

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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NEWSLETTER

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Major Milestone Reached on Woodrow Wilson Monument Full-Size Clay Model Completed



Full Size Clay Model of Statue - May 2010



Robert Doubek, Daniel Talavera, Michal Blažek, and Paul Beckmann - May 2010

Perhaps the most important milestone in rebuilding the Woodrow Wilson Monument was reached in late June 2010. After 15 months of work, the sculptor team of Václav Frýdecký, Michal Blažek and Daniel Talavera completed the full size (3.5 meters tall) clay model of the statue of Woodrow Wilson. The statue was originally created by Albin Polášek in 1927. The bulk of the sculptors' work on the model took place in a cavernous studio in the Dejvice area of Prague, just north of Prague Castle. The studio originally was built around 1950 for sculptor Bohumil Kafka to create the statue of Hussite leader Jan Žižka, which stands nine meters tall and is the largest equestrian statue in the world. It now stands proudly on Vitkov Hill in Prague-Zizkov.

A vital portion of the work, however, was carried out in the Lapidarium, which is part of the National Museum of Prague. The original plaster bust of the Wilson statue, the only part of the original to survive to the present, is preserved at the Lapidarium and is not allowed to be removed. Hence, AFoCR's sculptor team set up a studio there, in which they sculpted an exact clay replica on a plinth, side by side with the original. The key event in the completion of the model occurred when the clay bust was brought from the Lapidarium and placed on the model, substituting for the temporary plaster bust used during the sculpting of the full body.

The next step for the sculptors is to cast the clay model into plaster, a process expected to take two months. The plaster model then will be cut into pieces for transport to the foundry for casting into bronze, which will take approximately seven months.

In order to both inspect the model of the statue and move forward with other aspects of building the monument, AFoCR's

Project Director Robert Doubek traveled to Prague in late May. Also traveling was architect Paul Beckmann of Alexandria, Virginia, who both represented the Albin Polasek Foundation for approving the sculpture and consulted for AFoCR on planning for the Walk of Freedom and construction of the monument. Doubek met with the staff of the U.S. Embassy, City of Prague officials, and the staff of the International Dvorak Society, which is assisting in fund raising for the monument in the Czech Republic. Doubek also met with Přemysl Sobotka, the President of the Czech Senate, in order to discuss planning for the monument's dedication. In a highlight of the visit, Doubek, Beckmann, and Blažek were interviewed by Czech TV in a live broadcast from the sculptors' studio. Among the results of the trip were the selection of a foundry to cast the statue into bronze and a decision to hold the dedication of the monument in September 2011.

AFoCR's Czech architects will design the part of Vrchlicky Park that surrounds the monument and will be renovated before the remainder of the park. Doubek, Beckmann, and the architects made a tentative selection of the granite for the pedestal and base of the monument. The warm colored granite, from a quarry in southern Bohemia, can be seen in the courtyard of Prague Castle. At the same time, for the Walk of Freedom, they selected a gray granite that comes from a quarry near Staunton, Virginia, where Woodrow Wilson was born.

Last month, AFoCR mailed letters to all friends, supporters, and organizations offering the opportunity to contribute to rebuilding the monument and be recognized on the Walk of Freedom. Currently over 75 individuals, organizations, and companies have contributed sufficient amounts to be recognized on the Walk of Freedom, and AFoCR's directors hope that this number can be doubled.



Sculptor Michal Blažek Finishes Plaster Model of Recreated Bust of Wilson Statue - June 2010

AFoCR Updates Mission Statement

American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR) is an independent American non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening the relationship between the United States and Czech Republic. AFoCR fosters communication, encourages understanding, invites friendship, and promotes mutual respect between the two countries and their peoples, governments, economic enterprises, civic and cultural institutions. Nationwide in scope, AFoCR is the voice of the American constituency that supports close and strong relations with the Czech Republic and its people.

Letter from AFoCR President Thomas A. Dine



Dear Friends of the Czech Republic,

As the summer months of 2010 move on, I sit in Washington's heat wave worrying about two trends. The first is the static state of bilateral relations between the United States and the Czech Republic, and the second is the need of the American Friends of the Czech Republic to raise sufficient private funds to complete the important Woodrow Wilson Monument project in Prague.

The Obama Administration is approaching its two-year milestone, but U.S.-Czech relations are not thriving. This is of serious concern. Yes, President Obama has visited Prague twice since becoming our president. The first time was for the U.S.- E.U. summit held during the Czech Republic's E.U. presidency; the second was for the signing of a new nuclear arms reduction treaty with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev. Unfortunately, however, it appears that resetting relations with Russia has taken a higher priority for the Obama Administration than strengthening relations with our NATO and trade allies in Central and Eastern Europe. The low point occurred last year, when the Administration reversed the decision to place a sophisticated missile defense system in both the Czech Republic and Poland. The awkward way in which that decision was made and delivered to leaders in the Czech capital remains an infamous moment.

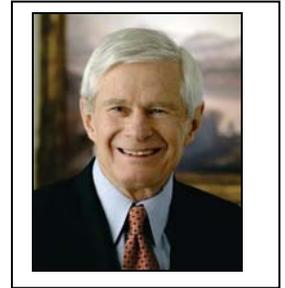
Yes, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton went on a whirlwind tour of Poland, Ukraine, and the southern Caucasus in early July, but there was no Czech Republic stopover. Perhaps our able Secretary did not stop in Prague because of the embarrassment of no American ambassador in place - or no announced nominee - so late into year two of the Administration. The Czech Republic is with us in the Middle East wars; we need - and the Czechs deserve - a top person serving as the President's envoy. Ironically, the very well informed Czech Ambassador Peter Kolář, about whom Fred Malek so eloquently writes in this issue, has served two roles during his many years in Washington. He has explained his country to our political establishment, and has explained the United States to the Czech government as well.

Yes, there is unofficial talk that Norman Eisen, a White House lawyer and law school friend of President Obama, will be named to the vacant ambassadorial position. But so far, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee awaits official notification of the nomination and has not received any preliminary documents that would necessarily accompany a nomination. Moreover, Congress will not spend much time in session before our November mid-year election. This means that if the Committee receives the official word and papers this summer, there is only a narrow window of opportunity in September for Eisen to receive Senate consent before the November election recess and just as narrow an opportunity in the lame duck session in the weeks after the election. Chances are better than even, that the next U.S. envoy to the Czech Republic will not arrive in Prague until early 2011.

It is my view that the Administration has placed relations with the Czech Republic specifically - and Central and Eastern Europe generally - on the proverbial back burner, and this is worrying. The AFoCR needs to - and will - be more visible and vocal on behalf of developing a better bilateral relationship.

In taking on the Wilson Monument project, your AFoCR faced a major challenge -- raising at least \$800,000 -- to rebuild this commemoration in honor of America's first friend of the new Czechoslovak democracy and its first President Tomáš G. Masaryk. As this issue of our *Newsletter* makes clear, the sculpting process is moving ahead on schedule. But the expensive part is about to commence. Our goal is a dedication ceremony in Prague in September 2011, a little over a year away. Private contributions have been received from a few, but so many AFoCR members and friends still have not participated. I worry that not enough supporters are helping to carry the financial load to complete this history-making project on time. I therefore urge each member of AFoCR to join us in funding a major symbol of close and strong U.S.- Czech relations.

Message from AFoCR Chairman Fred Malek



Dear American Friends,

Ambassadors to the United States have the primary mission of representing and advocating their countries' political and economic interests to the United States government. Most Ambassadors do this effectively, and this, of course, helps maintain good relationships between their countries and ours.

Occasionally, an Ambassador has the ability and energy to also develop relationships with the people of our country that enhance the admiration and affection of the American people toward the Ambassador's nation. This is what separates a great Ambassador from a good Ambassador. Such a man is Petr Kolář. In his years here in Washington, Petr and his lovely wife, Jaroslava, have shown intense interest in all aspects of American life and in all areas of our great country. Petr's proactive style, and his willingness to reach out and embrace others, and in many cases help lead them toward their goals, played a vital role in enhancing relations between the peoples of the U.S. and the Czech Republic. Especially memorable were his trips on behalf of the AFoCR to Houston for a gala dinner with former President Bush and to Chicago for a gala honoring Mayor Daley. Petr and Jaroslava's warmth made it all so enjoyable for those of us who worked with them.

The American Friends of the Czech Republic deeply appreciate you, Petr, and Jaroslava. We will be forever grateful for your intelligence, your guidance and most of all your warmth. Congratulations on a job well done. You will be sorely missed by all, and we wish you great success in your assignment in Moscow.

Fred Malek



AFoCR Directors honor Ambassador Petr Kolář in a farewell luncheon on 6/2/10 at the office of Chairman Fred Malek. From L to R: AFoCR Directors Jack White, Bob Doubek, Hana Callaghan, Bill Cabaniss, Ambassador Kolář, Tom Dine, Michael Rokos, Peter Rafaeli, Phil Kasik, and Peter Bisek (Photo by Lillis Werder)



AFoCR Bids Farewell to Czech Embassy Officers Jana Ráčová and Daniel Nový

AFoCR directors have recently developed a new communications vehicle for AFoCR, a page on Facebook. The page was initiated a few months ago by Houston resident Andrea Liptak-Pustejovsky, and recently has become more robust. AFoCR's Facebook page now is updated regularly with latest news and activities. AFoCR members and friends can log onto www.facebook.com and type "American Friends of Czech Republic" to become a Facebook friend of AFoCR. The AFoCR page contains much information, such as updates and photos on the Wilson Monument project and other Czech related news including special events and election results. Through Facebook, AFoCR, as an organization, is able to interact with other Facebook users by posting messages, updates, photos, links, announcements, and upcoming events. AFoCR has 31 members who have joined in recent weeks, and that number is growing steadily. Through the site, members can meet new Czech and American friends and reconnect with existing supporters. AFoCR's directors also welcome feedback on activities and suggestions for future initiatives.



(L to R) AFoCR President Tom Dine, Daniel Nový, Jana Ráčová, and AFoCR Directors Phil Kasik and Jack White at Czech Embassy on 6/2/10 after Farewell Reception (AFoCR Photo)

Wilson Monument Progress



Daniel Talavera, Michal Blažek, Robert Doubek, and Paul Beckmann - May 2010



Original and Clay Model of Bust and Wilson Statue - May 2010



Robert Doubek and Michal Blažek - May 2010



Sculptor Daniel Talavera at Work - May 2010



Sculptors Michal Blažek and Daniel Talavera with Original and Clay Model of Bust - May 2010



Czech TV Interviews Robert Doubek

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 The IRS has ruled that AFoCR is tax exempt under Sec. 501(c) (3).