



CZECH-NEBRASKA

1133 Oldfather, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE, 68588-0315

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www.unl.edu/komenskyclub

January/ledna 2005

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Schedule for Spring 2005

Jan. 20th-Film: "The Unbearable Lightness of Being"
8:00 p.m. Nebraska Union 14 & R St.

Jan. 25th- Film: "Žert"
8:00 p.m. Nebraska Union, 14th & R St.

Feb. 3rd- Film: "Button Maker"
8:00 p.m. Nebraska Union, 14 & R St.

Feb. 17th- Film: "Fireman's Ball"
8:00 p.m. Nebraska Union, 14 & R St.

Mar. 1st- Lecture: C.J. Švagera- Czech Music in South Omaha
7:30 p.m. Nebraska Union, 14 & R St.

Mar. 3rd- Film: "Let Us Kill Sekal"
8:00 p.m. Nebraska Union, 14th & R St.

Mar. 4th- Concert: Prague Symphony Orchestra with Navah Perlman, piano, 7:30 p.m. Lied Center, 12th & Q St.
For tickets contact the Lied Center at (402)472-4747

Mar. 29th- Film: "Closely Watched Trains"
8:00 p.m. Nebraska Union, 14th & R St.

Apr. 7th- Film: "Cozy Dens"
8:00 p.m. Nebraska Union, 14th & R St.

We are all citizens of one world. To dislike a man because he was born in another country, because he speaks a different language, or because he takes a different view on this or that, is a great folly. Let us have but one end in view, the welfare of humanity. Komenský - Comenius

Spring 2005-

Welcome Back! The Komenský Club has many exciting events planned for the spring semester, which we hope everyone will be able to participate in. There are many films and lectures scheduled. The Czech Komenský Club plans second annual "Czech Days in Nebraska", which will be in April in conjunction with a Czech Language Foundation banquet. We look forward to seeing everybody once again at our upcoming events! C.J. Svagera-, President

Komenský Club Nominated for Gracie Agait Award

Just before Christmas the Komenský Club was notified by the Czech Embassy that they had been nominated for the prestigious Jan Masaryk Gracie Agait Award given out by the Czech government. If the club is chosen to receive the award, Komenský Club President C.J. Švagera and Dr. Míla Šasková-Pierce will travel to Prague in June to receive the award from President Vaclav Klaus. The club nomination is based on its 100 years of service in preserving the Czech heritage and language in Nebraska and in North America.

SVU Conference-Miami Florida, March 2005

The Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU), in conjunction with the American Czech-Slovak Cultural Club of North Miami, Florida will hold their annual meeting on March 17-20, 2005 on the southeast coast of sunny Florida. The program will focus on the rich preservation of the Czech and Slovak culture including literature, music, dance, folklore, folk art, ethnic history, and preservation of cultural treasures. Featured artists and lecturers include legendary Czech singer Waldemar Matuška, Czech Ambassador Martin Palouš, Slovak Ambassador Rastislav Ka•er, Czech country

and western singer Larry Morava, Slovak folk dancers from Masaryktown, Florida, Europa Band from Orlando, Czech folk singers from Key West, Dr. Joseph Patrouch Professor of History at Florida International University (FIU), Howard Kaminsky, Professor Emeritus of Medieval History from FIU and Helene Cincebeaux internationally recognized Czech and Slovak folk dress expert. They are seeking additional speakers, who are knowledgeable about the major theme of the Conference: "Czech and Slovak Cultural Heritage". Although the focus will be on Czechs and Slovaks in America, they would welcome papers on the Czech and Slovak legacy in general and the "Old Country's" historical traditions that transcend a Millennium. Accommodations are available at Windsor Inn, 12210 Biscayne Blvd. NE, North Miami, FL 33181; Phone: (305) 891-7350; (Contact Sandra Codogno, mention SVU.) Price is \$65 per room plus 13 %

before January 31, 2005. Pre-registration forms are available on www.SVU2000.org, or <http://www.svu2000.org/headlines/b83.htm>

Three Nebraskans to Present at SVU Conference

Komenský Club President C.J. Svagera will present a lecture on Czech music; his paper presents a study of the history of Czech music as an expression of folk culture in South Omaha, Nebraska.

Through the first half of the twentieth century up until about 1955, South Omaha was its own independent community, separate from the rest of the town, and it was there, specifically in Brown Park, that many Czech immigrants settled from 1880 on. The subdivision, unlike the more affluent central Omaha, was a working class neighborhood close to the meatpacking plants and breweries that were willing to employ the Czech speaking workers. This social origin then determined the type of music that was performed in the neighborhood. The music was intended mainly for dance and over time a specific style of polka, native to eastern Nebraska, has developed. The Czech musicians cultivated this style in an effort to emulate and preserve the traditional "dechovka" style of the Czech homeland. The innovation consisted in a new instrumentation of two clarinets/saxophones, two trumpets/baritones, one tuba, one accordion and a drum set. They called it a polka band, to suggest that it was the "dechovka" sound, although on a smaller scale than the traditional large brass bands. Their repertoire continued to preserve the Czech folk melodies, this included the original Czech lyrics sung in Czech. The polka band flourished in the Czech community, to the extent that in the 1940's there were more than 40 polka bands operating out of South Omaha, earning a living while playing in dance halls across Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Minnesota. The paper will contrast the traditional Czech "dechovka" instrumentation with the polka band variant from South Omaha.

Layne Pierce, President of the Czech Language Foundation in Nebraska, will present a paper entitled *Two-Year Comparison of University Web Pages*.

Professor Mila Saskova-Pierce will present a report on Learning Communities that have constituted in Spillville, Iowa, to study Czech language. Their work will be supported by electronic materials authored by Mila Saskova-Pierce, Layne Pierce and Katya Koubek.

Czech Republic Aids Tsunami Victims

After last months horrific natural disasters in Southeast Asia the government of the Czech Republic has pledged well over 9 million U.S. dollars in aid to help rebuild the devastated countries. At last report there was one confirmed

Czech casualty with 11 other Czechs still declared missing, of which 7 are presumed dead.

Czech Vocabulary Czech way with words

By Melvyn Clarke, translator, Prague

The [Sapir-Whorf hypothesis](#) states that each language conveys a uniquely constituted world-view, breaking experience down in unique ways dictated by its history and circumstances: *'We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data.'* - Edward Sapir (1884-1936)

So it is, the Welsh have a single word for the blue-green of their sea, the Russians supposedly do not have a word for privacy, the Eskimos are famous for having [twenty-odd words for snow](#), and the Fuegians say "mamihlapinatapei", when we say "looking at each other hoping that either will offer to do something which both parties desire but are unwilling to do."

This is expressed in the Czech dictum: *Kolik jazyk • umíš, tolikrát jsi • lov • kem*, which suggests that to speak another language, we have to acquire another personality/mindset. So just how different is the Czech world/mindset from the English-speaking one and does one have to go totally schizoid to live in both?

There are indeed many concepts in Czech with English dictionary translations that read like something out of "[The Meaning of Life](#)". Perhaps my method is not the most scientific, but I wonder - if we listed all the Czech words that need a long description in English, and vice versa, what kind of alternative universes would we depict...:)

Anyway, here is a list of my personal favourites:

Bufe•ák (also Somrák)	<i>a guy who hangs around cafeterias and eats left-overs</i>
• echá•ek	<i>a narrow-minded Czech</i>
• ervánky	<i>red evening clouds</i>
Humna	<i>the village backyards</i>
Chmura	<i>a black cloud</i>
Ješita	<i>a smug, vainglorious person (always masculine)</i>
Klouza•ka	<i>slippery patch on ice-covered ground</i>
Knedlíkový	<i>rather partial to dumplings</i>
Kverulant	<i>chronic complainer, a litigious person</i>
Narafi•it	<i>to fix things up in a clever way</i>
Na•	<i>stalks and leaves</i>
Nedovtipa	<i>one who finds it difficult to take a hint</i>

Otužilec	<i>someone who does not feel the cold</i>
P•edposrání	<i>unnecessary self-censorship (vulgar expression lit. preshittedness)</i>
P•esezený	<i>stiff from sitting in the same position too long</i>
Smola•	<i>a person dogged by bad luck</i>
Ty•ovka	<i>a woman who hangs on to the pole next to the bus-driver and chats him up</i>
Uhranout	<i>cast the evil eye on somebody</i>
Ujec	<i>uncle on mother's side</i>
Umudrovat se	<i>to philosophize oneself into the madhouse</i>
Vodník	<i>a green water-goblin</i>
Vybafnout	<i>to jump out and say boo</i>
Výškrabek	<i>scrapings, an afterthought, (low colloquial) youngest child</i>
Vžít se	<i>to imagine oneself in somebody else's position</i>
Zakecat se	<i>to forget something through talking too much</i>

-- 17. 6. 2003

Czech and Slovak Collections in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries.

By: Katherine L. Walter, Chair, UNL Digital Initiatives & Special Collections Department

Czech and Slovak immigrants began settling in Nebraska after the Homestead Act. Many Czechs who came to Nebraska were able to purchase cheap farmland and work in agriculture. Though census records indicate that most Czechs in Nebraska lived in five counties—Douglas, Saunders, Butler, Colfax, and Saline, Czechs actually settled widely in Nebraska. Other counties with significant Czech populations included Fillmore, Knox, Richardson, Pawnee, Webster, Cass, Madison, Valley, Custer, Howard, Buffalo, and Cheyenne Counties. Omaha was at one time the fourth largest city in the U.S. in numbers of Czech-speaking citizens. According to another source, it was estimated that as many as one eighth of all Czech immigrants to the United States settled in Nebraska.

Czech culture, as you can tell, is indeed woven into the fabric of Nebraska life, and consequently Czech language instruction was offered at the University of Nebraska beginning in the early 1900s. The University Libraries soon began collecting Czech language books and periodicals. While Czech language materials were purchased steadily, the really impressive development of Czech Heritage Collections at UNL was due largely to the efforts of Archivist, Joseph G. Svoboda. Svoboda, a native of Czechoslovakia, escaped following the Communist takeover in 1948. He spent two years in refugee camps in Germany and Italy. Before coming to UNL, he was educated in Canada, and served as an

archivist in Toronto, Wyoming, and Cleveland. Svoboda was appointed Archivist at UNL in 1968 and remained in the position until his retirement in 1993.

For most of his twenty-five years on faculty at UNL, Svoboda dedicated his efforts to building a remarkable collection of Czech materials. He developed a strong working relationship with Czech Americans in Nebraska, and was successful in working with donors. An early significant addition to the collections, for example, was a book collection donated by Senator Roman Hruska in 1971. Many other donations followed. By the time that Svoboda retired, the collections had grown in both breadth and richness. In 1999, UNL bestowed a special award on Svoboda at the Czech Genealogical Society International meeting in Lincoln to recognize the importance of the archives.

Major Czech Collections at UNL

Books have been collected in all subject areas. Many titles can be located using the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's online catalog at <http://iris.unl.edu>. Together, there are an estimated 5,000 volumes published in Bohemia or Czechoslovakia, the United States, Canada, and other countries which include exile books from publishers like "68" Publishers (Toronto), Konfontation (Zurich), and Index (Cologne). Of the 5,000 book volumes, about 3,000 are cataloged.

Newspapers and periodicals.

Over 500 newspapers and periodicals from Bohemia or Czechoslovakia, the United States, and exile newspapers dating from 1938-1968 are included in the UNL collection. The Nebraska Newspaper Project, a joint project of UNL Libraries and the Nebraska State Historical Society located many newspapers published in Czech or with Czech-language columns. The National Endowment for the Humanities contributed to microfilming and cataloging of Czech American newspapers. All cataloging records for these titles are in the UNL Libraries online catalog at <http://iris.unl.edu>. The microfilm reels for Czech American newspapers are at the Nebraska State Historical Society. Czech exile newspapers from other countries can be located through finding aids in the UNL Archives & Special Collections, but are not currently online.

Theatrical plays published in Bohemia or Czechoslovakia include approximately 800 plays from the years 1870-1939. Among these are Alois Jirasek's *Emigrant*, and plays by such playwrights as Jiri Balda, Karel Balak, Karel Fort, Josef Stolba and many others.

Almanacs were published in Bohemia or Czechoslovakia (approximately seventy-five titles), and in Czech and Slovak languages in the United States (approximately fifty-five titles).

Pamphlets are on many subjects, people, and organizations from all over the U.S.

Records of Fraternal Organizations. • SPS, Z• BJ, • SDPS, Sokol, Knights of Pythias, and Czech National Cemeteries records are in this group, including the minutes of Nebraska lodges from many different communities. A few

lodges from North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, and Wisconsin are represented. The minutes were microfilmed by Joseph Svoboda in the 1980s.

Oral Histories. Reminiscences of sixty-five (65) men and women of Czech descent, recorded from 1975-1981 by Josef Svoboda. These are in either Czech or English.

Manuscript collections. Archival and manuscript collections of Czech, Moravian, and Slovakian organizations or individuals, and collections of Czech-speaking Americans. The following descriptions are of some of the more interesting collections:

Czechoslovak Scout Movement in Exile, Records. The records were created by various scout units, and maintained by Dr. Velen Fanderlik (1907-1985).

Josef Josten Papers. Josten (1913-1985) established the Free Czechoslovak Information (FCI) service in England. The main mission of the FCI Service was to provide uncensored news and editorial comments to the world media. Their newsletter, Features and News from Behind the Iron Curtain, was distributed to subscribers in over fifty countries.

Rudolph Kopecky Papers. Kopecky (1893-1981) wrote extensively for newspapers, co-founded a Czechoslovak military unit in Poland during WWII, and directed the publication of Prehled, and mimeographed Czech language daily.

All of the Czech Heritage Collections have been described in finding aids. A few are online, and can be found in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries online catalog at <http://iris.unl.edu> under the "University Archives & Special Collections" pages. Gradually, the encoded finding aids are being added to the UNL Archives & Special Collections web pages at <http://www.unl.edu/libr/libs/spec/specar1.html>.

Digitization. Digitization offers advantages in providing widespread access, but many of UNL's collections cover the years from WWII to the present. Because of this, copyright issues are likely to make large-scale digitization projects unlikely for the immediate future. What might be possible are smaller-scale web exhibits that feature photographs for which copyright permissions to publish online can be secured, and also curated text.

CZECH LANGUAGE CLASSES NEED YOUR HELP!

The Czech Language program was started in 1907, and has a great history. Many famous people started their creative and political lives in this program. For example, Senator Roman Hruška, Rudy Vrtiška, Olga Štastný, and many others. This year, once again students are enrolled in the Czech Language Program.

Please, support this one-hundred-year-old program, its existence depends on it. The support can have two forms. First of all, inform your children and your grandchildren about its availability, so that they could enroll in Czech. You also can send a tax-deductible donation. And most of all, come to the Komenský club program. We are the only organization that keeps Nebraska Czech culture alive at the university.

Contributions in care of the UNL Foundation can be sent to the Czech Instruction Fund #4931, UNL Foundation 1111 BLDG, 1111 Lincoln Mall, Lincoln NE 68588

Komenský Club at UNL

The principal function of the Komenský Club is to sponsor events that focus on culture and history and bring together people of diverse backgrounds who want to share Czech heritage. Readers of *Náš Svět* are encouraged to attend club events and participate in other activities listed in the newsletter in order to enhance awareness of the Czech culture in Nebraska communities. There is a low annual membership fee of \$3.00 for students and \$8.00 for non-students. The membership fee helps finance the films, newsletters and other special activities. Checks should be made out to the Komensky Club and mailed to: Mila Saskova-Pierce, UNL, 1133 Oldfather Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588-0315. Membership is open to everyone!

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