



AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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NEWSLETTER

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AWARD GALA CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF FREEDOM Chicago Mayor Daley Honored



AFoCR Chairman Fred Malek presents Civil Society Vision Award to Mayor Richard Daley at Chicago Gala, 11/10/09

AFoCR's annual Award Gala, held on November 10, 2009, in Chicago, was a great success. The 2009 honoree, Chicago's Mayor Richard M. Daley, received AFoCR's Civil Society Vision Award for his success in fostering close ties between the United States and the Czech Republic.

Venued at the elegant Ritz-Carlton Hotel, the event epitomized Chicago's motto: "Make no small plans." Over 250 attended, representing Chicago's business, academic, philanthropic, and international communities, involving a wide diversity of interests and initiatives in the Czech Republic.

Proceeds from the Gala will support the rebuilding of the Woodrow Wilson Monument in Prague, which was destroyed by the German occupiers in 1941.

In presenting the Civil Society Vision award, AFoCR Chairman Fred Malek, who chaired the event, cited Mayor Daley's visionary leadership and accomplishments to solidify Chicago's relationship with the city of Prague, which shares a Sister City relationship with Chicago. Chairman Malek emphasized that with the support received at the Gala, "Wilson will return to Prague."

The Mayor in his remarks noted the contributions of the Czech community to the city of Chicago. He cited hard working immigrants and their shared values of work and family that helped forge the development of the City. Not only work and family values but dedication to education characterized the early citizens. That devotion to education continues to this day. He emphasized that as globalization accelerates, quality education will give Chicago businesses the competitive edge to survive and thrive and

meet the competitive forces that abound in a world economy.

AFoCR President Tom Dine, serving as Master of Ceremonies, noted that the Gala also commemorated the 20th Anniversary of the Velvet Revolution that led to a free and democratic Czech Republic. Also noted was that Mayor Daley is celebrating his 20th year as Mayor of Chicago. During the evening, Mr. Dine introduced two famous past recipients of the Civil Society Vision Award: retired Navy Captain James Lovell of the Apollo 13 flight and retired Navy Captain Gene Cernan of Apollo 17, who is the last man to walk on the face of the moon. These two American heroes, both of Czech descent, were warmly acknowledged by the guests.

A dramatic interlude in the program was the performance by Amanda Majewski of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago, who sang the aria "Song to the Moon" from Antonín Dvořák's opera "Rusalka." The audience was captivated by her artistic skill, and as remarked by one attendee, the piece was not only beautifully sung, but sung in perfect Czech. Ms. Majewski was accompanied by Alan Darling at the piano.

Other highlights of the event included videotaped remarks by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who was born in Czechoslovakia. Czech Ambassador Petr Kolář addressed the guests in person and introduced videotaped greetings from President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus, who was the honorary Co-Chair of the event. Also present was Marek Skolil, Consul General of the Czech Republic in Chicago. Music was provided by the Judy Vessely Orchestra .

The evening ended with a report on the progress of the Woodrow Wilson Monument Project by Robert Doubek, who directs the project for AFoCR. The report concluded with the showing of film footage of the monument's 1928 dedication ceremony in Prague that was recently discovered in the Czech National Film Archives in Prague. After seeing the footage, Mayor Daley pronounced himself ready to attend the upcoming dedication of the rebuilt monument in Prague.

As the guests retired for the evening, coffee and authentic Czech kolačky were offered and enjoyed.



Downtown Chicago -Photo by Lillis Werder

Letter From the President

by **Thomas A. Dine,**
President,
American Friends
of the Czech Republic



Dear Friends of the Czech Republic,

The year 2009 has been heralded as historically important, particularly because of a new American President and the celebration of 20 years of freedom and democracy in Central Europe following the end of cruel, strong-armed communist rule. Indeed, the "Velvet Revolution," referring to the events in Czechoslovakia, has come to mean worldwide "a kind of peaceful, negotiated regime change, including elements of mass protest social mobilization and nonviolent action," as writes noted European intellectual Timothy Garton Ash. But as 2010 commences, a new fear grows - of further widespread economic failure and continuing wars, including Russian aggression toward small states and Iranian crackdowns. Amidst this global tumult and shouting, AFoCR, as a mission-driven organization, has advanced its purposes in both the United States and the Czech Republic. Looking back, it's been a good year, but a critical year lies ahead.

AFoCR has focused on projects to enhance the relationship between the peoples of our countries. The first and foremost effort has been to rebuild the monument of WWI President Woodrow Wilson in the center of Prague. This project is the counterpoint to the Memorial to Czechoslovak President Tomáš G. Masaryk that now graces the lovely diplomatic neighborhood of Embassy Row in Washington, DC. When finished, the Wilson Monument will stand across from Prague's Main Railroad Station, where it once stood from 1928 to 1941. Standing by the busy east-west thoroughfare named Wilsonova Street, it will again rise and symbolize the enduring Czech-U.S. friendship. In fact, no two pieces of art more aptly symbolize the universal themes of freedom and democracy.

The original Wilson Monument was resented by the Germans, especially the President's noble partnership with Masaryk at the Versailles Peace Conference establishing a free and independent state of Czechoslovakia. The occupying Nazis tore down the bronze figure of Wilson, melting it for ammunition. The Communists abhorred the memory of Wilson's belief in a country based on the sovereignty of the people, representative government, and the rule of law. They tried to eradicate Wilson's memory and his place of honor in the Czechoslovak capital city by eliminating the last vestige of the Monument, the marker that declared to the world where the monument to democracy once rose. The symbol is returning thanks to joint efforts of good citizens of these two truly democratic societies.

To achieve this artistic and political goal, AFoCR has selected a leading sculptor team, negotiated with the

mayors and authorities of City Hall and Prague 1 to return President Wilson to his original place in the Golden City of Central Europe. To bring back the monument, AFoCR has engaged in an intensive fundraising effort, in particular in the United States. In November 2008, a gala dinner was held in Houston, Texas, with the patronage of former President and Mrs. George H.W. Bush and Houston's popular mayor Bill White. It honored the two U.S. astronauts of Czech heritage, Gene Cernan and Jim Lovell. A substantial sum was raised to build the Wilson Monument. In November 2009, as reported on page one of this Newsletter, a gala dinner held in Chicago, Illinois, honored Mayor Richard Daley and his efforts to forge close ties between the cities of Chicago and Prague. Again substantial funds were raised. Fundraising in our current economic environment is not easy to say the least, but both communities rose to the occasion, both events being successes in spirit and generosity.

To successfully achieve the important goal of rebuilding the Wilson Monument and see it to its planned conclusion in 2011, AFoCR needs to raise additional funds. The AFoCR board of directors at its November annual meeting approved a resolution that the next AFoCR Award Gala should be held in New York City in 2010. A date and venue will be announced as soon as possible.

The second high priority project that AFoCR is undertaking and must pursue more vigorously, is to increase the number of people participating in our good works to enhance and promote the U.S. – Czech relationship. We wish to extend our membership to include not only those American citizens of Czech origins but people who have an interest in the Czech Republic for various reasons. They may have studied there; they may admire its history as well as sophisticated culture; and they may have investment and commercial ties. All these form a pool of natural supporters of our mission and to lead us into the future.

Yes, 2009 was a big, busy year, but now we need to focus on 2010 where we will determine the future of AFoCR and its impact on the ongoing relationship that binds our two peoples together.



*AFoCR President Tom Dine Congratulates
Mayor Richard Daley at the Chicago Gala*

Wilson Monument Project Update

Sculpting of Clay Model Nears Completion Height of Pedestal Tested



*Clay Model Nears Completion
November, 2009*



Sculptors Test Height of Pedestal

Since its selection by AFoCR in February 2009, the sculptor team recreating the statue of Woodrow Wilson has made impressive progress. The team members, Michal Blažek, Václav Frýdecký, and Daniel Talavera, all of whom are Czechs, have demonstrated great professionalism, artistry, and dedication, and the results are clearly evident. Photos taken in mid-November (see above) reveal that the full-size clay model has taken full form, down to the detailed shape of the fingers. The sculptor team estimates that it will finish the model in clay by the end of this year. The next step will be the plaster rendition of the statue, which may be completed by March 2010.

Last spring, in order to advance the work, the sculptors had affixed a temporary head to the clay model. The gypsum head was not detailed but was in the correct size in order to serve as a reference point for the modeling of the overall proportions of the body of the statue. At the same time, in the Lapidarium of the Czech National Museum, the sculptors were creating a detailed clay model of the head of the original plaster bust of the Wilson statue, working with the original and the model placed side by side in the same room. An important step happened in October when the temporary gypsum head was replaced with the detailed clay model of the head.

While the sculptors were working on the statue, the project's architects focused on the design of the Monument's base and pedestal. The essential factor involving the pedestal is the height at which the statue will stand above ground level. Because of the importance of this factor to the overall design of the monument and its location, AFoCR decided to do an actual on-site test, involving a full-size mock up of the statue. This test is similar to one performed in 1928 by the original sculptor, Albin Polášek, who made a full-size cut out of the statue on heavy cardboard and had it lifted up and down.

For the test of the rebuilt monument, AFoCR commissioned Prague's Barrandov Film Studios to make a full-size three-dimensional model of the statue out of Styrofoam. The test took place on September 7, 2009, and the Styrofoam model was brought to Vrchlický Park, along with an industrial-size fork lift truck. The model, which could be lifted by four men, was placed on the forks and belted secure. To simulate the pedestal itself, a long ribbon of plastic fabric, in the approximate width of the pedestal, was then secured to the base of the model. With a professional photographer documenting from several views at each juncture, the model was moved to two alternate locations and lifted to heights of 1.5, 2.5, 3.5, and 4.5 meters.

The event was widely covered by the Czech media and was attended by the Mayor and several council members of Prague 1. Robert Doubek, who directs the Woodrow Wilson Monument project for AFoCR, traveled to Prague to witness and assist with the testing of the pedestal height. The project architects are expected to complete the overall design and submit it for approval to Prague 1 by the end of the year.

AFoCR Honors Cerny at Annual Board Meeting



From left: Ambassador Kolář, Milton Cerny, Fred Malek, Tom Dine -Photo by Lillis Werder

Milton Cerny, a founder of AFoCR, was honored at the annual Board of Directors meeting in November. Mr. Cerny was named a Director Emeritus, and a certificate was presented by AFoCR President Tom Dine with Chairman Fred Malek and His Excellency Peter Kolář sharing in the presentation. The honor recognizes Mr. Cerny's achievements in building the AFoCR organization and spearheading the effort to build the Masaryk Memorial.

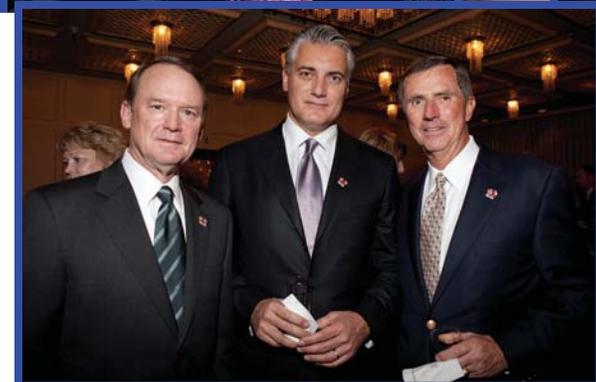
The meeting was held in Chicago, the location of the 2009 Gala Award Dinner honoring Mayor Richard Daley. At the annual meeting, the Board elected directors to serve for the coming year and appointed Joseph Balaz to the Executive Committee. Robert Doubek reported substantial progress on the Wilson Monument's statue and estimated that the dedication ceremony could take place as early as 2011.

Also attending the meeting as guests of the Chairman were Hana Callaghan of Philadelphia, Kristyna Driehaus of Chicago and Fritz Duda of Houston.

Chicago Gala

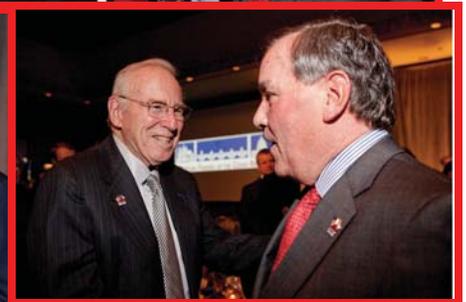
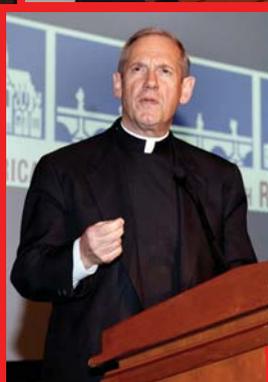
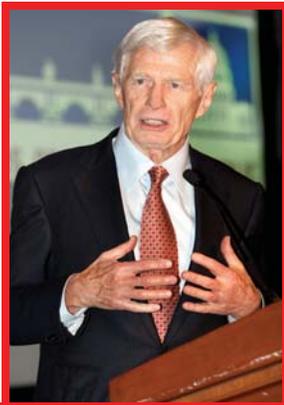
Photos by: Lillis Werder

RECEPTION



PROGRAM

Photos by: Lillis Werder and Steve Becker



AFoCR Mourns the Passing of Julian M. Niemczyk



AFoCR Advisor Julian M. Niemczyk
Photo credit: www.PTPI.org

AFoCR mourns the passing of a friend and distinguished Advisor, Julian M. Niemczyk, retired U.S. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia from 1986 to 1989, and Air Force Colonel. AFoCR knew him fondly as "Jay". Julian Martin Niemczyk, 89, of Annandale, VA, died at Inova Fairfax Hospital on September 16, 2009. He began his political career in the early 1970's with the Republican National Committee and led a colorful military career with various assignments in the OSS, NSA, and the CIA. His military decorations included the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, and the Defense Commendation Medal. Survivors include his wife of 63 years, Margaret McCann Niemczyk of Annandale. AFoCR expresses deepest sympathy to his family as he will be sorely missed.

AFoCR Distributes Over 6000 Copies of Nicholas Winton's "Lottery of Life"

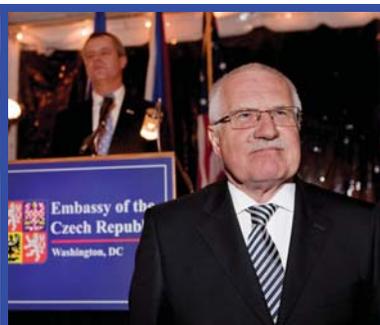


Please Help AFoCR Find More Worthy Recipients for Book

Since the initial publication of Sir Nicholas Winton's Book, "Lottery of Life", over 6000 copies have been distributed to high schools, colleges, churches and synagogues by AFoCR. AFoCR is currently seeking additional prospects as recipients for this very meaningful book. The books are free of charge to recipients except for the cost of shipping. If you know of any potential organizations who would benefit from this unique book, please contact Peter Rafaeli by phone at 215-646-777 or email him at czconsulphl@gmail.com. We need your help to find more worthy recipients.

National Day 11/4/09 - Celebration at the Czech Embassy President Klaus Visits

- Photos by Lillis Werder and Michael Rokos



National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library to be Lifted, Moved and Expanded



Ambassador Kolář tours the damaged NCSML, October 2008. From left: NCSML Board Chair Gary Rozek, President/CEO Gail Naughton, Mrs. Jaroslava Kolarova, and Press Secretary Daniel Novy

The flood-damaged National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library will be moved across the street, elevated and expanded to three times its current size under a plan recently announced by museum officials in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. “We are very excited about this creative solution to save our iconic building for its original use and protect it from future flooding,” said President/CEO Gail Naughton. “It is also a very cost-effective decision.”

The iconic 16,500 square foot structure now located on the banks of the Cedar River will be transported in one piece to land across the street and elevated three feet above the record 2008 flood. All or most of the building will sit atop garage parking. The cost of moving the 15-year-old building is estimated at \$740,000 and will likely take place in the latter half of 2010. With construction beginning in 2011, the building will be incorporated into a new 60,000 square-foot structure expected to open in 2012. Architectural design work will begin soon.

“One of the complicating factors in our rebuilding has been the need to expand our facilities that already existed before the flood,” said Naughton. “Since opening in 1995, our attendance has more than doubled, our collections have grown exponentially, and our programs have expanded. We have simply outgrown our space.” The flood has been a catalyst for the expansion, but not the cause, say museum officials. The total cost of flood recovery for the NCSML is projected at \$25 million.

While the NCSML is rebuilding its main exhibition center and library, it will operate from the historic Kosek building in nearby Czech Village, where it will feature an original exhibition titled *Rising Above: The Story of a People and the Flood*. The exhibition, a museum store, classroom and administrative offices are scheduled to open in March.

Historic Bohemian Hall Begins New Century

Renovated New York Landmark Becomes Center for Cultural and Arts Activities



Karel Gott Concert in New York From Left: Karel Gott, Tatiana Kucharova, and Joseph Balaz

Bohemian National Hall – a century old historic building on New York’s Upper East Side until 2001 – has begun a second life after a state-funded reconstruction from 2002 to 2008. Owned for many years by the non-profit organization Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association (BBLA), Bohemian Hall is now an asset of the Czech Republic. However, BBLA, led by president Josef Balaz still plays a key role in the life in the building. The foundation which includes many expatriates has launched many cultural events and highly regarded charitable projects in the newly renovated Hall. The renewed home base has lifted the visibility and activities of the BBLA in 2009 to new heights, not only due to the selection of the programs but also to its accomplishments. With this year’s successes came experience and perspective which will guide BBLA’s activities in its second century.

Many BBLA events were directed towards charitable projects, the most successful being “The First Annual Unity Ball”, which brought together the Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association, and the United Nations, which received a share of the proceeds for its 1% Development Fund. Guests of honor included Edyta Slivinska from “Dancing with the Stars” and singers from the musical “Jersey Boys”. The success of this first dance and society event has paved the way for future events of this type.

Being under the same roof also fostered the cooperation between the BBLA, the Czech Center, and the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in New York in hosting many events. It also strengthened the deep ties of Czech people living abroad to their mother country even after decades of life on American soil. Many activities were dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, including many celebrations of the nonviolent movement on November 17th as the highlight of these efforts. President Josef Balaz and his Slovak colleague Eva Jurinova not only played active parts in the event management team but also worked closely to anchor the programs.

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