

SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC

NEWSLETTER

November 2017

www.dcslovaks.org

<https://www.facebook.com/dcslovaks/>

Slovaks to Celebrate 2018 – A Year of Anniversaries

The coming year, 2018, will be a special one for Slovaks and Slovak-Americans, as it includes the anniversaries of a number of important events in the history of Slovakia. Various commemorations and related events are being planned.

First to note is that 2018 represents the 25th anniversary of Slovakia gaining its independence as a sovereign nation, when it separated from the Czech Lands in what is commonly referred to as the 'Velvet Divorce.' The centuries-long aspirations of Slovaks for recognition of independence within Europe, and by the world community, were realized in 1993, when the leaders of the Czechs and the Slovaks decided to separate the two nations that joined together in the wake of World War I following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. While at the time there was doubt among many Slovak citizens and various observers that the nation could be viable on its own, the last (somewhat bumpy) 25 years have shown that Slovakia is capable of taking its place on the world stage as a functioning liberal democracy within the European Union. The commemorations will begin early, in November 2017, with a forum hosted by the Slovak Embassy and Friends of Slovakia (FOS), featuring noted foreign policy analyst Dr. Pavol Demes reviewing Slovakia's progress and challenges since independence. The Slovak Embassy in Washington is planning to kick-off 2018 with a celebration in January, at the Library of Congress. Additional events are being planned.

Of course, the road to Slovak independence began much earlier; important milestones began in 1918, with the formation of Czechoslovakia (or Czecho-Slovakia). As World War I broke out, Tomáš Masaryk began working for independence from Austria-Hungary and championed the idea of a union of Czechs and Slovaks. He was joined in this effort, most notably, by Edvard Beneš, a Czech, and Milan Rastislav Štefánik, a Slovak. Masaryk cultivated support from other Western nations, as well as the large émigré populations in the United States. Among Slovaks, Masaryk's efforts are recognized in the Cleveland Agreement (1916) and in the Pittsburgh Agreement (May 1918), where he pledged that Slovaks would have substantial autonomy with a Czecho-Slovak Republic. While much history underlies the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks, today finds the two independent nations working as friends and partners on the world stage; they will both celebrate their joint history in 2018. The Czech Embassy, together with the American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR), is planning several events in the fall of 2018, around the (October) 100th anniversary of the formation of Czechoslovakia. Meanwhile, the 100th anniversary of the signing of

the Pittsburgh Agreement will be celebrated in downtown Pittsburgh, on May 31, 2018, at the Heinz Regional History Center, with a ceremony and reception. The event is being organized under the auspices of the Honorary Czech and Slovak consulates, along with several other groups. Representatives of both the Czech and Slovak republics are expected to participate.

The history of Czechoslovakia, the Czechs, and the Slovaks is replete with other historical events and milestones as well. The year 2018 will also see the 50th anniversary of the events of 1968, the so-called 'Prague Spring,' which brought the aspirations of Czechs and Slovaks for freedom and self-determination to the attention of the world community. Also, 2018 will be the 70th anniversary of the events of 1948, when the aspirations of Czechs and Slovaks were undermined by the communists. These events, together with other anniversaries discussed earlier, will be reviewed in a series of forums planned by SASW, some in cooperation with the Slovak Embassy. Also, the Friends of Slovakia will be supporting some of these events, and in fall 2018 it will organize the 19th Annual Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, in Washington, DC.

The details of these events are being worked out and information will be forthcoming as we move into 2018. Other organizations may be planning events throughout the country as well. Some events will be open to the public, others by invitation, some will have free admission, and some may charge admission. The best way to stay informed is to check the websites of several organizations, including SASW, FOS, AFoCR, and others.

SASW Holds 2017 Annual Meeting

SASW's Annual Membership Meeting was held on October 14, 2017, at the Slovak Embassy in Washington, DC. SASW President Brian Belensky presented a report on the year's activities. A copy is printed below. As is our tradition, an election for three open Board seats was held, with Virginia Sorkin, Valerie McNeil and Marta Galysh Szotakova being elected to three-year terms. Virginia is returning to the Board, while Valerie and Marta were elected for the first time. SASW appreciates their willingness to serve and looks forward to working with the new team. We also extend our thanks to Anne Pavuk Wright and Ray Luca, who decided to step down from the Board. Anne served as a very able Board Secretary and Ray helped organize several events and brought forward new ideas. We look forward to their continued active participation in SASW. Subsequently, the new board chose its officers: Brian Belensky (President), Marcel Lorincz (Vice-President), and Georgene Chastain (Treasurer) retained their positions, and Rich Palaschak assumed the duties of Board Secretary.

Following the meeting, an enthusiastic audience gathered to hear a Speakers' Series talk by Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky, of Roanoke College. He spoke in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the date German monk Martin Luther nailed his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, in the Electorate of Saxony, in the Holy Roman Empire. This was considered by many to have begun the Reformation in Europe. Dr. Hinlicky spoke on *Lutheranism in Slovakia: From the Reformation to Samuel Štefan Osuský*. Osuský was a 20th-century Slovak Lutheran intellectual who championed Czechoslovak democracy, was imprisoned by the Nazis, and was exiled by the communist state.

(SASW Annual Report follows)

SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC

Report to the Membership: October 2017

This year our society has continued our efforts to help foster awareness of Slovak cultural and current affairs. The following are the highlights:

Membership

As of September 30, 2017, we had 85 total memberships (42 Individual and 43 Family), an increase from the total of 78 memberships (42 Individual and 36 Family) in September 2016.

Financial

Our financial status is stable. Our total assets as of September 30, 2017, were \$13,898.83. These assets are deposited in our business checking account with Bank of America (\$7,916.09) and held as a CD with Lafayette Federal Credit Union (\$5,982.74).

City University

In May, we donated \$5,250 to City University of Seattle, which amount supported seven partial scholarships to needy students in Slovakia. This sum was the largest amount ever donated by the SASW in a single year, topping our previous high of five scholarships in 2016.

On November 5th, we will hold our 4th annual Café Night fundraiser at Bistro Bohem in Washington, DC, for City University Scholarships. Orchester Praževica will provide the music for the event.

Programs

The following are the events we have held/scheduled during the 15th year of our Speakers' Series:

On February 23, Dr. Kimberly Zarecor gave a talk about her recent book, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960*, at the Czech Embassy.

On April 24, SASW co-hosted, with the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, a slide presentation titled, "Andy Warhol: The Carpatho-Rusyn King of American Pop Art," by Dr. Elaine Rusinko, at the Slovak Embassy. This event attracted one of the largest audiences for a Speakers' Series event.

On June 24, Dr. Charles Sabatos lead a discussion of Slovak themes in Thomas Bell's 1941 novel, *Out of This Furnace*, the best-known depiction of Slovak immigrants in American literature, at the Arlington County Central Library.

On October 21, Dr. Paul Hinlicky gave a talk about the history of Lutheranism in Slovakia, with a focus on prominent Slovak Lutheran intellectual Samuel Štefan Osuský, who was imprisoned during the Nazi occupation and sent into internal exile during the communist era. The talk took place at the Slovak Embassy.

For 2018, we are lining up speakers for an interesting series of talks about prominent years in Slovak history that end with "8" – 1918 (the founding of Czechoslovakia), 1948 (the Communist takeover), 1968 (the 'Prague Spring'), and 1988 (the Velvet Revolution).

Membership Initiatives

Over the past year, SASW has continued with several initiatives to improve our outreach to attract new members.

We have revamped our website, < www.dcslovaks.org >, and we are working to increase the quantity and variety of content available to SASW members and visitors.

We are actively maintaining public pages on social media sites such as Twitter < <https://twitter.com/DCSlovaks> > and Facebook < <https://www.facebook.com/dcslovaks/> > to raise our public profile and generate interest in Slovak topics. Please follow these pages and share them with your friends and colleagues to boost the SASW Internet presence.

In 2018, SASW will be examining additional ways to more fully engage with our current membership and to improve our outreach towards potential members.

Social and Cultural Activities

On May 7, a pirohy-making demonstration was held at the home of SASW member Ludo Hintos.

On June 11, our annual picnic was held at Fort Hunt Park in Alexandria, VA.

On December 3, our annual Svätý Mikuláš party will be held at the Slovak Embassy. Orchester Praževica will provide the musical entertainment.

SASW has continued to support a social group on the Meetup website < <http://www.meetup.com/dcslovaks/> > to attract younger members and more recent Slovak émigrés.

Officers: Brian Belensky, President; Marcel Lorincz, Vice President; Georgene C. Chastain, Treasurer; Anne Pavuk Wright, Secretary.

At-Large Board Members: Ray Luca, John Husovsky, Helen Fedor, Rich Palaschak, and Virginia Sorkin.

SASW News and Notes

In Memoriam – SASW sadly notes the passing of **Stephen C. Matula** of Falls Church, VA, on September 20, at the age of 97. Steve was an active member of the Slovak-American community, particularly as long-serving president of Washington, DC-area Branch 856 of the First Catholic Slovak Union (Jednota). He was a dedicated member of SASW as well, and will be warmly remembered by many. SASW sent a donation to the Jednota Scholarship Fund in his memory. We extend our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Slovak Christmas Markets – The Slovak Embassy in Washington, DC, will hold its annual Christmas Market on Saturday, November 4, 10:00am-5:00pm. The event will feature the sale of handmade Christmas ornaments, jewelry, and Slovak wines, along with foods to sample and singing by the children's choir *Sokolik*. Also, the Washington, DC chapter of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences' (SVU) will hold its Czecho-Slovak Bazaar on Saturday, November 11, at the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD, 11:00am-3:00pm.

SASW Café Night Fundraiser – SASW will hold its 4th annual scholarship fundraising event to support the students of VSM/City University on Sunday, November 5, 6:00-9:00pm. Since 1996, SASW has raised nearly \$40,000 for partial scholarships that have helped more than 50 Slovak students with financial need to attend VSM/City University campuses in Bratislava and Trenčín. There will be live Gypsy jazz music performed by Orchester Praževica. There's no cover charge, but your purchase of food and drink will help support the scholarship fund. If you're not able to attend you can still support the scholarship by sending a donation to SASW, P.O. Box 2502, Springfield, VA 22152-2502.

The Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C.,
in cooperation with the Embassy of the Slovak Republic

Svätý Mikuláš Party

Join us to celebrate the tradition of St. Nicholas with a delicious Slovak buffet dinner,
a visit by Sv. Mikuláš, and live music by Orchester Praževica.

Sunday, December 3, 2017
2-4:30 pm (doors open at 1:30pm)

\$25 - SASW Member (Individual)
\$45 - SASW Member (Family)
\$35 - Non-Member (Individual)
\$65 - Non-Member (Family)

The Embassy of the Slovak Republic
3523 International Court, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Prepaid Reservations Only

Seating is limited to the first 100 persons.

RSVP by 6:00 pm, Wednesday, November 29



Please visit the dcslovaks.org for more information.

SASW News and Notes (cont'd)

Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture –The 18th annual Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture will be held on Tuesday, November 7, at 3:30pm at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. This prestigious annual lecture alternates between prominent Czech and Slovak figures, and this year, it is the Czechs' turn. The speaker will be **Professor Jan Švejnar**, who is the James T. Shotwell Professor of Global Political Economy and the Director of the Center on Global Economic Governance, Columbia University. At Columbia, Prof. Švejnar researches the effects of government policies on firms, labor, and capital markets; corporate, national, and global governance and performance; and entrepreneurship. He also was a 2008 presidential candidate in the Czech Republic, and a former economic advisor to President Václav Havel. The topic of his lecture will be "The Czech Republic in the World Economy."

The Wilson Center is located in the Ronald Reagan Building at One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania, Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20004. You can RSVP to the Wilson Center by calling [\(202\) 691-4000](tel:2026914000), or on the website at < www.wilsoncenter.org >. The lecture is sponsored by the Czech Embassy, the Slovak Embassy, the American Friends of the Slovak Republic, and the Friends of Slovakia.

Pavol Demeš Talk – A lecture and informal discussion will be held on Monday, November 13, at 7pm, at the Slovak Embassy, featuring Pavol Demeš speaking on "*Slovakia and the United States: The Ties that Bind.*" Pavol Demeš is a well-known Slovak expert on international relations and civil society, author, and photographer. From 2000 until 2010, he was the Director for Central and Eastern Europe of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF US), based in Bratislava. Since then, he has been a non-resident senior fellow with GMF US and a board member of the European Endowment for Democracy. The Slovak Embassy is at 3523 International Court, NW, Washington, DC 20008.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING OPTIONS !

AmazonSmile – SASW is a participant in the AmazonSmile charitable donation program. Under this program, Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organizations selected by our customers. When you do your shopping on Amazon this holiday season, please use this link < <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1906440> > to support SASW. Donations will only be credited to SASW on purchases made through this link. Please share the link with your family and friends.

Slovak Wines for the Holidays? – A reminder that wine from Slovakia is available in the Washington, DC area, and for shipment to other states. The selection of wines is produced near the village of Limbach, and is offered under the LIMBA brand. These wines are available at **Potomac Wine and Spirits, 3100 M St., NW, Washington, DC (in Georgetown)**. You can also order by calling 1-(800) 333-2829; they can be shipped to most states. To order online go to < www.potomacwines.com >, then click on 'Country' (left side) and scroll down to 'Slovakia'.

Please use the form on the next page to reserve your place at the Svätý Mikuláš Party. Also, remember to renew your membership for 2018, if you have not already done so, using the form on the back page. We need and appreciate your support !!!



SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF WASHINGTON D.C.

SV. MIKULÁŠ PARTY 2017 PREPAID RESERVATION FORM

RSVP by 6:00 pm on Wednesday, November 29th

Free Admission for Children

	No. Reservations		Amount
Member Admission			
Individual	_____ x \$25	=	\$ _____
Family (Two Adults)	_____ x \$45	=	\$ _____
Non-Member Admission			
Individual	_____ x \$35	=	\$ _____
Family (Two Adults)	_____ x \$65	=	\$ _____
		TOTAL	\$ _____

Contact Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____

Names of Attendees (please specify adult or child):

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

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

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

New membership or 2018 renewal runs through 12/31/2018.

Individual membership (\$25/year) \$ _____
Family membership (\$35/year) \$ _____

Tax-deductible donation (optional):

City University Scholarship Fund \$ _____
SASW General Fund \$ _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

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

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

NAME(s) _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ ZIP+4 _____

TELEPHONE Home: (____) - _____ Work: (____) - _____

E-MAIL _____

Please Circle Your Selections:

Contact me to help out with SASW events:	Yes	No
Send my copy of the Newsletter via (select one):	USPS Mail	Email

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

2018 Board of Directors:

Officers:

Brian Belensky – President
Marcel Lorincz – Vice-President
Georgene Chastain – Treasurer
Rich Palaschak – Secretary

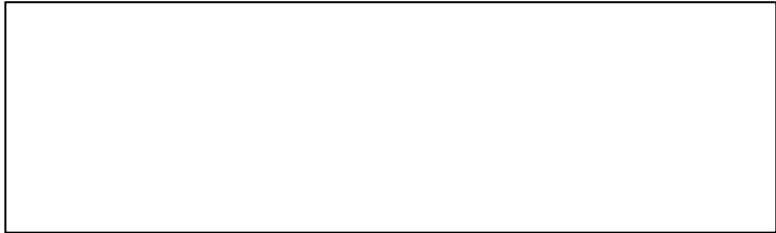
At-Large Members:

Helen Fedor
John Husovsky
Valerie McNeil
Virginia Sorkin
Marta Galysh Szotakova

Website: www.dcslovaks.org



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