



Friends of Slovakia NEWSLETTER

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2ND ANNUAL SLOVAK-AMERICAN AWARDS DINNER

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On Wednesday November 10, 2010 Friends of Slovakia (FOS) and the Slovak Embassy co-hosted the second annual Slovak-American Awards Dinner at the Washington Golf & Country Club in Arlington, Virginia. The dinner was attended by approximately 220 guests including Slovak Prime Minister Iveta Radicová, who also gave the evening's keynote address. Other dignitaries at the event included Slovak Ambassador Peter Burian, Slovak State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Mr. Milan Jezovica and Ambassador Daniel Fried, the Obama Administration's Special Envoy to oversee the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention camp.

Three former Slovak Ambassadors to the US (Branislav Lichardus, Martin Butora and Rastislav Kacer) and two former U.S. Ambassadors to Slovakia (Theodore E. Russell and Vincent Obsitnik) as well as the current U.S. Ambassador Theodore Sedgwick were also in attendance.



Prime Minister Radicová and FOS Chairman Joe Senko

The Prime Minister remarked on the positive state of Slovak-American relations and was then presented with the FOS Medal of Honor by FOS Chairman Joe Senko.

(continued on page 2)



Ambassadors Peter Burian, Rastislav Kacer, Martin Butora and Branislav Lichardus



Albina Senko, Martin Butora, Joe Senko and Zora Butorova



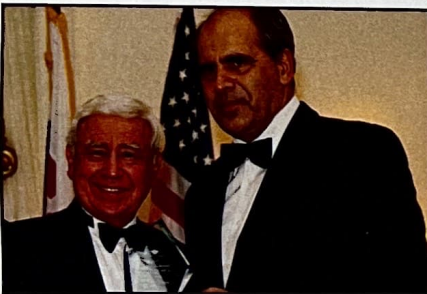
DCM Andrej Droba's table



Maj. Gen. Martin Umberger accepting the Slovak-American Partnership Award from Bill Tucker and Amb. Peter Burian



John Goodish accepting the Slovak-American Economic Cooperation Award from Julie Slavik as Amb. Burian and Kitty Goodish look on



FOS Chairman Joe Senko receiving the Slovak-American of the Year Award from Amb. Burian

Czechoslovakia and its successor states and to Friends of Slovakia members Oliver Gunovsky and Monika Rokus for their grass roots diplomacy in welcoming Slovaks to Washington. The book is viewable in pdf format on the TASR website: <http://www.tasr.sk/files/promoknihy/PPS.pdf>

Dr. Demes is a former foreign policy advisor to the Slovak President (1993-97) and is currently Director for Central and Eastern Europe for the German Marshall Fund of the United States. US Ambassador Theodore Sedgwick hosted a festive book launch for Demes' book at the US Embassy in Bratislava on November 24. Ambassador Burian and FOS sponsored a well attended U.S. book launch at the Slovak Embassy February 10. Dr. Demes and former U.S. diplomats in Bratislava and friends of Slovakia like Ann Gardner and Oliver Gunovsky recalled their experiences helping Slovakia move forward on its democratic development since the Velvet Revolution and independence in 1993. FOS Founding Chairman Ted Russell presented Pavol Demes with the FOS Medal of Honor for his contributions to Slovakia's democratization, civil society and US-Slovak friendship.

John Palka's recently published book "*Moje Slovensko, Moja Rodina*" (My Slovakia, My Family) tells the story of his own life and especially the lives of his Hodža and Pálka ancestors and their roles in the history of the Slovak nation. Tracing the family back 300 years, he recounts the lives and contributions of a number of enterprising traders and craftsmen during the times of the guilds and the industrial revolution, as well as noted personalities such as Michal Miloslav Hodža (one of the famous trio of Štur-Hurban-Hodza of the Slovak National Awakening), Milan Hodža (prime Minister from 1935-1938, and Ján Pálka (a social and business visionary during the First Republic). The Slovak version, published in Slovakia by Kalligram, is available through its website www.Kalligram.sk. John currently is exploring possibilities to publish the English version. For more information, please contact John Palka directly at jpalka@whidbey.com. ♦

The following three awards were presented at the dinner:

♦ The **Slovak-American Partnership Award**, a joint FOS/Slovak Embassy award, was presented to **Major General Martin Umberger**, the Adjutant General of the Indiana Army and Air National Guard. A partnership between Slovakia and the Indiana National Guard was established in 1994 and over the past 16 years of collaboration, more than 8000 projects or activities were performed under the umbrella of this partnership.

♦ The **Slovak-American Economic Cooperation Award**, a joint FOS/Slovak Embassy award, was presented to **John H. Goodish**, Executive Vice President and COO of US Steel Corporation. Mr. Goodish was the first President of U.S. Steel Košice, s.r.o. (2000-2003) and worked throughout the past decade on developing strategies, directing investments and overseeing U.S. Steel's operation in Slovakia.

♦ The Embassy's **Slovak-American of the Year Award** was presented to **Joe Senko**, Chairman of Friends of Slovakia and Slovak Honorary Consul in Pittsburgh, PA. Joe, whose parents immigrated to the US from Eastern Slovakia, has remained a close friend of Slovakia and has worked tirelessly for many years on improving and nurturing the strong bonds that exist between the US and Slovakia

A silent auction was held during the gala dinner, which raised in excess of \$10,000 for the FOS Scholarship Fund and the Slovak Embassy/Honorary Consuls' Roma Scholarship. Musical entertainment was provided by Radoslav Lesay, a talented young Slovak tenor in New York, and Charleston Virtuosi, a string ensemble from Charleston, South Carolina.

NEW BOOKS ON SLOVAKIA

Dr. Pavol Demes recently published a book in English and Slovak on Slovak-American relations entitled "*Friend-Partner-Ally: The Story of the Slovak-American Relationship from the Velvet Revolution to This Day*." It is dedicated to Madeleine Albright for her assistance to the democratic transition of



Dr. Demes, Ambs. Burian and Russell "christen" the book

Prime Minister Radicová Gives Czech & Slovak Freedom Lecture

Slovakia has made much progress in its transition from part of a socialist, pro-Soviet republic to an independent, democratic nation, but there remains much hard work ahead. That was the theme of remarks by Prime Minister Iveta Radicová at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars on November 10, 2010. Her lecture was part of the Wilson Center's Director's Forum series. It was the 11th Annual Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture sponsored by Friends of Slovakia (FOS), the American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR) and the Slovak and Czech Embassies. It was attended by an overflow audience of members of FOS and AFoCR, US and foreign government representatives, Washington think tank members and the members of the press. The Prime Minister's remarks were live webcast and later televised by MHz Networks.

Radicová began her speech by recognizing the accomplishments Slovakia has achieved since becoming an independent state, but acknowledged the aid and support the country has received from friendly nations and trans-Atlantic partnerships. She pointed to the recent increase of the Slovak contingent in Afghanistan, as an example of returned support from Slovakia. She emphasized Slovakia's desire to maintain good relations between the U.S. and other European nations and the country's firm commitment to the European Union. The transition to democracy has not been easy for Slovakia, Radicová said, but she maintained that Slovakia has been "successful in establishing a democratic, pluralistic system, a market economy, and an independent state, as well as integration into the Euro-Atlantic community." She acknowledged that not all are happy with the transition and spoke of particular resistance to reforms in the beginning of the transition. She attributed much of the dissatisfaction with the transition to a growth in inequality – which led some to believe the new, free market system to be less just than the old, socialist one – and "tendencies toward authoritarianism [that] accompanied the transition towards a new regime." By 2006, however, Radicová claimed that opposition to democratic and free market reforms had declined and most of the population recognized that the system needed merely "fine tuning," rather than radical changes. She attributed this change in opinion in part to Slovakia's admission into the European Union in 2004, which she credited for inspiring confidence in economic growth. Radicová spoke favorably of Slovakia's admission into the EU, saying that after the country joined the EU, the economy grew, real wages increased, while inflation and unemployment fell. She said that worries about joining the EU did not materialize in significant ways and that the citizens have a largely positive view of the country's EU membership. On the issue of EU expansion, Radicová, said that "Slovakia is very much in favor of future EU and NATO enlargement, providing that the countries of the western Balkans and other regions are willing to prove their readiness." When asked about Slovakia's recent opposition to the admission of Kosovo into the EU, however, she said that Slovakia's "position has not changed."



(l-r) Joe Senko, Amb. Ted Russell, Michael Van Dusen, Prime Minister Iveta Radicová, Peter Rafaeli, Amb. Peter Burian, Bill Tucker and Julie Slavik.

Radicová addressed several challenges currently facing Slovakia. Particularly, the Prime Minister highlighted the need to create economic stability and reduce government corruption. To create economic stability, she pointed to her ambitious plan for consolidating public funds and said that the government has to focus primarily on "jobs, jobs, jobs." She also said that reform efforts aimed at reducing corruption were already underway – using the internet and new technology to publicize legal rulings and government contract awards and to make the government more open and transparent.

In the question and answer section of the event, Radicová was asked about the recent controversial language and citizenship laws in Slovakia that have caused tensions with Hungary. She expressed a firm commitment to ease these tensions and said that she and the Hungarian Prime Minister had agreed to work on finding solutions to problems caused by the citizenship laws. Other challenges she addressed included the problems affecting Slovakia's Roma communities and the economic disparity between Slovakia's urban centers and rural regions. In addressing both of these issues, she again focused on the economy and job creation. She said that legal conditions and financial resources need to be targeted at individual Roma communities (as opposed to a holistic approach to the Roma people), and should center on three priorities: education, jobs, and housing. She cautioned that these programs must not be open exclusively to Roma, but must take into account the needs and desires of all Slovaks in those communities to avoid stoking tensions. She noted that several such social programs are underway to promote development and economic security among Roma communities and in wider Slovakia. At the conclusion of her presentation Ted Russell, Founding Chairman of Friends of Slovakia, presented Prime Minister Radicová with the organization's Medal of Honor and Thomas Dine, President of the American Friends of the Czech Republic presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation. ♦



Prime Minister Iveta Radicová speaking at the Woodrow Wilson Center

REMEMBER US WHEN GIFTING

The Friends of Slovakia (FOS) depends on its individual members, corporations, and other nonprofit organizations for support. Here are just a few ways that you can help. FOS is a 501(c) (3) organization, which makes all of your donations tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- Contributions designated to the FOS Slovak Scholarship fund
- Purchase of plaque on the "Wall of Honor" at the Slovak Embassy
- Designating a contribution to FOS in your will
- Attending FOS' fundraising dinners in Washington, DC
- Additional funds sent with your annual membership dues
- Contribution from your IRA
- Corporate matching charitable contributions

If you would like to discuss these, or any other options for supporting FoS, please contact Bill Tucker at 703-525-4445 or tuckintl@radix.net.



Genevieve Knezo, Archie Casey and Lillian McEnany at Wall of Honor Sept. 2010

A growing trend in gift-giving that celebrates anniversaries, birthdays or important holidays is to make a donation on behalf of someone to their favorite cause. This is possible with FOS as well. With a donation of \$250 or more, you can make a gift that will appear on the FOS Wall of Honor. Each year a new series of plaques appears on the Wall, located in the garden of the Slovak Embassy in Washington, D.C. The donation deadline for each "class" of plaques is December 31st. Donors and honorees are recognized and thanked at a reception at the Slovak Embassy, usually in September, shortly after the plaques are installed.

For more information about participating in the FOS Wall of Honor, please contact Julie Slavik at JLJSlavik@aol.com.

MEMBERS OF SLOVAK CABINET

| NAME | CABINET POSITION |
|------------------|--|
| Iveta Radičová | Prime Minister |
| Ján Figel' | Deputy Prime Minister Minister of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications |
| Rudolf Chmel | Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities |
| Ivan Mikloš | Deputy Prime Minister Minister of Finance |
| Jozef Mihál | Deputy Prime Minister Minister of Labor, Social Affairs and Family |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | Minister of Foreign Affairs |
| Ľubomír Galko | Minister of Defense |
| Daniel Lipšic | Minister for the Interior |
| Lucia Žitňanská | Minister of Justice |
| Juraj Miškov | Minister of Economy and Construction |
| Eugen Jurzyca | Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport |
| Ivan Uhliarík | Minister of Health Care |
| Daniel Krajcer | Minister of Culture and Tourism |
| Zsolt Simon | Minister of Agriculture and Regional Development |
| József Nagy | Minister of Environment |

NCSML CONFERENCE

March 11 and 12, 2011

The 20th Century in Retrospect, 1989-2001: Transition to Democracy is the theme of the upcoming conference of the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This is the third bi-annual conference in this series. Featured speakers include Amb. Peter Burian, FOS Advisory Committee members Ambs. Adrian Basora and Martin Butora, and Zora Butorova. For details and to register, go to www.NCSML.org, click on events, or call 319-362-8500, ext. 218.

AMB. THEODORE SEDGWICK'S LETTER TO FOS

I thoroughly enjoyed visiting with your board when I was back in DC in November. I hope your board members and supporters will check in with us at the embassy whenever you come through town.

Ambassador Ted Russell asked me to write a few words on my views on current US-Slovak relations. From where I sit as U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia, our relations could not be stronger.

The Slovak Parliament in December lifted the caveats on its troops going to Afghanistan so Slovak Special Forces will be fighting alongside NATO allied forces. The Parliament took this action with virtually no discussion or controversy because the Slovak people understand they have a role to play in the fight against terrorism. European Command's Major General Repass, Commander of the Special Operations Command for Europe, will be visiting Slovakia February 3-4 to confer on the final preparations for this mission and to ensure Slovak forces integrate well with U.S. and allied forces already in theatre.

For better or worse, relationships between countries are often measured by the high-level meetings they have. By this measure, US-Slovak relations are also quite robust. Foreign Minister Mikulas Dzurinda had a most productive meeting in October with Secretary Clinton, whom he has personally known during the time he served as Prime Minister and Secretary Clinton was First Lady. In November, Slovak Prime Minister Radicova also met with Secretary Clinton, at which time the Prime Minister laid out the new government's program and reviewed every aspect of the relations between our two countries. Finally, the State Department's number two, Deputy Secretary James Steinberg, came here to Bratislava in early October for meetings with Defense Minister Galko and Foreign Minister Dzurinda.

Through its V4 leadership, Slovakia is playing a constructive and proactive role in promoting stability in the Western Balkans by assisting – in very pragmatic ways – countries aspiring to EU and NATO membership. In addition, Foreign Minister Dzurinda has been outspoken about our mutual concerns regarding the ongoing detention of opposition members, journalists, and peaceful protestors in Belarus. Clearly, the days of business as usual with Belarus are over, and I believe Slovakia is playing an important role in shaping European consensus on that issue.

The new coalition government's agenda happily is parallel in many ways to our own – promoting greater transparency, energy security, rule of law, innovation and educational exchange.

In the commercial sphere, we see increased investment in Slovakia. The Slovak government is wisely focusing its state aid on sustainable, knowledge-based industries and is in the process of attracting some major blue-chip American companies. We hope to hear some announcements soon.

Slovakia still has a ways to go in assuring investors that its judicial system has sufficient integrity. Apart from infrastructure, this is the major concern of businesses either currently or prospectively interested in investing in the country. I believe Slovak public opinion is beginning to come to terms with the seriousness of this issue, however, based on what I heard at a useful conference hosted by the Open Society Foundation in Bratislava on "Judicial Reform in the V4." Also, a recent editorial I read in the weekly "tyzden" by Stefan Hrib on the subject was one of the most forthright opinion pieces I've seen to date.

Finally, let me say that I believe the Embassy initiative that has the greatest return on investment in promoting the US-Slovak relationship is sponsoring exchange programs in which Slovaks visit the U.S. and/or attend U.S. universities. Just this month we sponsored five members of the Slovak Parliament on a two-week trip to the U.S. where they were able to exchange ideas with the full spectrum of U.S. society. I can't thank the Friends of Slovakia enough for your leadership in recognizing the value of educational exchanges and raising funds for Slovak students to study in the United States.



SLOVAK ATLANTIC COMMISSION INITIATIVE

Ambassador Rastislav Kacer, former Slovak Ambassador to Washington and member of the FOS Advisory Board is President and founding member of the Slovak Atlantic Commission (SAC). The SAC, in cooperation with the Slovak Foreign Affairs Ministry, NATO and the European Commission since 2005 has organized an annual high level foreign policy and security conference for Central Europe. Its September 13-14 conference in Bratislava last year hosted 50 distinguished speakers, including the Slovak, Czech and Hungarian Foreign Ministers, and featured seven panels with topics ranging from the new strategic concept of NATO, the newly energized Visegrad Four, and Eastern Europe and the Eastern Partnership. The next GLOBSEC Conference will take place in March 2011. Summaries of proceedings from these important conferences are available on the GLOBSEC website:

www.atasac.org/globsec2011

NATIONAL CZECH & SLOVAK MUSEUM BREAKS GROUND ON NEW BUILDING



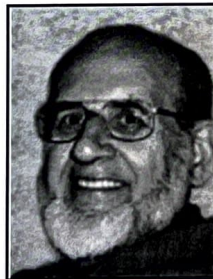
On the painfully cold afternoon of December, 15, 2010, over 100 people cheered as 14 silver shovels and one golden pickaxe were wielded to officially break ground and commemorate the start of construction of a new museum and library. The building will replace the flood damaged home of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. "What an overwhelming feeling to be standing here on the very ground where we faced the destruction of our museum in 2008," said Sue Olson, chair of the NCSML Board of Directors. "I can see, clearly and with confidence, a world-class museum and library right here opening in 2012."

Following the groundbreaking, all in attendance repaired to the museum's Kosek Building for champagne, refreshments, and another announcement: the NCSML has reached its initial capital fund raising goal of \$25 million. "We have successfully concluded the first challenging phase of our recovery and rebirth," said Gail Naughton, president/CEO.

While the NCSML has had to focus on capital rebuilding, officials have always realized and planned for what goes on inside the building. "Our incomparable building must be populated by incomparable events and programs," said Naughton. So the NCSML is proceeding with a national initiative to provide support for exceptional programming, educational services and exhibitions on a national scale. To date 302 donors have participated with 75% from Iowa. "Cedar Rapids and Iowa have stepped up saying this museum is critical to our heritage, our knowledge of who we are. We believe our national friends and supporters will join them."

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library was devastated by eight feet of water inside its museum when the Cedar River rose to 31 feet above flood stage on June 13, 2008. Construction progress via live webcams can be viewed on the NCSML website at www.NCSML.org. For more information, call 319-362-8500. ♦

In Memoriam EDWARD KESHOCK



Dr. Edward Keshock, the Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic for the State of Ohio since 1999, died suddenly on Dec. 9, 2010. In the past 20 years he served as president of the Cleveland-Bratislava Sister Cities organization. He worked tirelessly welcoming ambassadors and consuls, members of Parliament, cabinet ministers, and figures from the fields of education, music and art. In 1995 he co-hosted a 35-member delegation from Slovakia at the White House Conference on Trade and Investment. He participated in many cultural programs that furthered greater understanding between Ohio and Slovakia. He enjoyed a long and satisfying career in mechanical engineering. He taught for more than 30 years at Cleveland State University and served as chairperson of its Mechanical Engineering Department. In 2003 he was awarded a Fulbright Research Scholar appointment and used it to do research and present seminars at Russian and Siberian scientific institutes. He also received various visiting professorships and research appointments in China, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Poland and the United Kingdom. Edward's final kindness was the gift of sight as an eye donor, thus benefiting two recipients. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Mary Jo Keshock, three children and a large extended family. ♦

In Memoriam OLGA GALLIK McCLURE



Olga Gallik McClure, a devoted Friend of Slovakia, died in September aged 87. Mrs. McClure was the daughter of Slovak immigrants and the first of her three siblings to graduate from Cornell University.

She worked in an amazing variety of jobs, but her work as assistant to diplomats in the Polish, French and Korean embassies may have been what led her to apply to the CIA. However, by the time the security check was completed, she had married Brooks McClure, a Washington journalist who was joining the State Department. A dual career was not possible in the '50s. So Mrs. McClure became a Foreign Service wife, serving her country in Europe and the Middle and Far East. After her husband's retirement from government, they lived in Washington, and she was active in Slovak and Czech societies. Aware of the popularity of the English language in Slovakia and the limited supply of English materials to use in teaching, in 2002 Mrs. McClure provided 20-year subscriptions to *National Geographic* magazine to 26 schools and libraries across the country. For this project the Slovak government awarded Mr. and Mrs. McClure its presidential medal. ♦



PROFILE: LADIES PENNSYLVANIA SLOVAK CATHOLIC UNION (LPSCU)

(This article is one of an occasional series profiling important Slovak-American fraternal and other organizations.)

The Ladies Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Union, a major Slovak-American fraternal organization, is in its second century of operation. Founded in 1898, the LPSCU offers insurance products to its members, supports a range of fraternal activities, honors its American heritage and Catholic values, and fosters an awareness of Slovak-related history, culture, and current events.

Like other Slovak-American fraternal organizations, the LPSCU was founded in response to the need for insurance among Slovak immigrant workers and their families. Many immigrant-worker families struggled economically and could not afford life insurance. The untimely death of the primary breadwinner could leave widows and their families in desperate straits, burdened by funeral expenses and the loss of income. To respond to these needs, a group of eight pioneering women met in Hazelton, Pennsylvania and agreed to work toward the formation of a fraternal society to provide needed benefits. The organization, originally known as the Women's Pennsylvania Slovak Roman and Greek Catholic Union, was formed with five branches and received its charter from the state of Pennsylvania in 1900.

The LPSCU still thrives today under the leadership of President Theresa Kluchinski and its slate of national officers. Its headquarters are in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, although its activities are nation-wide. LPSCU focuses primarily on offering a range of life insurance products to its members. In the third quarter of 2010, LPSCU reported assets of over \$14 million and revenues of over \$700,000. What makes the fraternal unique is their support for a variety of activities that reflect broader values beyond financial ones. A number of educational scholarships are offered to students who are members, and LPSCU supports organizations and social activities through its headquarters and branches. These activities help enrich the lives of members and their families, with a focus on fostering a strong sense of patriotism and Catholic values. But importantly, the LPSCU never loses sight of its Slovak heritage. It supports cultural awareness and provides its members with Slovak-related information through its bi-monthly magazine, *Zornička* (Morning Star), see www.lpscu.org.

In 2010, the organization was deeply saddened by the loss of past LPSCU President Cecilia Sarocky. Ms. Sarocky served in various roles with LPSCU for over fifty years, was its national president 1978-96, and its honorary president since 1997. A former employee of U.S. Steel, Ms. Sarocky also served in various roles with other fraternal associations, and received numerous honors from government, the Catholic Church, and Slovak-related organizations. She served as chairperson of the annual "Slovak Day" celebration in Pittsburgh. She also received the Friends of Slovakia/Slovak Embassy Medal of Honor in 2004. Cecilia embodied the spirit of the pioneering women who founded the LPSCU and who sought to protect their families while honoring God, country, and their Slovak heritage. ♦

BARBARA PIVNICKA SLOVAK CONSUL IN SAN FRANCISCO

Barbara Pivnicka is the first woman in the U.S. to be named as an honorary consul by the Slovak Republic. She also serves as Vice Dean of the San Francisco Consular Corps, the third-largest consular community in the U.S. whose members represent 78 countries, and is secretary-treasurer for this organization.

She is currently president and CEO of the San Francisco Global Trade Council, a nonprofit group founded in 1992 that is focused on international trade and commerce issues. Earlier, she served as the interim executive director of the International Diplomacy Council. It is now part of the Institute of International Education, responsible for a full spectrum of international exchange and educational programs. She is a member of the advisory board of the Institute's West Coast Center.



She is involved in other community and civic organizations as well: Commonwealth Club, University of San Francisco's Center for the Study of the Pacific Rim, and Girl Scouts, Northern California Chapter. She has won various awards, including being named San Francisco's Volunteer of the Year by the Bay Area Management Center. She graduated with honors from the University of San Francisco. ♦