

Newsletter

Czech President Vaclav Klaus Visits Washington D.C. , Tomas G. Masaryk Park



In mid-November, Czech President Vaclav Klaus made his first visit to Washington , D.C. since taking office. During his visit, the Czech President met with Vice President Richard Cheney, spoke at a CATO Institute economic seminar and visited the Heritage Foundation. He also delivered the Fourth Annual Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture, presented at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. President Klaus capped his trip with a visit to Masaryk Park in northwest Washington to take part in a ceremony marking the completion of its construction.

After inspecting the park and the statue, President Klaus noted that it was his first opportunity to see this beautiful monument. He was impressed that the tribute to Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, first president of Czechoslovakia, had been placed on such a prominent place in Washington, and that it was a fitting symbol of the extraordinary relations between the Czech Republic and the U.S., which he emphasized the Czech government takes, "...very very seriously." President Klaus acknowledged the role of AFoCR in building the monument, noting that it was the result of enormous activity and effort.

He then placed a bouquet of flowers in the Czech national colors at the base of the Masaryk statue. The visit closed with AFoCR President Phil Kasik presenting a memorial souvenir related to the park and statue by and AFoCR Vice-President Michael Rokos presenting a framed first day cover of the Masaryk Champion of Liberty stamp, issued in 1960, on behalf of the Czech and Slovak Heritage Association.

Following the ceremony at the park, many of those present proceeded to a nearby hotel for a reception that included AFoCR directors and supporters.

New U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic



Ambassador
William J. Cabaniss,
Jr.

In September, President Bush named a new U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic . William J. Cabaniss, Jr., of Birmingham , Alabama , will succeed Ambassador Craig Stapleton, who has been U.S. envoy since 2001. Amb. Cabaniss is formerly CEO of Precision Grinding, a specialty steel manufacturing company with headquarters in Birmingham . He served in the Alabama state legislature for twelve years including four years as senator. Shortly after his confirmation by the U.S. Senate, the AFoCR Executive Committee met with the new envoy at a working lunch in Alexandria , Virginia . The informal setting laid the groundwork for a productive working relationship. The discussion included the challenges that the new ambassador will face in the Czech Republic . AFoCR looks forward to working with the new Ambassador to further strengthen U.S.-Czech relations.

Czech Prime Minister Visits Washington



Czech Prime Minister
Vladimir Spidla with
AFoCR Directors Peter
Rafaelli, Amb. Jenonne
Walker, Phillip Kasik,

Michael Rokos as well as
Czech Consul General
Margita Fuchsova and
Czech Ambassador
Martin Palous

Czech Prime Minister Vladimir Spidla led a delegation of Czech leaders to Washington in July 2003. Mr. Spidla met with U.S. leaders as well as with AFoCR officers. The Prime Minister took part in a program at the U.S. Capitol with several members of Congress.

During Prime Ministers Spidla's visit, AFoCR hosted a luncheon for Czech Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda. In what is becoming a traditional stop for Czech dignitaries visiting Washington, the Prime Minister visited Masaryk Park in northwest Washington where he offered remarks and placed flowers at the statue.

Foreign Minister Svoboda participated in ceremonies to mark the birthday of President Masaryk in March 2003. A special Masaryk birthday celebration is being planned for March 2004.

Klaus Delivers Czech & Slovak Freedom Lecture



The Fourth Annual Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture was delivered by President Klaus during his November visit to the United States to a packed audience in the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. This lecture was the fourth in the series of lectures held in co-operation with the Embassies of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic in Washington, AFoCR and Friends of Slovakia. Czech Ambassador Martin Palous and Slovak Ambassador Rastislav Kacer also attended and spoke briefly. Center Deputy Director Michael vanDusen hosted the lecture.

The president's speech, entitled "Freedom and Its Enemies (As Seen from Central Europe)," was followed by a short reception. In his lecture, President Klaus emphasized that freedom can never be taken for granted, and that it was vital that each new generation reaffirm its commitment to freedom and democracy. He conveyed his belief in the centrality of freedom and human liberty and the danger that

some political processes may actually undermine democracy, and therefore certain ideas, interests, and fears that can erode ideals of freedom, must not be allowed to prevail.

Following the speech, AFoCR President Phillip Kasik and Friends of Slovakia representative William Tucker presented President Klaus with a "Philadelphia Bowl", a ceramic bowl depicting historic scenes of American independence and liberty in Philadelphia .

Message from the President

As we look to the New Year, we all can take much pride in AFoCR's achievements during the year 2003: successful humanitarian and educational missions; completion of a beautiful and historic monument to T.G. Masaryk; and most of all, expanded friendship and support between the U.S. and the Czech Republic .

It was a historic year for the Czech people as Vaclav Klaus assumed office, only the second Czech president to do so since the Velvet Revolution. Soon after, the decisive vote of the Czech People to join the European Union assured that EU membership, a major foreign policy goal - second only to NATO - will be a reality in 2004. The Czech Republic now will play major roles in both key security and economic structures of the West.

While ties between our countries were strengthened in 2003 by the visits to Washington of Prime Minister Spidla and President Klaus, world events brought us together in more ways. The Czechs answered the call of a friend in need, and stood shoulder to shoulder with America , in both word and deed, in the war on terror. This took courage and determination, but friends help each other. In a more symbolic gesture, President Bush awarded President Havel with the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his achievements in human rights and building a free and democratic Czech Republic .

In 2004 we look forward to elections in America , and also look forward to celebrating the 15 th Anniversary of the historic Velvet Revolution. We pray for peace and success in the mission of people everywhere to achieve freedom, dignity and democracy.



Elite Czech Unit to Serve in Afghanistan

In mid-January the Czech government approved a Defense Ministry plan to send troops from the highly trained Prostějov unit to Afghanistan to help track down elusive terrorist cells. This is not the first time elite Czech troops have served in dangerous territory, having also participated in missions from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to Bosnia , and offering chemical expert aid last year in the war in Iraq .

Heeding the call from NATO and the U.S. for help, the Czech troops will serve as peacekeepers and operate on the front lines. The determination to serve in the U.S.-led "Operation Enduring Freedom" demonstrates a commitment to both NATO and good Czech-U.S. relations.

An event from the past...



AFoCR Director, General Wesley Clark, speaks at the AFoCR Gala award dinner in New York for Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in September 2000. The Board wishes him well in his bid for the Democratic Presidential nomination.

Coming Soon...

In September 2002, in conjunction with the unveiling of the Masaryk Statue in Washington, a symposium was held at the Willard Inter-Continental Hotel that included lectures and speeches on President-Liberator Tomas G. Masaryk and America

The video of those speeches and lectures and will soon be available as a companion to the video of the unveiling of the statue and to the printed copies of the lectures published by the Czech Embassy. The video will include the talks by Madeline Albright, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Radom Palous, Petr Pithart, Jacques Rupnik, Martin Simecka, and the addresses by Vaclav Havel, former Czech President, and Michal Kovac, former Slovak President.

EU Ascension Draws Near

2003 was an important milestone for the Czech nation as it decisively voted to join the European Union. May 1 marks an important milestone in 2004—it is the date when the Czech Republic formally joins the European Union. Conversion from the Czech crown to the Euro is farther off, but important issues, such as the EU constitution, which are the center of intense debate in the EU community, are now part of the Czech national debate. In late 2003 Czech delegates to the EU conference in Brussels decided to support the new constitution. However, due to resistance from Spain and Poland the constitution could not be passed and further debate—and possibly changes—will be necessary before a final vote is taken. Other key issues that the delegations must deal with in 2004 are the merits of creating common defense and foreign policies, and the

elimination of the rotating EU presidency.

Ambassador Cabaniss Arrives in Prague



FoCR President Phill Kasik
Congratulates Ambassador
Cabaniss, at his
Swearing-in Ceremony

U.S. Ambassador William J. Cabaniss, Jr., presented his credentials to Czech President Vaclav Klaus on Tuesday, January 13, at Hradcany Palace in Prague and began his tenure as U.S. envoy. Shortly afterwards, Ambassador Cabaniss left for Iraq with Czech Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda for meetings in Baghdad concerning opportunities for Czech companies to participate in contracts to rebuild the country. Foreign Minister Svoboda and Ambassador Cabaniss expressed optimism on prospects for Czech support of vital reconstruction efforts after their visit. It was made clear that the U.S. considers the Czech Republic an ally in the war in Iraq, and there are good possibilities for the Czechs to bid on rebuilding contracts.

AFoCR Director Rafaeli Receives Award

In June 2003, AFoCR Treasurer and Director Peter A. Rafaeli received the prestigious Gratias Agit Award. Fourteen individuals and three institutions from around the world received the Award this year. The award is presented annually to groups or individuals who have distinguished themselves by promoting the good name of the Czech Republic. The award, first given in 1997, is named after Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovakia's late Foreign Minister who died mysteriously in March 1948 shortly after the Communist coup.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, JUDr. Cyril Svoboda, presented this year's award to Mr. Rafaeli, who serves as the Honorary Consul General to Philadelphia. The presentation took place, at a formal ceremony in the Czernin Palace in Prague – the official site of the Czech Republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Board congratulates Peter for this well-deserved recognition.

Grant Made to Charles University



Dean Ivan Netuka and
Lida Urbanek at Prague
Ceremony

AFoCR made a significant grant to Charles University in the fall of 2003. The grant was the first phase of a multi-year project to refurbish the physics undergraduate teaching laboratories in the Physics and Mathematics Department. The \$300,000 project is being funded by a major gift from the Urbanek Family Foundation. The facility will be named "Karel Urbanek Teaching Laboratories" as a tribute to Karel Urbanek, who graduated from the Mathematics and Physics Faculty in 1963. A native of Prague, Karel Urbanek left Czechoslovakia in 1963 and settled in the area near San Francisco, which became known as Silicon Valley. He built a successful technology company that supplies specialized equipment to the semiconductor industry. After Mr. Urbanek passed away, his family, through a private family foundation, established scholarships and programs in the United States.

Mrs. Lida Urbanek conceived the project at Charles University as a memorial to her late husband. AFoCR assisted by putting in place a donor-advised fund to handle the logistics and the international aspects of the grant. In October Mrs. Urbanek, along with friends and family, inaugurated the project at a ceremony in Prague. At the ceremony Faculty Dean Ivan Netuka stated: "Not only is this the first action on promises we have received from a potential donor, but we are impressed by the one to one matching grant structure. We don't want to be in a position of having our hands out for charity; we want to participate as partners in this project." The gift to Charles University is the first overseas education project by AFoCR. The fund coordinated by AFoCR provides for continued funding over a five year period based on matching funds raised by the University on a one-to-one basis. Mrs. Urbanek noted that the advice and facilities provided by AFoCR to enable the grant to be funded are excellent resources, and the AFoCR donor-advised funds approach accommodated the project using concepts of giving familiar in the United States. This structure could be a model for persons who have thought of making tax-deductible giving to projects in the Czech Republic. "The avenues for giving and helping in the Czech Republic are in place," she added.

AFoCR Meets with ODS Leaders

In October Czech Senator Mirek Topolanek, chairman of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), led a delegation of his party, including Deputy Vlastimil Tlustý to the United States. AFoCR and the Embassy hosted the meeting which included a luncheon for the delegation at the historic Woodrow Wilson House in Washington. The Woodrow Wilson House is the last residence of President Woodrow Wilson after his presidency and is maintained as a museum.

AFoCR's Flood Relief Fund Helped Many

By summer 2003 the historic floods in the Czech Republic of summer 2002 were just a memory to many. However, full recovery and reconstruction in some areas took much longer, and only now are things back to normal. The floods from torrential rains will be recorded in history as one of the great Czech national disasters. The worst flooding afflicted ten regions of the country. Prague, Central and Southern Bohemia, and the Plzeň, Karlovy Vary and Ústí nad Labem regions were the most severely hit. Based on one report, 753 municipalities were affected and about 220,000 people were evacuated. Seventeen people died as a direct result of the flooding, and more than a thousand houses were destroyed.

AFoCR's PRAGUE-NEEDS-HELP Relief Fund raised over \$330,000. Contributions came primarily from American organizations, associations, churches, corporations and many concerned Americans who saw the need and wanted to help. Thanks to their support and generosity, the Fund received over 500 individual contributions ranging from \$5 to \$50,000. Larger contributions came from U.S. companies doing business in the Czech Republic, from prominent figures in the U.S. film industry and from several Czech-American organizations—as well as U.S. Ambassador Craig Stapleton. A number of concerned groups and churches in the U.S. undertook special flood relief fundraising efforts.

Grants were provided for 28 specific projects, which were selected by AFoCR with major input from the U.S. and Czech Embassies and the American Chamber of Commerce in Prague, as well as non-profit organizations working in the country. The projects covered hospitals and medical facilities, schools and education facilities, replacement housing units, and historic facilities and museums. Grants were made related to construct Sokol facilities in Blatná, the math and physics library at Charles University, a vocational high school in Decín, Central Bohemian Museum in Roztoky, the national memorial and museum at Terezín, educational facilities in Třebon, elementary schools in Písek and České Budějovice, the Jewish Museum in Prague, severely damaged synagogues in Prague (Klaus, Pinkas, Spanish), the Church of St. Salvator in Prague and the severely damaged Kampa Museum in Malá Strana. Grants were made through other non-profit groups to vocational schools in Karlín (Lyckovo and Molákova), Cinoherní Studio in Ústí, and to the cultural facility ROXY in Prague.



Replacement housing units
in Veseli nad Luznici

AFoCR Board of Directors Meeting Held

AFoCR's annual Board of Directors meeting was held for 2003 on November 19, in Washington . President Phil Kasik reported on the completion of the two largest projects for 2003, the Prague-Needs-Help relief fund and the construction of Masaryk Park , as well as on the management, fundraising, cultural and diplomatic activities for the year. Highlights included visits by Prime Minister Spidla, Foreign Minister Svoboda and President Klaus. Also important were new grant initiatives in support of Charles University educational facilities and a humanitarian project in cooperation with Kraft Foods International, teaming with the Nadeje Organization in Prague .

This year the Board undertook to self-manage key operations of the organization to reduce costs. Mr. Kasik noted the considerable effort required, particularly in the financial and administrative areas. He thanked Treasurer Peter Rafaeli for his very competent efforts at maintaining the books and finances. Mr. Kasik also thanked AFoCR Advisor, Paul Svab, for his diligent work in implementing and managing the administration and documentation of the grants made by the flood relief fund.

Mr. Kasik noted the continued importance of the Website, which now contains pages in the Czech language and will expand as time and resources permit. He thanked AFoCR intern David Hofman, who did the translations, and who also assisted with a general upgrade of the list management software, which led to substantial savings in administrative costs.

The Board elected Timothy Whipple to the Board of Advisors, and Mr. Kasik noted the elections earlier in the year of former U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic Jenonne Walker as a Director and Paul Svab as an Advisor. Officers serving in 2003 will continue to serve through 2004.

Recommendations on a strategic organizational planning were accepted by the Board, with the study and implementation of a separate 501(c)(3) structure for the Masaryk Memorial Education and Endowment Fund specifically approved. It was agreed that a major fundraising event for 2004 should be planned, and AFoCR Vice President Michael Rokos agreed to chair the 2004 Event Planning Committee. Mr. Kasik thanked the entire Board for their advice and counsel through the year, and adjourned the

meeting.

Park Completion Marked in Ceremony Attended by President Klaus



In a ceremony at Masaryk Park on November 21, attended by President Klaus, Ambassador Palous and an audience of nearly 200, AFoCR President Phil Kasik announced the completion of major construction at Masaryk Park . President Klaus spoke briefly about the beauty and prominence of the Park in its location on Embassy Row. He recognized the efforts of AFoCR in creating the Memorial and called it a symbol of the friendship between our two countries. President Klaus recalled how the friendship and respect between Masaryk and President Woodrow Wilson lead to the creation of the modern Czechoslovak state.

A descriptive plaque will be placed in the spring to complete the project.

AFoCR Welcomes

... New Board Member Ambassador Jenonne Walker



Jenonne Walker served as United States Ambassador to the Czech Republic from July 1995 until October 1998. Prior to that she had been Special Assistant to President Clinton and Senior Director for Europe on the National Security Council staff. After

retiring from government service she spent two years as Vice President for Europe of the World Monuments Fund, based first in Paris and then in London.

Earlier in her career Ambassador Walker worked as an analyst of West European affairs at the Central Intelligence Agency, a member of State's Policy Planning Staff, Political Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm, Director of the State Department Office responsible for European and UN arms control, and as a Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Guest Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Institute for Scholars. Immediately before joining the Clinton Administration she was working on the role of European regional organizations in easing tensions within states, under a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

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Ambassador Walker received a BA in Letters and MA in Philosophy from the University of Oklahoma , and did further work in contemporary European literature and philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris and the University of London .

Ambassador Walker is a member of the Board of the German Marshall Fund, the Project on Ethnic Relations, the Washington Concert Opera, and the American Friends of Czech Greenways.

... New Advisory Board Member Paul Svab



Paul Svab is a founder and principal of International Private Solutions, an international business consulting firm that specializes in advising investors with investments in

Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union . Born in Prague , the Czech Republic , Paul immigrated to the United States in 1981. He and his family settled in Columbus , Ohio , where he worked in the food industry as chief engineer in a salad dressing company. In 1990, Paul moved to Europe and started his successful career with The Coca-Cola Company as project manager and regional technical manager in Eastern Europe and Russia . This job took Paul to many far-away places like Tashkent , Vladivostok , and Kuala Lumpur . At that time, Coca-Cola was one of the top multinational companies heavily investing in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union , and Paul ended up in St. Petersburg , Russia , where he built a production facility.

In 2000, Paul moved back to the United States and redirected his focus on financial services and became a licensed financial advisor with Morgan Stanley in Scottsdale , Arizona . Being a Czech by origin, Paul became a member of the Board of the Phoenix-Prague Sister Cities organization. After moving to Fairfax , Virginia , Paul became very involved with AFoCR and helped with the Prague flood relief program that was under way. Currently, Paul is advisor to AFoCR and with his firm works with private equity funds.

...New Advisory Board Member Tim Whipple

Tim joins AFoCR's advisory board with 14 years' experience living and working in Prague and an abiding interest in the Czech Republic 's continued development. Tim is managing director of the Washington DC office of Kroll Inc., the global risk consulting firm. He is a member of Kroll's senior management team for the Consulting Services Group and acts as US liaison for client support in Europe , the Middle East and Africa . He works primarily with US and international corporate clients, US Federal agencies and multilateral institutions.

Prior to joining Kroll, Tim was the senior partner heading Andersen's Czech practice, where he specialized in market-entry, privatization and restructuring advice for investors and regional governments during the tumultuous decade that followed the fall of communism. He also worked extensively in Slovakia and other central European countries.

While in Prague , Tim served two terms as President of the American Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic , was a director of the American Chamber in Slovakia and regularly advised government bodies on new legislation and business issues during the region's post-communist transition.

Tim earned an MA with highest honors in Soviet and East European affairs from the University of California (Berkeley), Charles University (Prague , Czech Republic) and the Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys (USSR). He graduated Phi Beta Kappa, Magna

cum Laude from Dartmouth College (Hanover , NH) and Leningrad State University (USSR) with highest honors in Russian studies. He completed his secondary education at Eton College (UK). Tim has authored two books: *After the Velvet Revolution* (Freedom House, 1991: a review of post-communist Czecho-Slovak politics and economics, reviewed in the NY Times Book Review, May 1991), and *Doing Business in the Czech Republic* (Andersen, 2001: an introduction to key issues for investors reviewing Czech business opportunities). He contributes to articles and interviews in the US and international media, including *The Wall Street Journal* , *Washington Times* , *Financial Times* and BBC television. Tim speaks Czech, Slovak, Russian and French.

Notable Americans of Czech Descent



John Kerry, Senator
from Massachusetts

Senator John Kerry, candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, was recently confirmed to be an American of Czech descent. Senator Kerry, a highly decorated Viet Nam war veteran, served there with the U.S. Navy in the 1960s. After the war, he attended Boston Law School and served a short period as district attorney in Middlesex County , Massachusetts .

He began his political career in 1982 when he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts. First elected to the Senate in 1984, he was re-elected 3 times and now serves on and leads important committees. Records from a Czech genealogical researcher, recently reported in the Boston Globe, confirmed that Kerry's grandfather, Frederick, was born in Horni Benesov and emigrated to the U.S. in 1905. His great-grandfather, Benedikt Kohn, worked in a brewery there and his great-grandmother's name was Mathilda Frankelova. The family name changed to Kerry shortly before his grandfather came to the United States .



Peter Sis,
Illustrator/Author

Peter Sis is a brilliant author and illustrator who has worked in the fields of children's literature, journalism, graphic art, and book publishing. Providing unique and intriguing dimensions to the texts he illuminates, Sis has contributed over 1,000 drawings to the New York Times Book Review and many illustrations for Time magazine and the Atlantic Monthly.

Peter Sis was born in Brno , Czechoslovakia and has more than twenty books to his credit and almost as many honors. Peter is a five-time winner of *The New York Times Book Review* Best Illustrated Book of the Year.

He has designed many book jackets and posters, including, in 1984, the famous poster for Milos Forman's Academy Award-winning motion picture *Amadeus* . In 2003, Sis received a prestigious MacArthur Grant. These substantial grants are awarded each year to exceptional people, and recipients are only requested to "pursue their own creative, intellectual and professional inclinations." They are also known as the Genius awards. AFoCR congratulates Peter on receipt of this award and wishes him success with this special opportunity to advance his creative pursuits. AFoCR is proud to have Peter as an Advisor.



Jarmila Novotna,
Opera Singer

Czech soprano Jarmila Novotna belongs among the legendary singers of the Metropolitan Opera.

Born in Prague in 1907, she was a student of another legendary Czech singer, Emmy Destinn. At nineteen she became a permanent member of the National Theater in Prague . But feeling the need of more training, she left for Italy , where the year 1928 marks the beginning of her international career. It led her to Berlin , Vienna , Salzburg , and finally the Metropolitan Opera, where her debut took place on January 5, 1940 . Radiantly beautiful, a remarkable musician with an irresistable charm, natural glamour, and superb acting talent, she was cosidered the greatest singing actress of her time.

Jarmila Novotna started as a coloratura but switched to a lyric repertoire, but also excelled in mezzo soprano trouser roles. Her most famous one was Octavian in "Der Rosenkavalier."

As an ardent patriot she supported the cause of a free Czechoslovakia during the Second World War and made a record of "Songs of Lidice" with Jan Masaryk at the piano. Jarmila Novotna stayed with the Met for 15 seasons. As an artist of international statue she sang in all major opera houses and concert halls. She also made 10 films. Her last one was "The Great Caruso" in 1950. She died in 1994 at the age of 86 in New York .

A new generation of singers with Czech heritage is now gracing the stage of the Metropolitan Opera- among them is the outstanding, beautiful Renee Fleming.



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