



# AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Summer, 2008

NEWSLETTER

Volume XIV, Number 2

## AFoCR to Host Annual Gala Event in Houston November 12, 2008 Presidents Bush and Klaus Honorary Co-chairs



*President George H. W. Bush*

*Photo by www.starpulse.com*

*President Václav Klaus*

*Photo by www.radio.cz*

Former U.S. President George H.W. Bush and Czech President Václav Klaus are the honorary co-chairs of the American Friends of the Czech Republic's annual gala dinner that will take place at the JW Marriott Hotel in Houston, Texas on November 12, 2008. The evening's honorees are pioneering American astronauts of Czech heritage, Captains Eugene Cernan and James Lovell, both U.S. Navy (ret.), who will each receive the coveted Civil Society Vision award.

This year's gala dinner will celebrate 20 years of close and strong U.S.-Czech relations, including the flourishing democracy and prosperity in the Czech Republic, and the reconstruction of the Woodrow Wilson Monument in Prague. Financial contributions raised at the event will support architecture and sculpture costs involved in recreating this once bright and graphic reminder of President Wilson's critical role in creating a free, independent, and democratic Czechoslovakia after the First World War. It will also mark the historic relationship between President Wilson and Czechoslovak Liberator Tomáš G. Masaryk.

A significant number of corporations and individuals have already bought tables and tickets for the event. Many places remain open for what is shaping up as a genuine celebration. To reserve your place(s) at AFoCR's annual award dinner, please contact Carrie Eickenroht at (713) 942-1209 or [ceicken@dinipartners.com](mailto:ceicken@dinipartners.com).



Call 1-800-228-9290 to reserve your room now at the JW Marriott in Houston on November 12th. Ask for Event Rate Code PKFO.

*Photo by www.marriott.com*

## National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library Hit by Flood in Cedar Rapids, Iowa AFoCR Establishes Relief Fund



*National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library after devastating flooding in Cedar Rapids*

*Photo by www.ncsml.org*

Record flooding on Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, of the Cedar River in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, at its crest resulted in 15 feet of water inundating the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library. Gail Naughton, NCSML President and CEO explained the destruction, "We were relieved to find our Czech crystal chandelier intact, all 401 pounds and 600 Bohemian crystals". In the aftermath, the staff found over an inch of mud covering the floors plus broken windows and doors, heavy furniture flipped upside down and walls blown out. "The power of the water and current it took to do this kind of damage is unimaginable", added Naughton. Many books and other items within the Museum and Library have suffered serious damage. Before the flooding occurred, the staff removed two semi trucks of artifacts and print material from the museum.

Although the main building has been deemed structurally safe to enter, an architectural and engineering analysis will follow to fully assess the potential damage of the structure. The Library and Museum will remain closed until further notice.

Updates on the status of the Museum are available on their web site at [www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org). AFoCR has dedicated a bank account for the sole purpose of collecting funds to help the NCSML operation to assist renovation and repair. Everyone's support is needed and appreciated. Because AFoCR is legally recognized by the IRS as a charitable organization, contributions to this worthy effort are tax exempt.

Checks should be made out to: **AFoCR-Cedar Rapids NCSML Flood Relief**. Please mail to: **AFoCR-Cedar Rapids, c/o Harleysville National Bank, 1804 North Broad Street, Lansdale PA 19446, USA**. For wiring instructions and other questions, please write to [Philadelphia@honorary.mzv.cz](mailto:Philadelphia@honorary.mzv.cz) or call 215-646-7777.



## Message from AFoCR President Peter Rafaeli

Greetings!

We are pleased to send you our Summer, 2008, AFoCR Newsletter. This issue reports on the expanded range of AFoCR activities. We have many accomplishments to share with you. But first, I want to express some words about the terrible events in Cedar Rapids. The photo in our lead article says it better than words. Let us all join together with a helping hand to restore the beautiful Czech and Slovak Museum and Library and recover the priceless artifacts and records.

### Our Houston Gala:

You may have already heard that we are organizing a festive gala on November 12, 2008, at the JW Marriott Hotel in Houston, TX. We will be honored by the presence of former President George H.W. Bush and his wife Barbara. The goals of the AFoCR Gala in 2008 include honoring two outstanding pioneers of the U.S. space program of Czech heritage – Captains Eugene Cernan and James Lovell, both U.S. Navy (ret.). The second goal is to raise funds to enable us to rebuild the monument to U.S. President Woodrow Wilson at the Prague main railroad station, officially named “Wilson Station”.

### Woodrow Wilson Monument in Prague:

This project, conceived and led by our Bob Doubek, is progressing well. We assembled a team in Prague to help us with design questions, legal matters, public relations issues and the selection of a sculptor. I encourage you to support this Czech/U.S. project financially to help us to unveil the new monument in 2009.

### Visa-free travel for Czechs to the U.S. Coming Soon:

During my recent visit to Prague, I attended a meeting organized by the U.S. Embassy in Prague at the Embassy’s Cultural Center. The meeting participants were U.S. Ambassador Richard Graber, Czech Ambassador to Washington Petr Kolář, and all Czech honorary consuls in the U.S. The guest speaker was Deputy Prime Minister Alexandr Vondra. Many topics were discussed, including Czech-U.S. missile defense, and visa-free travel. As you may recall, AFoCR strongly supported abolishment of the visa requirement for Czech nationals to travel to the U.S. We are pleased to learn that the current expectation on both sides is that by October 28th of this year, Czechs may be able to travel to the U.S. visa-free. What a pleasant turn of events for the 90th anniversary of Czech independence!

We are grateful to those of you who responded to our calls for action to make this happen.

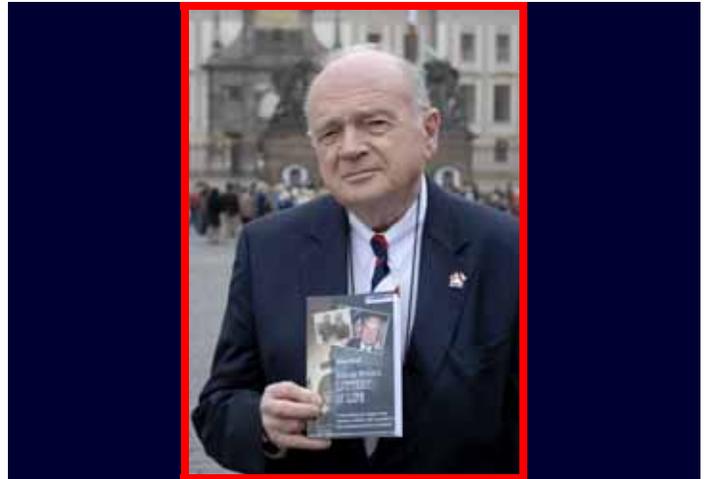
### Nicholas Winton’s Lottery of Life Available Free of Charge

A few years ago, AFoCR established the Nicholas Winton Educational Fund. As part of the project, we made a book which is widely used in Czech schools available to the United States. It is the story of a 29 year-old English stockbroker who came to Prague in late 1938 and saved 669 children from soon-to-be occupied Czechoslo-

vakia by bringing them to England. For 50 years, this man remained silent about his heroic deeds.

To bring the book to the American public, we had to expand the book, translate it, have it professionally edited, and raise the necessary funds to cover the printing and publication of 17,000 copies. We are grateful to the Czech Embassy and the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs for providing us with necessary seed-grant money to accomplish this goal.

The books are now available to educational institutions free of charge, except for the cost of shipping. We would very much appreciate your assistance with finding worthy recipients for this book, as a lengthy storage period is cost prohibitive. The book is a companion to the International Emmy Award winning documentary, *Nicholas Winton – The Power of Good*.



AFoCR President Peter Rafaeli

Photo by Petr Matička

### AFoCR is Expanding Efforts to become a Nationwide Organization:

As one of our first steps toward the “de-Washingtonization” of AFoCR, we established the Leadership Council earlier this year. It now has 16 members from 14 different states.

If you are interested in serving on the Leadership Council please contact me at 215.646.7777 or email me at:

[philadelphia@honorary.mzv.cz](mailto:philadelphia@honorary.mzv.cz).

We are grateful for your ongoing support.

Regards,

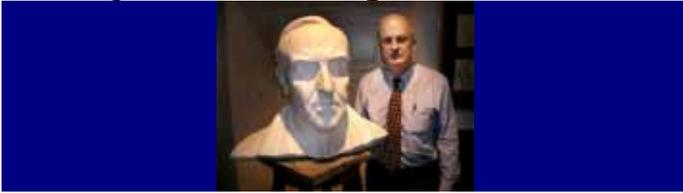
### Educational Programs Available at CCEC

The Center for Czech Education and Culture (CCEC) was founded in Seattle, Washington, to promote cultural and academic exchange between the Czech Republic and the Pacific Northwest. Its educational and scholarship programs provide support and recognition to outstanding academics, and especially to those whose work and ideas will have long-term impact on Czech-related activities. These programs often target interdisciplinary pursuits, where new perspectives emerge from a broad spectrum of ideas and experiences, thus ensuring the production of knowledge and expertise grounded in a diversity of key topics, cultures, and social awareness.

CCEC educational programs are intended to promote the diversification of knowledge and ideas, ensuring that they remain open to, and challenged by, a range of perspectives, backgrounds, and nationalities.

As part of these programs, the CCEC maintains and manages the Jehlik Scholarship Fund, a program designed to support study abroad opportunities at the University of Washington. Scholarship students who have studied in Prague are, in the words of one recipient, “not merely tourists there to take pictures, (but) are interested in (Czech) history and way of life.” The study abroad experience immerses participants in the language, history and culture of the Czech Republic, providing more than just a snapshot

## Woodrow Wilson Monument Project Gaining Momentum



*AFoCR Director Bob Doubek with copy of Wilson bust in Prague-AFoCR photo*

The project to reconstruct the Woodrow Wilson Monument that was torn down by the Nazis in 1941 in Prague is gaining momentum. In addition to its key partners – the City of Prague and the Albin Polasek Foundation – AFoCR has brought aboard key professional consultants in Prague to undertake the next important steps.

As was reported in the Spring newsletter, the original plaster bust of the head of the Wilson statue was found last January in a warehouse of the Czech National Museum in Prague. An AFoCR volunteer was able to access the bust in order to make a fiberglass copy as seen in the above photo. Although the entire plaster model was once kept in the warehouse, all but the bust was destroyed in 1977.

In March, AFoCR signed a contract with the Center of Machine Perception, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Czech Technical University, to utilize 3D digital imaging to develop a virtual model reconstruction of the entire statue based upon photographs and the actual-size plaster bust of the head. The virtual model will determine key dimensions such as the size of hands, distance between the nose and toes, etc. Dr. Jiří Matas is leading this effort.

In April, AFoCR retained Czech architecture and law firms for the Wilson project. The architects, Mikuláš Hulec and Daniel Špička, by coincidence, are currently managing the restoration of the facade of the U.S. Ambassador's residence. H&S services for Wilson include the design of the base and pedestal of the monument, oversight of the processes of sculpting the statue, casting into bronze, and coordination of the project with the City of Prague. The law firm, Vyroubal Krajhanzl Školout, is responsible for ensuring that all activities and contracts for the monument conform to Czech and EU law.

AFoCR Director Robert Doubek, the Project Leader, visited Prague in mid-May and met with the AFoCR consultants, the responsible city officials, and U.S. Ambassador Richard Graber. During the trip, it was decided to issue a tender (request for proposals) for sculptors to reconstruct the statue. Proposals will be due on July 31.

of the country, or life in Prague.

Another component of the educational programs at the CCEC is the development of a permanent endowment for Czech studies at the University of Washington. This endowment is designed to provide academic support for the academic year, complementing the study abroad support opportunity of the Jehlik Scholarship Fund. Awards from the Endowment will be based on merit and will be available to scholars pursuing Czech studies.

Additionally, the CCEC is working with Charles University in Prague and the University of Washington to help develop and facilitate educational exchange programs for Czech

## AFoCR Co-sponsors Energy Forum in Washington

A Central European Energy Forum was held in Washington in May at the Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS). Forum panelists included experts in energy policy and senior diplomats from the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, and the United States. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy, Sanctions and Commodities Douglas Hengel opened the Forum and moderated the discussions. Deputy Chief of Mission Jaroslav Kurfürst represented the Embassy of the Czech Republic.

The discussion focused on the cost and supply of energy in Europe, in general, and the special situations in Central and Eastern Europe, which is supplied in part by sources in Eastern Europe, particularly the Russian Federation. Although cost is a significant concern for Central European countries, a more pressing concern to energy security is the potential for disruptions in the supply. As a result, there is an effort to diversify energy sources as well as suppliers.

Hungary noted it is proceeding with a liquefied natural gas terminal project which will provide diversity in supply and potential competitive pricing for gas from existing pipelines. The Polish representative noted that it presently does not have nuclear energy plants. However, it is currently cooperating on a nuclear project with neighboring Lithuania.



*Mr. Wojciech Ponikiewski, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (right) and Mr. Vaclav Bartuska, Ambassador-at-Large for Energy -Security (left) AFoCR Photo*

students interested in studying in the United States, with the intention of being able to provide similar financial and scholarship support to deserving students. For more information contact Wayne Jehlik at [waynej@ccec-seattle.org](mailto:waynej@ccec-seattle.org).



*Study abroad students at the CCEC with Czech author Ivan Klima*

*Photo by CCEC*

## President Klaus Visits Washington in May

Czech President Václav Klaus traveled to Washington in May for a brief set of working meetings. During his trip, the President introduced the newly published English version of his book, “*Blue Planet in Green Shackles - What Is Endangered: Climate or Freedom?*”

The first stop on the visit was the National Press Club in Washington, DC, where he delivered an address at the Distinguished Speakers’ Luncheon outlining his views on global climate change. The speech aired on the C-SPAN cable news network. President Klaus later attended a reception hosted by Ambassador Kolář at the Czech Embassy. While there, AFoCR leaders Peter Rafaeli and Phil Kasik met with President Klaus to update him on the Wilson Monument project.

President Klaus was honored with a prestigious annual award at the Competitive Enterprise Institute’s (CEI’s) 2008 Annual Dinner. There, he delivered the keynote address on his views on the current-day relevance of a 19th century economist (J. Schumpeter) who predicted the fall of capitalism. In the address, President Klaus shared his views regarding his opinion that some of the concerns about global climate changes are overstated, and how it would be better to allow the free market to operate without hindering its ability to innovate solutions.

While in Washington, President Klaus met with several senior government officials, including Vice President Cheney and Chairman of the US Federal Reserve Ben Bernanke. He also met with leaders of the Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute, Brookings Institution, CATO Institute and representatives of various media organizations. President Klaus also made a brief sightseeing visit to Mount Vernon.



*AFoCR Director Phil Kasik, President Václav Klaus, AFoCR President Peter Rafaeli, Czech Embassy on May 27, 2008- Photo by Lillis Werder*

## Czech-born Architect Jiří Boudník Recognized for 9/11 Work

Czech-born Architect Jiří Boudník recalls that unforgettable morning in New York City on September 11, 2001, with sunlight streaming over the Hudson River, a brilliant azure sky dominating above. From where he stood across from the Brooklyn Bridge, Boudník could clearly see the luminous towers of the World Trade Center looming like giants guarding a treasure. His sense of satisfaction that

fateful morning was cut short, however, as he realized the terror that was suddenly unfolding before his eyes.

The morning after the attacks, Boudník was one of the first to arrive at the core of devastation. He was quick to offer his expertise in the construction of tall buildings. Boudník remembers the horrific scene as ghastly and appalling: the air, thick with dust and debris, the omnipresent blaze of lights from fire engines and police cars, and the vast group of rescue workers as they seemed to float through the haze searching for victims. The silence was broken only by the eerie sound of un-answered cell phones. “It was all dead,” Boudník recalls. “Not even birds were flying.”

Boudník drew from his expertise and experience to construct a three-dimensional chipboard model of Ground Zero in order to give the rescue workers a visual orientation of the destruction. From Boudník’s model, rescuers could determine the locations of offices, elevator shafts, and other areas where victims might still be alive. Boudník toiled alongside cadaver dogs, climbing through the ruins, searching for any sign of life.

Boudník later led a team of architectural students from Cooper Union, where he had graduated in 1997, in creating a plexiglas model detailing the subterranean levels of the towers. Boudník, along with two others, successfully completed the first computerized 3-D model of Ground Zero, as well as a 4-D computer model, the most accurate and multidimensional model of the site in existence.

A documentary called “*Unsung Heros*,” was aired on American television on the first anniversary of the attacks, recognizing the extraordinary contributions of two volunteers. Boudník was one of them. Soon thereafter, the New York Czech Center sponsored a collection of Boudník’s photographs captured during rescue efforts at the WTC site. Czech President Václav Havel attended the exhibition at St. Paul’s Chapel, where he presented a medal of honor to Mayor Rudolf Guliani on behalf of the Czech Republic. Boudník happily recalls shaking hands with President Havel. “I was so happy to meet him. That was my reward,” he explained.

Boudník lives in New York City, where he designs high-rise residential buildings for an architectural firm. He loves living in the city. He feels that his experiences and presentations of Ground Zero help foster ties between the Czech Republic and the U.S. As Boudník describes, “They welcomed me with open arms, so I want to do something good for the U.S. I want to show that the U.S. and the Czech people are united.”

### Now an AFoCR Advisor

Boudník is continuing to strengthen ties between the U.S. and the Czech Republic in his current role as AFoCR Advisor. He has applied his architectural and project coordination skills in support of the Woodrow Wilson Monument project.



AFoCR Advisor Jiří Boudník

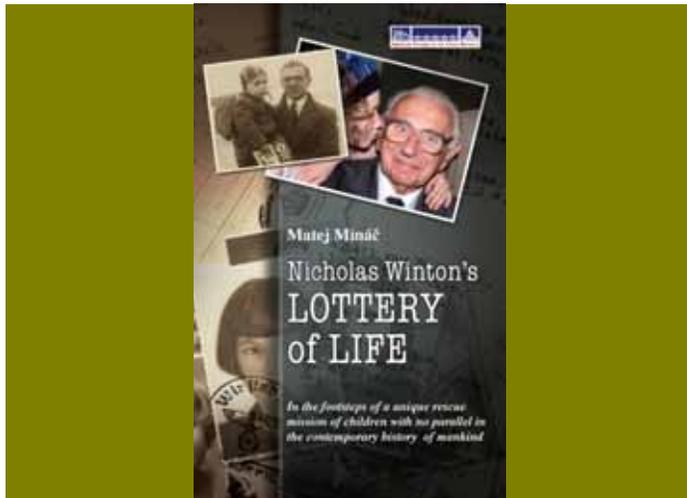
Photo by [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

# Klaus Visits Washington

*Photos by Lillis Werder and Mary Fetzko*



## Nicholas Winton's Lottery of Life Book Now in U.S.



Book Cover Photo by AFoCR

American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR) is now distributing free of charge, copies of the U.S. edition of Matej Minac's *Nicholas Winton's Lottery of Life*, translated and expanded by Peter A. Rafaeli.

As part of the Nicholas Winton Educational Project the availability of the first English language edition of *Nicholas Winton's Lottery of Life* is now a reality. This 320 page book was originally published in Czech for use in schools in the Czech Republic, where it is distributed free of charge to students in high schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions. A German language edition, for use in German speaking countries, was also published several years ago.

AFoCR is accepting orders from U.S. educational institutions. The books will be donated by AFoCR to pre-approved educational entities free of charge, except for the cost of shipping from Michigan. A nationwide distribution plan is envisioned. Recipients need only commit by written agreement that the books will not be sold, and that their use will be for the sole purpose of education in the areas of history, political science, and Holocaust education. AFoCR will consider schools, colleges, universities, churches and synagogues to be approved recipients for donated books. AFoCR reserves the right to limit quantities shipped to any approved recipient institution in order to ensure nationwide reach.

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For information please contact Peter A. Rafaeli at [Philadelphia@honorary.mzv.cz](mailto:Philadelphia@honorary.mzv.cz) or call 215.646.7777.

Voluntary tax deductible contributions will be gratefully accepted. Checks should be made out to "AFoCR – Nicholas Winton Educational Project" and mailed to:

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1804 North Broad Street  
Lansdale, PA 19446 USA

## AFoCR Mourns Passing of Architect Jan Hird Pokorný

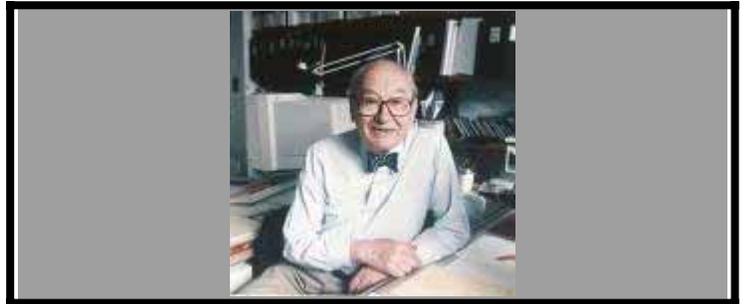


Photo by [www.e-architekt.cz](http://www.e-architekt.cz)

The death of Jan Hird Pokorný is being mourned by many, but especially at AFoCR where he was a long-time, trusted advisor. Mr. Pokorný was a prominent Czech-born New York architect who designed the pedestal for the Masaryk Memorial in Washington.

Born in Brno in 1914, Mr. Pokorný emigrated to the U.S. in 1939 and began his remarkable career as an architect in his adopted country. His many achievements were recognized in 2005 when he received a lifetime achievement award from the Czech Union of Architects in Prague. Radio Prague called him a living legend. From 1973 to 1977, Mr. Pokorný served on the Art Commission of the City of New York, a review board for permanent works to be placed on city property.

In more recent times, Mr. Pokorný worked on the renovation of historic Bohemian Hall in New York's historic Czech neighborhood. He then undertook the challenge to relocate sculptor Ivan Mestrovic's rendering of Antonín Dvořák from relative obscurity on the roof of New York's Avery Fisher Hall to its present home in Stuyvesant Square Park on a pedestal of green granite of his own design. Mr. Pokorný took his Czech heritage seriously, so it is not surprising that he willingly undertook the Masaryk Memorial project in Washington where it now stands for the ages as a beautiful reminder of his genius.



Masaryk Memorial Architect Jan Hird Pokorný Receives AFoCR Award in Ceremony at the Czech Embassy in 2004  
Photo by AFoCR

# Czech Artist David Černý's *Metalmorphosis* Turning Heads in Charlotte, NC



After months of anticipation, David Černý's *Metalmorphosis* was unveiled in September, 2007 at a ceremony celebrating the grand opening of American Asset Corporation's 3701 Whitehall Corporate Center in Charlotte, NC. The internationally renowned Czech artist was commissioned by Count Riprand Arco, founder and chairman of AAC, to create a one-of-a-kind sculpture for his 200-acre office park.

David Černý says of *Metalmorphosis*, his first permanent public installation in the United States, "I was thinking about doing something as a centerpiece. I knew I wanted to employ water from the beginning." The sculpture, which stands 25 feet tall and fabricated from approximately 14 tons of stainless steel, is in the shape of a human head with water flowing from its mouth into a large fountain at its base. The structure is comprised of seven separate layers that rotate intermittently, dissecting the sculpture's features. Custom-written programs control motors embedded within the structure to orchestrate choreographed sequences. This movement is controlled via the internet by Černý himself, and represents a continuation of his work that incorporates mechanical engineering and computers as an integral part of the design.

Live streaming video of the sculpture in motion is available for viewing online at [www.metalmorphosis.tv](http://www.metalmorphosis.tv).



Czech Artist David Černý's *Metalmorphosis* sculpture in Charlotte, NC with horizontally- moving stainless-steel plates which form and re-form a giant metal head.

*Photo by radio.cz*

# AFoCR Web Site Gets Facelift

This spring, the new AFoCR web site, [www.afocr.org](http://www.afocr.org) was unveiled on the internet. The site has been extensively updated and improved—and made more visually appealing. The news has been reorganized and expanded, and projects are shown on their own pages. Improved technology will make it work even better with your computer.

The "Czech Links" guide to useful sites and information sources has been updated and categorized for improved user friendliness. As always, the latest AFoCR newsletter is online, and past issues remain available and can be downloaded. There is also easy access to the names on the Masaryk Memorial Wall of Honor and the Book of Honor—the same one that is kept at the Embassy of the Czech Republic.

Please "Czech" it out and let us know if there is anything else you'd like to see in your AFoCR web site.



Sample pages from updated AFoCR web site

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*Photo by Lillis Werder*

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