



# AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Spring, 2011

NEWSLETTER

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## Construction Begins on Wilson Monument



*AFoCR Director Phillip Kasik congratulates Ondřej Špaček upon his foundry's completion of half the pieces of the Wilson*

The prime contractor for construction of the Woodrow Wilson Monument, Jež spol s.r.o., began preparatory work in February at the monument site in Vrchlický Park. At the same time, work is underway in fabricating the large granite pieces that will comprise the monument's base and pedestal as well as in casting the statue into bronze. All the work is being coordinated in Prague by AFoCR's architects Mikulaš Hulec and Daniel Špička.

The stone is being fabricated in the workshops of Hausdorf Granit s.r.o., located in the village of Nové Jirny, east of Prague. The Hausdorf workshops were visited in February by AFoCR officers Robert Doubek, the director of the monument project, and Phillip Kasik, who is organizing the dedication activities. They reported a very impressive operation, with huge circular saws, 10 feet in diameter, cutting the granite, while water to cool the blades was spraying into the cuts. The largest piece of granite, out of which will be cut the main shaft of the pedestal, is over 14 feet in length. Fortunately for the project's schedule, the granite was quarried just in the nick of time last fall, a day before the quarry closed for the winter. The representatives of Hausdorf and Jež expressed confidence that they will finish the job of constructing the base and pedestal well in advance of the monument's dedication in October.

The statue is being cast into bronze at the foundry of Ondřej Špaček, located in the Lysolaje area in the northern part of Prague. The Špaček foundry is considered to be one of the best in the Czech Republic and was one of the first foundries in the former Czechoslovakia that specialized in casting bronze sculptures with the lost wax process. It has done work for the leading sculptors in the country. One of the Špaček master craftsmen started his career in the same foundry where the original statue of Wilson was cast in 1928.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Plans Set for Wilson Monument Dedication in Prague

### Start Making Your Plans Now



*View of St. Vitus Cathedral and Prague Castle (Photo by Lillis Werder)*

AFoCR Chairman Fred Malek announced in Washington that the dedication of the rebuilt Woodrow Wilson Monument is now set. The historic dedication ceremony will take place on October 5 where the monument is now under construction, opposite the new building of the main railway station.

Among the dignitaries and officials already committed to participating in the dedication ceremony and planned events are President Václav Klaus, Former President Václav Havel, and Lord Mayor of Prague, Bohuslav Svoboda. Among the dignitaries representing the U.S. will be former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic Norman Eisen, and former Congresswoman Jane Harman, who recently assumed the post of President of the Woodrow Wilson Institute for Scholars.

Here in Q&A format is basic information to assist visitors in planning their visits to Prague to attend Dedication Week events.

#### **What events are planned and when do they begin?**

Wilson Monument Dedication Week includes a series of special commemorative events and activities to mark the historic occasion. It all begins on Tuesday, October 4. The events are listed on Page 3.

#### **When should I plan to arrive in Prague?**

We recommend arriving the weekend of October 1-2 to allow for a few days to enjoy the sights of historic Prague.

#### **How do I sign up for events?**

The AFoCR web site has a page with reservation and registration information for the events. Just go to [www.afocr.org](http://www.afocr.org) and on the home page click the link for Wilson Dedication Reservations and Information.

#### **How can I get around to the events?**

Prague is a compact city with an excellent public transit system. Most events will be within short walking distance from the

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Letter From AFoCR President Thomas A. Dine



Dear Friends of the Czech Republic,

Over a year ago, I wrote that American Friends of the Czech Republic, committed to improving and expanding U.S. relations with the Czech Republic, was on the move as an organization. As we commence springtime 2011, I want to reiterate that observation, highlighting the historic dedication ceremonies of the Wilson Monument in Prague, October 4 to 6, 2011.

I also want to highlight the arrival in Prague of the vigorous and committed Norman Eisen, our new Ambassador to the Czech Republic. Also I note the participation of AFoCR in a new project here in the nation's capital, the National Museum of the American People.

In support of our Wilson Monument project, we have held successful fundraising dinners in Houston and Chicago. The Houston gala featured former President George H.W. Bush and his wife Barbara, as well as two astronauts of Czech origin, James Lovell and Eugene Cernan. In Chicago, we honored then Mayor Richard Daley.

Ambassador Eisen has hit the ground running in the Czech lands. He has a blog; he is speaking around the country, often in the Czech language; and he is on the job in dealing with Czech officials at all levels. We at AFoCR share his goals: enhancing US-Czech political-military cooperation, helping to stimulate a broader and longer two-way economic street between our two countries with private investment and trade, and of course advancing the people-to-people programs and opportunities. Along these lines, the Ambassador is helping make the dedication of the Wilson Monument this fall a big success.

A bipartisan coalition of ethnic and minority groups in the U.S. is supporting a congressional resolution that calls for a presidential commission to study a National Museum of the American People. Plans are underway to find, with the help of the U.S. Park Service, a location either on, or near, the Mall. There will be no requests for federal appropriated funds. In addition to AFoCR, there are 51 other organizations in the coalition.

It is with personal pleasure that I call to your attention the 60th anniversary of a major American and Czechoslovak institution, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Its first broadcast was to Czechoslovakia from Munich, Germany, in 1951. The station moved its broadcasting headquarters to Prague in late 1995. In tribute to this free radio during the Cold War, its cousin, *Český rozhlas* (Czech Radio), will host an international conference regarding freedom of expression and press in Prague on May 5, 2011, and the Czech Senate will display an exhibition of RFE's broadcasting. Both Czech Prime Minister Petr Nečas and Slovak Prime Minister Iveta Radičová will participate in the conference.

Finally, continuing on the subject of history, I would like to highlight two recent scholarly books that Americans attached to Czech history and the contemporary Czech Republic will find, as I did, stimulating and worthwhile reading. The first, by historian Zdenek V. David, is entitled *Realism, Tolerance, and Liberalism in the Czech National Awakening: Legacies of the Bohemian Reformation*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010. Zdenek recounts the intellectual roots and impulses of Czech political culture from the 15th century's Bohemian Reformation to its resuscitation and embrace during the Austro-Bohemian Catholic Enlightenment of the liberal "national awakening," in the late 18th century. This set the stage for the philosophical "quarrel" that the early 19th century Czech scholar Bernhard Bolzano had with the great German analytic philosophers Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, and above all Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

The second book is *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, by Timothy Snyder, Basic Books, 2010. The blood letting from mass murder of 14 million civilians by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union took place in the lands that lay between Berlin, especially Poland, over to Moscow via Ukraine and Belarus between the years 1930 to 1945. Yale University's Snyder addresses the frequently debated question: Who was worse, who is more to blame, Hitler or Stalin? Based on his encyclopedic knowledge and analysis, Carter treats the two as comparable. The numbers killed are similar; he shows that it was Stalin who set the example for Hitler of systematic butchery; it was Stalin who provided an example for Hitler by eliminating opposition from national minorities, rich kulaks, and poor peasants. Both, of course, were results-oriented, particularly in initiating the Holocaust against the Jews and with the Great Terror against Ukrainians. For Snyder, what mattered most in the end was the commonality of both leaders in sacrificing millions to complete grandiose criminal totalitarian projects.

*Tom Dine*



*The Astronomical Clock in Prague Counting  
Down to the Wilson Monument Dedication on  
October 5th  
(Photo by Lillis Werder)*

## U.S. Ambassador Arrives



### Newly Posted Ambassador Norman Eisen Submits his Credentials and Hits Ground Running

Ambassador Norman Eisen arrived in Prague in January and quickly got to work. He presented his credentials to President Klaus and soon thereafter addressed the Institute of International Relations at Czernin Palace, seat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of President Ronald Reagan's birth, and set up his blog. To read his blog, go to: <http://eisen.blog.idnes.cz/>

In his address to the Institute of International Relations at Czernin Palace, Ambassador Eisen highlighted the importance of the U.S.–Czech relationship, and his desire for the relationship to be not just good but “great.” In his address he emphasized the permanence of the friendship and the shared values and history in this way:

Let me begin with the famous adage of the great British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, who said that nations have no permanent friends, only permanent interests.

In the case of the United States and the Czech Republic--I do not accept that. I believe our two countries share a permanent friendship.

The roots of that friendship lie in our shared history. **The U.S. played an integral role in the creation of the then-Czechoslovak Republic, when President Wilson and President Masaryk worked together to turn the dream of an independent, free nation into reality.** The friendship survived World War II and Nazi occupation—an occupation the United States helped end. It survived the Cold War and Communist domination—a domination the United States helped fight. It flowered after the Velvet Revolution and, in my view, is poised to renew itself amid the challenges of the 21st century.

Yes, we share interests. Yes, we work together for mutual benefit. But there is a reason for that - a true friendship, based on shared values, above all a commitment to the promotion of human freedom. That commitment runs through our shared history and into our future. It creates a shared mission as we work together to improve the lives of those who live in our two nations and to lift up the world. That shared commitment is, I believe, unshakeable. It is part of our respective national characters. If I have any faith, it is in that.

Ambassador Eisen then elaborated on the three pillars on which the U.S. —Czech relationship rests: (1) security and defense cooperation; (2) economic and commercial activity; and (3) above all, the advancement of our shared values.

In closing he declared:

I offer the Czech people my full support, and the support of my Embassy, as these efforts move forward. We stand with the Czech ministers, parliamentarians, prosecutors, judges, police and non-governmental organizations that promote transparency and fight corruption...no matter their party affiliations. We will continue to foster dialogue as Czech officials weigh what answers are right for your country. When the insights of U.S. experts are useful, we will gladly offer them. In this light, U.S. experts on public and defense procurement will not only compare experiences and discuss best practices with their Czech counterparts, but also share hard-earned lessons from cases in the U.S. Our experts will also participate in the public discussion about crafting procurement rules to ensure that Czech taxpayer money is put to the best and most efficient use. And every expert that visits will take back valuable ideas and lessons about Czech innovations in these areas that can also benefit the U.S.

In the days and weeks ahead, I hope to explore with you the ways we can work together to shine the transformative light of our shared values of freedom, democracy and human rights into those places that remain dark in the 21st century.



*AFoCR Directors After Meeting at the White House with  
Ambassador Designate Norman Eisen  
(2nd from right)*

## AFoCR Facebook and Web Site Update



AFoCR is currently working on an upgrade of its Facebook Page and web site. The "Facebook Group" will be changing to "Facebook Fan Page" to better serve visitors. This change will result in a more attractive look and ease of navigation. All news and invitations to events will be directly streamlined to the "News Feed". On this new Fan Page will be created a new bookmark for the Woodrow Wilson Monument Dedication, which will be connected with a microsite on the AFoCR web page that will be focused on the Dedication.

The AFoCR web page will have a tab specifically designed for the Wilson Monument Dedication. Visitors will be able to learn more about AFoCR activities and register for events. AFoCR urges all readers of the *Newsletter* to become fans and join its Facebook page to stay informed.

## “Nicky’s Family” Premieres in Prague Sir Nicholas Winton Attends Festivities



*AFoCR  
Director  
Peter Rafaeli  
Greets Sir  
Nicholas  
Winton*

On January 20, 2011, two premieres were held at the Congress Center Prague. Each was attended by 3,000 invitees. The morning event was for high school students, and Sir Nicholas Winton received a standing ovation from the adoring crowd. The President of the Czech Senate, Dr. Přemysl Sobotka, had written a nomination letter for a Nobel Peace Prize which was delivered to the Norwegian Ambassador at the session.

The evening session at 7:00 PM was attended by 3,000 VIP guests. Sir Nicholas was escorted into the hall by former Czech President Václav Havel to another standing ovation. The guest list included a large number of foreign ambassadors, including the new U.S. ambassador, Norman Eisen, and the Czech ambassador-designate to the U.S., Petr Gandalovič. The First Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Karel Schwarzenberg, and the Czech Minister of Defense, Alexandr Vondra, were among the speakers.

After introductory speeches, the newest film by Matej Mináč, “Nicky’s family,” was shown. This is the third Mináč film about the spectacular rescue mission of 669 Czechoslovak, mostly Jewish, children during the immediate pre-war years of 1938-39. The earlier films are “All My Loved Ones” and the International Emmy Award winning “Nicholas Winton – The Power of Good”. The latest film is a docu-drama featuring some of the leading Czech film stars. In the English language, it is aimed primarily for U.S. audiences. The Czech version was introduced to Czech audiences in February 2011.

On the following day, January 21, Czech Minister of Defense Vondra hosted a luncheon honoring Sir Nicholas.

AFoCR published an expanded version of Mináč’s book “Nicholas Winton’s Lottery of Life,” which is available free of charge, except shipping and handling costs, to schools, libraries, churches, synagogues, etc. Interested parties should write to [afocr@afocr.org](mailto:afocr@afocr.org) or directly to [Philadelphia@honorary.mzv.cz](mailto:Philadelphia@honorary.mzv.cz).



*Group  
Photo  
from The  
Defense  
Minister’s  
luncheon*

## Construction Begins on Wilson Monument *(continued from page 1)*

While in Prague, Mssrs. Doubek and Kasik also visited the foundry, which is casting the statue piece by piece, corresponding to the sections that were cut from the plaster model. The pieces then will be welded together. As of the end of February, over half of the pieces have been cast, including the bust, the legs and feet, and the hands. The process of casting is laborious and involves forming a rubber mold over the plaster positive and then coating the inside of the rubber with wax to the same thickness as the resulting bronze skin of the statue.

The Wilson statue is currently the foundry’s only project, and Mr. Špaček expects to finish it yet this spring. It will be stored until the base and pedestal are made ready for its installation.

While the work in Prague progresses, AFoCR is heavily engaged in drafting the inscriptions that will appear on the monument and in completing the design and fabrication of the granite plaques for the Walk of Freedom. The granite that has been chosen for the plaques is known as “Dakota Mahogany,” with a rich deep grain and color. Mount Rushmore consists of this stone. AFoCR has been asking all substantial contributors to submit the inscriptions for their plaques.

As with the original Wilson Monument, President Wilson’s statement, “The World Must Be Made Safe For Democracy,” will be inscribed on the rebuilt monument’s base. A dedicatory inscription, briefly explaining the monument’s purpose and history, will be located on the granite surface in front of the base, in both English and Czech.



*AFoCR  
Director  
Robert  
Doubek (r)  
stands before  
granite slab  
to be cut for  
monument  
pedestal.  
(Below)  
Details of the  
Statue*



(Continued from page 1)

designated hotels. Chartered buses will be available for selected events during the day.

#### How do I arrange for accommodations in Prague?

The AFoCR web site also has a link for the Prague travel agent site where specially priced accommodations are available for a variety of hotels in the area, and can be booked individually to suit your own arrival and departure plans.

#### Will I be able to tour Prague and the areas outside of Prague?

You will have time to do your own touring. Prague is a walking city and the principal sights are all within easy reach of the historic Old Town area. You can make up your own touring plan or register for tours that the travel agency is arranging both within Prague and for special destinations outside of Prague. There is even a Wilson Dedication Golf Tourney planned at Konopiště Castle just outside of Prague for visitors inclined toward the sport.

### Dedication Week Activity Schedule

#### Tues Oct 4

- Morning - Wilson-Masaryk Historical Exhibition at the new building of the National Museum.
- Afternoon—Symposium: *The legacy of Wilson and Masaryk in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czernin Palace. (Admission by e-ticket, limited availability)
- Evening—Award Dinner and Reception at the Rudolfinum, attended by prominent dignitaries and business leaders and featuring the inaugural presentation of the Wilson-Masaryk Award for Democracy and Freedom. (tickets, tables and Sponsorships available—information available on [www.afocr.org](http://www.afocr.org) )

#### Wed Oct 5

- Morning (11am)—Dedication Ceremony featuring U.S. and Czech officials, musical and military tributes, and the formal unveiling of the Monument and the Walk of Freedom.
- Afternoon (12:30pm)—Celebratory Gathering at the main hall of the historic Automotoklub, with refreshments (adjacent to the Monument dedication, admission by e-ticket only, attendance limited)

#### Thurs Oct 6

- Morning (9am) —Wilson Dedication Golf Tourney, at the golf course at Konopiště Castle (includes bus transportation, clubs and awards; places limited)
- Morning—Wilson - Masaryk Historical Exhibition at the new building of the National Museum.
- Afternoon—Tour of the Joža Uprka Art Exhibition at the Wallenstein Riding School.
- Evening—Concert of the Prague Symphony at the Rudolfinum (discount tickets available to dedication participants; limited availability).

## NCSML

### A Museum on the Move



*Beams are being placed underneath the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library building as it is being prepared to move to the new foundation being constructed in the foreground. Webcam views can be seen at [www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org).*

Nearly three years after disaster struck the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML), plans have been finalized for the historic relocation of the flood damaged building currently located at 30 Sixteenth Ave. SW. The building will be moved on April 26 and 27 to its new site and positioned next to its new foundation. Preparation work by Patterson Structural Moving of Washington, IA, has started at the current location.

“The first phase of this move includes welding steel beams up to 200 feet long, removing bricks from the façade of the building, and then sliding beams into the structure,” said CEO/President Gail Naughton. “Once the structure is secured and relocated, it will remain in place next to the foundation until May 17, when more activity occurs.”

Crews from Patterson Structural Moving will complete three additional phases over a week’s time. Starting May 17, the building will be elevated to its final height 11 feet above where it sits today and three feet above the level of the 2008 flood. It will then be rolled on to the new foundation and finally, on May 21, set down and secured in place.

“Live webcams on [www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org) will allow viewing around the clock for the many people across the world interested in following all the activity. We are excited that this exceptional moment in the museum’s history is finally coming to fruition. The expansion and renovation of this museum and library is a major milestone in flood recovery, and an historic event for Czechs, Slovaks, and people of Czech and Slovak descent worldwide,” said Naughton.



**American Friends of The Czech Republic**  
**4410 Massachusetts Avenue, NW #391**  
**Washington, DC 20016**

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*Photo by Lillis Werder*

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