



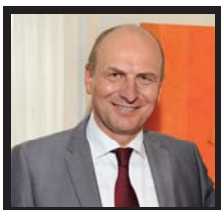
AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Summer, 2011

NEWSLETTER

Volume XVII, Number 2

Ambassador Gandalovič Arrives



*Ambassador
Petr
Gandalovič*

The Czech Embassy buzzed with excitement last month as Ambassador and Mrs. Petr Gandalovič arrived in Washington. The Ambassador officially assumed his diplomatic post on May 23 when he presented his credentials at the Department of State. No stranger to the United States, Ambassador Gandalovič served as Consul General in New York from 1997 to 2002. He was a frequent visitor to Washington then and kept in touch with AFoCR activities and projects, including attending the dedication of the Masaryk Memorial.

A graduate of Charles University in Mathematics and Physics, the Ambassador taught high school in Ústí nad Labem before 1989. He was one of the founding members of Civic Forum, the dissident political movement credited with bringing about the Velvet Revolution that overthrew the Communist regime. He was elected to the first free Parliament in 1990 and later served as Consul General in New York. Thereupon, he was elected mayor of Ústí nad Labem, after which he held successively the cabinet positions of Minister for Regional Development and Minister of Agriculture.

Wilson Monument Construction on Schedule

Working under floodlights late in the evening of Saturday, June 4, workmen completed construction of the base and pedestal of the Woodrow Wilson Monument in Prague. The last piece to be put in place was the huge granite block that forms the pedestal's front. Although the block is over 14' long, 3.5' wide, and 2.5' deep, the workmen set it with precision, measured in millimeters.

Meanwhile, the Špaček foundry in the Lysolaje area of Prague has completed welding and finishing the bronze statue of Wilson. The statue will be stored until it is installed on the pedestal a number of weeks in advance of the dedication. Until the dedication, it will be kept covered from view.

Along with the base/pedestal and the statue, the third component of the monument is the Walk of Freedom, where those who have made substantial contributions to rebuild the monument will be recognized on a band of granite plaques leading to the pedestal. In May, AFoCR entered into a contract with Rugo Stone of Lorton, Virginia, which will fabricate and inscribe the plaques and ship them to Prague. They need to be shipped by the end of July to ensure that they are ready to be installed by early September. The Walk will contain a total of 129 plaques in five sizes ranging from 6" x 12" to 14" x 28." The contributors to be recognized come from all over the United States and the Czech Republic.

Historic Wilson Dedication Draws Near

Presidential Auspices Granted

AFoCR President Tom Dine announced last week that Czech President Václav Klaus has granted his official auspices for the dedication ceremony for the Woodrow Wilson Monument, making it an officially sanctioned national event in Prague. The dedication will be attended by President Klaus, former President Václav Havel, U.S. Ambassador Norman Eisen, Lord Mayor of Prague Bohuslav Svoboda, former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, and other dignitaries. A color guard salute and military band will highlight the historic event, symbolizing the long standing and close ties between the U.S. and the Czech Republic and their shared values of freedom and democracy. According to Wilson Monument Project Director Robert Doubek the monument will be ready weeks in advance of its unveiling and dedication, and the Walk of Freedom, which honors those who have made significant contributions to rebuild the monument, will be ready for its first viewing. For articles on the special dedication Wilson-Masaryk Symposium and Historical Exhibit events see Page 4.

Gala Dinner to Celebrate Dedication

Former Czech President Václav Havel and former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright will serve as honorary co-chairs of the American Friends of the Czech Republic's Gala Award Dinner that will be held at the Rudolfinum on October 4, 2011. The dinner will celebrate the completion of the Woodrow Wilson Monument and recognize over 20 years of close and strong U.S.-Czech relations. Special guests will be U.S. Ambassador Norman Eisen and Czech Ambassador Petr Gandalovič, along with Lord Mayor of Prague Bohuslav Svoboda. Special classical musical selections will brighten the evening. The highlight of the evening will be the presentation of the first AFoCR Masaryk-Wilson Peace and Democracy Award.



Tickets and tables for the Gala Award Dinner are available on the AFoCR's Special Dedication web site at: <http://www.afocr.org/woodrow-wilson-dedication-events.html>

For visitors visiting from the U.S., specially priced accommodations are available from links on the web site.

Letter From AFoCR President Thomas A. Dine

Dear Friends of the Czech Republic,

The American-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty celebrated 60 years of broadcasting this spring. The Czech people have been instrumental in this history.

The first broadcast of Radio Free Europe was in the Czech language to communist-controlled Czechoslovakia in 1951. That original news broadcast came from Munich. Six decades later Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) is still broadcasting the news of the day to 21 countries without a free media in 28 languages from the Balkans to Russia to Central Asia and the Caucasus to Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The programs originate in the organization's modern international headquarters in the Hagibor neighborhood of Prague.

Czech influence on RFE/RL has been profound. The impact was due to the Czech and Slovak Language Services in Munich and later in Prague. Both produced news and balanced commentary of the highest quality day after day, both had influential listening audiences during and after the Cold War, both trained journalists that went on to have significant careers in the media business when the Berlin Wall came down.

One person personifies this quality and influence. Pavel Pechacek followed the lead of his journalist father, who for many years headed the Service in Munich. Pavel's tenure covered the Communist occupation, the transition period of the 1980's through the Velvet Revolution and Divorce, and during the phasing out of the broadcasts as free and independent media emerged in the mid-to late-1990's. His career high point took place in November 1989. From Munich, he applied for and received a six-day visa to enter the country. In the Czech language, he covered events live such as the exciting evolution of happenings in and around Wenceslaus Square in Prague. His security handlers had expected him to put the best face on these occurrences, but Pavel reported what was happening such as the crumbling of the regime. He interviewed people in the town squares; these reports spread throughout the country, in the words of one listener in Bratislava, "like wildfire." A dissident in prison František Stárek, who later became a police official, later recorded his reactions to Radio Free Europe broadcasts. "Pechacek in Prague means we will be home by Christmas," he remembered. He and other patriotic dissidents did return to their families - on time. Pavel became the Czech Language Service director in 1993.

Two stories pertain to President Václav Havel, an avid listener of the Radio. The first is that each time the playwright was imprisoned by the Communist government, the Czech Service from Munich would tell its listeners of Havel's fate and actual whereabouts. Demonstrators would gather outside the houses of incarceration. Havel has told me and others that without RFE's broadcasts he would have died in prison. Havel also recounts hearing a broadcast one day while in prison, his most recent essay being read over the air.

The second story is the enormous value President Havel placed on the news and information of the Radios. It was his vision to move the operation from Munich to Prague, a part of his overall strategy to return the Czech people into the family of Europe, including joining the NATO alliance and the European Union. One day, during his presidency, he told me, "Look, late at night when I come home, I listen to your Czech Service to find out if what I learned during the course of my official activities that day were correct."

The Czech and Slovak peoples were good listeners and partners of Radio Free Europe, and now the whole Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty operations from its Prague studios is bringing credible reporting and democracy to much of the world.

I commend to AFoCR members a new publication of the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), a small Washington D.C. think tank, entitled "Building the New Normal: U.S.-Central European Relations, 2010-2020." Ten European and American analysts give their perspectives of where political, military, and economic relations are at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century and where these relations are headed.

The good news is that U.S.-Central European relations are once again in the positive zone. In 2010, a string of elections in the countries of Central Europe created "a constellation of largely stable and like-minded governments that has laid the foundation for enhanced regional cooperation and given impetus to the revival of the long-defunct Visegrad Group." Also Poland, the largest power in the region, has gotten closer to the historic nemesis, Russia, "lending weight to Washington's own efforts at U.S.-Russian detente." And overall, President Obama's second year in office has moved beyond the strains of its first year, mending relations and reassuring the Czech Republic, Poland, the Baltics and others that this region is important, even in a period of Arab turmoil, the rise of China and India, and continued economic low growth at best, and that together the countries of Central Europe will transition to a "New Normal that will be more businesslike than the mentor-protege relationship that existed prior to Iraq and less volatile."

Tom Dine



*AFoCR President
Tom Dine
Speaking at Radio
Free Europe's
60th Anniversary
Commemoration
in Washington,
D.C. on
June 2, 2011
(Photo by
Lillis Werder)*

Wilson Monument Construction On Schedule



Path for Walk of Freedom with Completed Base and Pedestal



Setting the Final Block at Midnight



Moving the Statue at the Foundry

Recent Events in Washington, D.C.

(Photos by Lillis Werder)



Panelists Discuss Radio Free Europe's Role and Relevance in the 21st Century on June 2, 2011



Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg Addresses 60th Anniversary of Radio Free Europe in Washington on June 2, 2011



Brig. Gen. Přemysl Skacha, Phil Kasik, Ambassador Petr Gandalovič, Tom Gibian, Czech Senator Přemysl Sobotka, Tom Dine, and Michael Rokos at wreath-laying ceremony at Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk Memorial on May 25, 2011



Czech Senator Sobotka Places Wreath at Masaryk Memorial on May 25, 2011

Václav Havel and Madeleine Albright Headline Symposium



*Former President of the Czech Republic Václav Havel
and Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright*

The legacy of Woodrow Wilson and Tomáš G. Masaryk will be the subject matter of a symposium specially organized as part of the dedication of the Wilson Monument. President Havel and Dr. Albright will examine the legacy of these two men whose remarkable alliance set the stage for the first western-style democracy in Central Europe. In 1918, following World War I, the Czechoslovak Republic was formed from the war-torn lands of Austria-Hungary, giving Czechs and Slovaks the chance to control their own destiny as free nations. While the free Czechoslovakia was suppressed by Hitler after only 20 years, the beliefs of Wilson and Masaryk in democracy, free markets, and a peaceful international order remain no less compelling nearly a century after the country's birth.

Dr. John Milton Cooper, Jr., a preeminent U.S. Wilson scholar, and Dr. Dagmar Hájková, a Charles University scholar of Czech history, will set the stage with the stories of these leaders. President Havel and Dr. Albright will conclude with their analysis of the influence of Wilson and Masaryk on the development of the Czech and Slovak Republics, on democracy in Europe, and more generally on world peace and prosperity.

The symposium will be held at 1:30 p.m., October 4, at the Czernin Palace. It is free but registration is required.

Original Historical Exhibit Created for Dedication

Need a refresher on the history of Wilson and Masaryk? The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in partnership with the National Museum in Prague, is creating an original exhibit with that in mind. "It has been decades since the Woodrow Wilson Monument stood in Prague and many have forgotten its meaning," said Gail Naughton, NCSML President/CEO. "It is fitting that we take this opportunity to reexamine the two men and the historical events that led to the 1928 erection of the original monument."

In addition to the story of the creation of an independent Czechoslovakia following World War I, the exhibit will review the short and dramatic history of the monument in Prague, the life of the original sculptor, Czech émigré Albin Polasek, and the newest chapter of the story, i.e. the campaign by the American Friends of the Czech Republic to rebuild the monument 70 years after its destruction. Illustrated by extraordinary archival images accompanied by text in both Czech and English, the exhibit is created to allow for maximum portability to facilitate its travel to venues in Europe and the United States.

The exhibit will open with a reception at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, October 4, at the National Museum. It is free but advance registration is required.

The curators are Stefanie Kohn, National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, and Dr. Ivan Malý, National Museum. To inquire about the panel exhibit for display in the United States, contact: skohn@ncsml.org.

First Masaryk-Wilson Award Announced

AFoCR Chairman Fred Malek announced last week that the first recipient of the AFoCR's Masaryk-Wilson Peace and Democracy Award will be **the People in Need Foundation (PIN)**. Since its founding nearly 20 years ago as a Czech NGO, People in Need has been active in providing relief aid and development assistance in many troubled parts of the world, while working to defend human rights and democratic freedom. Their programs work to support development of an informed and empowered civil society both at home and abroad. PIN is one of the largest organizations of its kind in post-communist Europe, and has administered projects in 37 countries over the past fourteen years.

The award will be presented at the Wilson Monument Gala Award dinner in Prague being held as part of the Wilson Monument Dedication events. The Masaryk – Wilson Peace and Democracy Award honors individuals and organizations of the Czech Republic and the United States of America that have contributed to the advancement of the principles of democracy and peace as the inalienable rights of mankind. This award acknowledges the ideals and accomplishments of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and Czechoslovak Republic Founder and First President Tomáš G. Masaryk, whose vision and leadership brought forth the democracy of Czechoslovakia after the First World War.

NCSML Makes Historic Move to New Location



Confetti flew as the NCSML building started to move to its new location where it will be raised to 11 feet above where it stands today, or three feet above flood waters of June 2008.

Goodwill messages flowed in from across the country when the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library building in Cedar Rapids, IA set out on its way to a new location. It was damaged in a flood in June 2008, so NCSML leaders decided to move the building to a new foundation at an elevation three feet higher than the highest point of the flood waters. On Wednesday, June 8, the 1,400 ton brick and frame building was moved 240 feet on the first leg of its journey. The next step is to pivot the building before it moves the last 200 feet to stand in front of the foundation. Then the building will be lifted 10 feet and rolled onto the foundation and finally set in place. The entire process will take six to eight weeks. With a 30,000 square foot addition, the area of the completed museum and library will total 50,000 square feet. It is set to open in the summer of 2012. To watch the progress of the move via live webcam and for updates on recovery, go to www.ncsml.org.

Publishers of *Americké Listy* Honored



*AFoCR
Director
Peter
Bisek
and his
wife Vera*

AFoCR Director Peter Bisek and his wife Vera were honored and celebrated for their work publishing the well-regarded and award winning Czech & Slovak language newspaper *Americké Listy*. The couple was joined by friends and admirers at a well-attended event hosted by the Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association at the Bohemian National Hall in New York.

Now retired from publishing, Peter and Vera shared the inspiring story about their emigration to the U.S. during the turbulent 60's. They related vividly how they became involved first in printing the newspaper, and then for the past 20 years serving as editor-in-chief and publisher. Attendees also shared stories about the importance of the newspaper and some personal remembrances about Peter and Vera, who have been active members of their Long Island community of Glen Cove. Peter told a wonderful story about how, without really intending to do so, he became a beloved and successful coach of the high school rowing team.

The last issue of *Americké Listy* came out in June 2010 as, anticipating retirement, the Biseks wound down the publishing operation. Vera says she enjoys having more time to be a grandmother: Peter, however, says he would not rule out a reawakening of the newspaper in another form.

Wilson Dedication Golf Tourney Planned

Visitors to the Wilson Dedication who want to get out and exercise a bit in the country fresh air will have an opportunity to play a round of golf at a Czech Castle near Prague. AFoCR has booked the historic Konopiště golf course for a special post-dedication tournament among the plush, tree-lined fairways, and castle-views that are found on this wonderful course. Max Munson, a prominent Prague restaurant owner, has collaborated with the Wilson Dedication planners to create a day of fun and sport and camaraderie. All golfers will be picked up at approximately 8:00 AM from the hotel departure point and returned to the hotel after the tournament at approximately 4:00 PM. There will be an awards banquet. To be part of the fun, just register on the AFoCR web site, www.afocr.org.

The Czech Republic has numerous championship golf courses. Prior to the various festivities scheduled to start on October 4th, AFoCR Director Fritz Duda and some of his guests are putting together a short holiday of golf with a tour guide. The group is now scheduling their itinerary for some three days starting on a Thursday, September 29th, arrival with three courses in proximity to Carlsbad. If anyone has an interest in joining the Duda group (which includes both golfers and non-golfers) please contact Gail Williams at gwilliams@fritzduda.com or 972.934.5115.

Special Dedication Art Exhibit to Open

The Czech Lands can lay claim to numerous skilled artists over the last centuries, but international fame has been elusive. In the area of the fine arts, Moravian-born Joža Uprka became a recognized and talented artist in the early decades of the 20th century. Visitors to Prague for the Wilson Dedication will have a special opportunity to view rarely seen works by Uprka in a unique exhibit at the Wallenstein Riding School at the Castle. The National Gallery and the Moravské Slovácko Foundation are holding the exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of the artist's birth. It will be the artist's largest posthumous exhibition. Visitors will be offered a special guided tour of this special collection of his works.

Uprka was born in Kněždub, Moravia in 1861 and died in Hroznová Lhota, Moravia, in 1940. His origins were modest, but he exhibited skills and an interest in art that eventually earned him admission to the Prague Academy and later the Munich Academy. As a Czech painter and graphic artist, his work was often representative of romantic historicism and Art Nouveau decorativism. His work ethnographically documents the folklore of South Moravia. In his early works, his art was drawn in a realistic style, using darker colors in his compositions. After spending time in France, the style and nature of Uprka's work changed to French Impressionist. His strokes on his oils were broader, even choosing impasto to give depth to his works. The colors moved from the darker browns to the crème colors, pastels, oranges, reds, and greens. The canvas seemed to explode. In France, Uprka enjoyed a special relationship with the French sculptor Auguste Rodin, who even visited Moravia early in the last century.

Uprka's subject matter was significant: he depicted the people from the regions where he grew up in Eastern Moravia. One could consider his art as an ethnographic study; women in kroje and men in fur coats were some of his subjects. The subject matter is reminiscent of the works of Jean Francois Millet [1814-1875] depicting rural farm scenes, with thankful and humble, almost pietistic subjects. *The Gleaners* is an example. Uprka was sympathetic to the everyday life of the rural people, to their simple ways, faith, hard work, and family. He took joy in their celebrations of life such as the "Ride of the Kings" and the "Pilgrimages of Saint Anthony."



Tomáš Masaryk and Woodrow Wilson are pictured on this commemorative postcard with the American YMCA circa 1918. The caption reads: We will always be linked with the American nation, united by the spirit of freedom and democracy. Photo: Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum

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