

Update from the Czech Center Museum Houston

November 25, 2008

To: Members and Friends:

The first of November seemed to come to Houston earlier this year 2008. It was very much welcome however after the usual overly warm summer and an especially depressing and damaging bout contending with Hurricane Ike on September 11th and the many more weeks to follow. Many suffered more than we at the CCMH and while we were grateful it wasn't more, yet it was not easy, but Life does go on.

The city's longest running festival, the **Fall Slavic Saints Cyril and Methodius Festival** was an enjoyable and needed respite psychologically. Immediately thereafter besides daily museum operations, we became engaged in an important fundraiser, **The American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR)**, a Washington, DC based 501[c][3] organization is joint venturing with the City of Prague to return a bronze monument of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson to commemorate his assistance to Tomas Masaryk, first president of the First Republic, in promoting a Czechoslovak democratic government in 1918. (The statue had been destroyed by the Nazis in 1938.)

On the tenth of November I enjoyed greatly another birthday at the office and in fact we commandeered any staff and volunteers we could to celebrate and I made a great decision to begin a **Rosene Legacy Fund** for some good Czech Center purpose – believe me, there are many great purposes – and general admission to the party was a one dollar (\$1.00) contribution instead of the usual flowers, chocolates or other possible beautiful gifts. I had \$5.00 and thought what a great beginning, which I would invest "safely" while trying to enhance that collection. Actually I think it would be great if others would start meaningful funds like that. It was really easy!

On November 12th we had a great group for viewing and talk in Brno Gallery followed by a authentic Slavic luncheon in Prague Hall with Champagne, music by our maestro Board member **Robert Dvorak**, and many of the group after touring shopped in Prague International Gifts. These very interesting and interested guests were from all over the country from the west to the east coast and in between associated with the AFoCR and in the City to attend the evening's Gala. We were honored to meet these gracious people who came from afar to see us. We took the opportunity, **James Ermis**, Vice Chair and President was also attending, to present **Gail Naughton**, Executive Director of the tragically flooded **National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library** of Cedar Rapids, Iowa a gift check towards eventual restoration of this great institution.

The evening's AFoCR fundraising Gala at the J.W.Marriott Galleria benefiting its mission was indeed a grand one, such as the city has not seen before beginning with Mayor White, President and Mrs. George H. W. Bush, (Czech President Vaclav Klaus on video), former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, numerous ambassadors, multiple Honorary and Consul Generals, state and city political personages, Czech organization leaders, a substantial segment of Houston's society and philanthropic movers and shakers and the great number of officials and friends of the AFoCR. You surely read it in the Houston Chronicle's **Shelby Hodge** column! We know Galas, having administered some fifteen and numerous kinds of events and have attended others. This one was awesome! Two great American Heroes and our "local" friends, **Captains Eugene Cernan and James Lovell** (both of Czech and Slovak heritage) were awarded a Civil Society Vision Award for their work in space exploration on this evening. Many members of the CCMH attended to help this great cause. If you were not fortunate to attend this beautiful gathering you can still be a real documented participant by sending a contribution to **Phil Kasik AFoCR Monument Fund, 4410 Massachusetts Ave. N.W. #391, Washington, DC 20016**. I understand next year's reinstallation/dedication of this monument in Prague that so long stood at the Wilsonovi Train Station will be incredibly special as well!

Here in south Moravia, the wine country, we arrived two days after that Gala to a really cold winter. The Grape harvest had just ended, rather late, the pressing still going on. The gatherers celebrated with an annual feast. The harvest was an especially good one. The young wines were all ready to taste and exquisitely delicious they are! You may not know this but since in the European Union, the Czech Moravian wines are major gold medal winners in the International Wine Competition in Paris and elsewhere. (They have always been winners in regional competitions.) Bohemia Sekt of Stary Plzen is, of course, a major player, gets their grapes/wines from this region. The French, you know, look forward to their young Beaujolais on November 20th. These are great celebrations of joy and national pride. The Czech do theirs on Svaty Martinsky Day (St. Martin's Holiday) on November 11th with the same celebrations, joy, national pride. I have it from my dear wine maker friend **Jarek Slichta**, he swears this is true, that Beaujolais actually originated right here in Moravia. A vintner whose wife's name was Bozena was told at the Harvest's young wine debut "Boze – let!" That means "Bozeno – pour" (the wine). And that is from an authentic source!

We had no idea cold could be so **Cold**. Not like we know cold in Houston in the early morning of an occasional "Norther." This cold is constant. But people still go to work, do their shopping, little **Alzbetka** (Elizabeth) 3 ½ months old goes for a daily long pram outing snow or rain and Annie's mother **Hermina Drobilicova**, age 94 goes to daily mass a few blocks away!

We so look forward to seeing you at the **CCMH St. Nicholas Eve** gathering with a festive Buffet, Carols and great fun and St. Nick and his colleagues angel and devil **Friday, December 5th**. RSVP please for this ancient cultural tradition to **713 528 2060** which we have been observing for thirteen years with Members and Friends or to czech@czechcenter.org at your earliest.

Happy Thanksgiving to you all. We are grateful for family and friends and for what you all mean to the Czech Center Museum Houston.

Warmest regards,
Effie M. Rosene
W. G. Bill Rosene