



# AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Fall 2006

Newsletter

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## New U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic

The U.S. Embassy in Prague has experienced some changes. Ambassador William Cabaniss has completed his tour of duty, and has been replaced by Richard Graber. Ambassador Graber began his tour of duty in late September.



Ambassador Graber was a director, President and CEO of a law firm in Milwaukee, WI, Reinhart Boerner VanDeuren. He has been active in the Republican Party in Wisconsin, serving as chairman since 1999. He has also been a member of the Greater Milwaukee Committee, a Trustee of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee and Co-Chairman of the Alexis de Toqueville Society for the United Way. Ambassador Graber previously served on the Board of Trustees of the Medical College of Wisconsin and is a past President of the Milwaukee North Shore Rotary Club.

Ambassador Graber has appeared on the Larry King Show and has been a regular commentator on CNN. He is a member of the State Bar of Wisconsin. His undergraduate degree is from Duke University and his law degree is from Boston University. The Ambassador is married and has two teenaged sons. His younger son will attend school in the Czech Republic while his older son is a college student in the U.S.

Ambassador and Mrs. Cabaniss are returning to Alabama this fall. One of Ambassador Cabaniss's major efforts upon his return to the U.S. will be with a major international festival that will take place in Birmingham, Alabama and will feature events and celebrations involving the Czech Republic. President Vaclav Klaus is expected to be one of the visitors to Birmingham for the Birmingham International Festival that will run from fall 2006 until the spring 2007 and spotlights the Czech Republic.



Both Ambassador Cabaniss and Ambassador Graber serve as Members of the Advisory Board of the American Friends of the Czech Republic.

## AFoCR Takes on the Visa Waiver Issue

Back in the days of the Cold War it was of course necessary for citizens of Czechoslovakia and other Iron Curtain countries to obtain visas for travel to the U.S. It was also necessary for U.S. citizens to obtain a visa if they wished to travel to Czechoslovakia. I remember as a child hearing of family and friends wanting to travel to visit relatives in Czechoslovakia having difficulties in obtaining a visa. It was frustrating and challenging.

In 1989, things began to change along the Iron Curtain. The Berlin Wall fell and beginning on 17 November 1989 the people of Czechoslovakia made it known that they had enough of the totalitarian communist regime and it was time for a change. The Velvet Revolution had begun. This was the first revolution in the history of the world led by artists, intellectuals and students.

In the next few years many changes would come to Czechoslovakia. On January 1, 1993 the country peacefully separated into two nations, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. The Czech Republic would become even more of an ally to the U.S. by joining NATO in 1999. The Czech Republic had promptly reacted to the 9/11 attacks and pledged its support to the U.S. in the War on Terrorism. In March of 2002, the Castle Guard and Czech Police Orchestra from Prague gave a benefit concert at New York's Carnegie Hall for the New York City Police and Fire Department. This was only country in the world to make such a gesture to the people of New York and the U.S. The Czech Republic is eager to work with the U.S. as a strong ally.

These days, an American going to the Czech Republic does not need a visa to enter. Czechs wishing to come to the US do need a visa to come to the U.S. It is costly and cumbersome for Czechs to obtain a U.S. visa. This is a major diplomatic problem for the U.S. in dealing with a country and people who are our allies. It creates problems doing business, tourism, education and cultural affairs. In short all of the areas that are of concern to the American Friends of the Czech Republic.

AFoCR would like to see the Czech Republic included in the government's Visa Waiver Program which allows citizens of countries that meet certain criteria to enter the U.S. without a visa. On our website, [www.afocr.org](http://www.afocr.org), you will find information about the Visa Waiver Program and information about how you as an American citizen can contact your Congressman or Senators to make your feelings known about this issue. It is important that you as an American let your elected representatives know how you feel, whether you are a supporter the inclusion of the Czech Republic in the Visa Waiver Program or not.

Michael G. Rokos,  
President, AFoCR

**President George W. Bush Honors Sir Nicholas Winton**  
**The Power of Good Educational Project**

In late 1938 Nicholas Winton, then a 29 year-old stockbroker in London, received a call from his friend who was visiting Prague. The friend suggested to Winton that they cancel their annual Christmas time skiing trip to Switzerland. He urged Winton to come to Prague immediately because a significant number of children is at risk because of the imminent Nazi threat to Czechoslovakia. Winton did not hesitate. He cancelled his Swiss vacation and without hesitation landed in Prague. Here he embarked on a rescue mission which resulted in the actual saving 669 children by bringing them all to England. Many of them live now in the United States. The Winton rescue mission was a secret for 50 years. Even his own wife, whom he married after his return from Prague, was totally unaware of the mission.

Matej Mináč is a young cinematographer. He is a director, writer and producer. In the late 1990s he heard about the Winton rescue mission. He went on an extensive research hunt with very little luck until he found an autobiography by Vera Gissing, one of the „Winton children“. Mrs. Gissing was trying to find out who her rescuer was. Once Matej found the book he first created a full length movie called „All My Loved Ones“ which was followed by a marvelous documentary titled „Nicholas Winton – The Power of Good“. On November 22, 2002 this documentary won an international Emmy Award as best foreign documentary. The following day AFoCR arranged for a premiere showing to students, faculty and others at Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA. We are especially grateful to Dr. Ervin Rokke, former President of Moravian, his Special assistant Mike Seidl and Prof. Anne D. Dutlinger for their tremendous support with the arrangements made to show the film at Moravian. The showing was coupled with a visit to Moravian by the creators of the film, Messrs. Matej Mináč, Patrik Pašš and their spouses. The film was followed by his book „Nicholas Winton – The Lottery of Life“ first published in Czech and subsequently translated into German. The documentary and the book are the core of the educational fund aimed senior high and college students under the auspices of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, H.E. Dr. Cyril Svoboda. Although AFoCR was active in supporting promotion of the film in U.S. schools and colleges. About 18 months ago we were approached by Mr. Mináč who asked us to explore the possibilities of publishing a U.S. edition of the book and thus bringing the Nicholas Winton Educational Project to the U.S. One of our Board Members translated the book into English free of charge. The text was edited free of charge by Dr. Curtis Keim, Dean of faculty at Moravian College. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs approved an AFoCR grant request to cover partial funding of U.S. publication of the book titled „Nicholas Winton – The Lottery of Life“. The expected publication target date is Winter 2006/Spring 2007. This individual also pursued an effort to have Sir Nicholas Winton recog-

nized by the United States. We are delighted to be able to tell you the President George W. Bush sent a personal letter to Sir Nicholas Winton honoring him for rescuing 669 Czechoslovak children in 1939.

The Chuck & Rita Gelman Educational Foundation produced an educational kit which includes a study guide and the documentary DVD.

To purchase *Nicholas Winton – The Power of Good*, please email your contact information to: powerofgood@chuckgelman.com or call 734-913-5819 and ask for Tam-mee (x10).

AFoCR is offering showing of “Nicholas Winton – The Power of Good” under the following conditions:  
 Introduction of the film and Q & A session at the conclusion of the screening by Peter A. Rafaeli – no charge.  
 Organizer – no set fees, just voluntary tax deductible contribution to “AFoCR – Nicholas Winton Educational Project”.  
 Audience – no admission charge just voluntary tax deductible contribution to “AFoCR – Nicholas Winton Educational Project”.  
 Travel expenses for Peter Rafaeli, if venue is located up to 200 miles from Philadelphia – no charge. Over 200 miles from Philadelphia – organizer to cover travel expense.

Questions regarding this project, including your ability to make a tax deductible donation to this project can be directed to our Vice President, Peter A. Rafaeli by phone to 215.646.7777 or by e-mail to cz.consul.phl@juno.com



*AFoCR oversees maintenance and restoration on the T.G. Masaryk Memorial in northwest, Washington. The monument is at the corner of Massachusetts Ave and 22nd St. NW in our nations capital*



## Temelin Station--Safe, Reliable Power for the Czech Economy

Nuclear power is an essential part of Czech electric power generation. There are now two nuclear generating plants in the Czech Republic, Dukovany Station in Moravia and Temelin.



With 2,000 MW of installed capacity, Temelin generates over 40% of the power produced by CEZ and is the largest power resource in the Czech Republic. Temelin is situated about 24 km from České Budějovice, in South Bohemia and generates power using two Russian-designed pressurized-water reactors. AFoCR director Phil Kasik visited the Temelin Power Station during a July visit to the CR.

Construction of Temelin began in 1987 with an original objective of 4 units. After November 1989, it was decided to reduce the number of production units to two. In July 2000 after some significant improvements in the control system and nuclear fuel, the reactor was loaded with nuclear fuel and in December 2000, the plant began operation. After overcoming a short period of startup problems, the plant became a reliable contributor to the nation's economy.

Temelin is owned and operated by CEZ the Czech utility. CEZ recognized early-on the importance of educating the population on the nuclear power and the contribution of nuclear generation to the economy. To do this they developed a visitor information center at a nearby reconstructed castle Vysoký Hrádek. The center has excellent multi-media programs that are well-attended by young people from across the country. Other visitors can attend by appointment. In the center is an exhibit hall equipped with museum-grade interactive displays. The displays describe the plant and how it operates. The utility's efforts are helping to educate the Czech people on the important role of nuclear power in safely generating a large part of the nation's energy.

for further information. The original sculpture was by the noted Czech sculptor Albin Polasek and showed a larger than life Wilson atop a tall pedestal. The statue and memorial contributed to remind people of the important role that Wilson and the US played in the foundation of Czechoslovakia after World War I. The preliminary conversations now underway include the US Embassy in Prague, the Czech Embassy in Washington, the Polasek Museum in Florida, the City of Prague as well as AFoCR

## Seventh Annual Lecture

On Monday, 13 November 2006, the seventh Annual Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture will take place at the Woodrow Wilson Center in the Ronald Regan Building on Pennsylvania Avenue. This lecture series is jointly sponsored



by the American Friends of the Czech Republic and the Friends of Slovakia in conjunction with both Embassies. This year's lecture, which begins at 2 o'clock, will feature former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Ivan Miklos from Slovakia. A reception will follow. From the AFoCR side, this lecture series honors AFoCR founder Thomas Gibian. Past speakers at the series have included Czech President Vaclav Klaus, Ambassador Martin Palous, Madeline Albright and others. For information, call 202-691-4000.

## Possible New Project

Following World War I and the creation of Czechoslovakia, the main railroad station in Prague was named for US President Woodrow Wilson. One of the main streets near the station was named Wilsonova, and in the 1920's a statue of the American President was unveiled near the station. The Nazi regime did not appreciate the statue, so it was destroyed during the war, even though it was a significant piece of sculpture. AFoCR has begun to explore the possibility of recreating and replacing the statue at the station which is about to undergo major renovation and restoration work. Watch the newsletter

AFoCR is updating its mailing list. Please take the time to e-mail your name, address and any corrections to [afocr@afocr.org](mailto:afocr@afocr.org). If you do not have e-mail, you can mail your information to our Washington address. In addition if you have friends or family members that would like to be added please pass on their information as well.

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