



# Friends of Slovakia NEWSLETTER

Volume 13, Issue 1 • Winter 2011

## THIRD ANNUAL SLOVAK-AMERICAN AWARDS DINNER

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Amb. Theodore E. Russell**  
Founding Chairman
- Joseph T. Senko**  
Chairman and Treasurer
- William Tucker, Esq.**  
Vice Chairman and President
- Julie Brès Slávik**  
Secretary
- Kenneth J. Bombara**
- Amb. Peter Burian**
- Dr. Sharon Fisher**
- Frederick Frank, Esq.**
- Roger Kodat**
- Peter Muzila**
- Peter A. Rafaeli**
- Scott Salmon**
- Thomas W. Skladony**
- Scott Thayer**
- Prof. Sharon L. Wolchik**

### BOARD OF ADVISORS

- Ingrid Kimianova Aielli**
- Amb. Adrian A. Basora**
- Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski**
- Amb. Martin Butora**
- Mary Ellen Callahan, Esq.**
- Dr. Pavol Demes**
- Thomas A. Dine**
- Amb. Julie Finley**
- John H. Goodish**
- Amb. Rastislav Kacer**
- Hon. Michal Kovac**
- Amb. Branislav Lichardus**
- Hon. Frank E. Loy**
- Wendy W. Luers**
- Hon. John L. Mica**
- Gail Naughton**
- Prof. Michael Novak**
- Amb. Vincent Obsitnik**
- Juraj L.J. Slavik**
- Amb. Carl Spielvogel**
- Peter Stastny**
- Jan Erik Surotchak**
- Amb. Ronald Weiser**

On Thursday, November 17, 2011 Friends of Slovakia (FOS) and the Slovak Embassy co-hosted the third annual Slovak-American Awards Dinner at the Washington Golf & Country Club. The dinner was attended by approximately 210 guests including the evening's keynote speaker, The Honorable Frantisek Sebej, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Slovak National Council. Mr. Sebej was also the recipient of the 2011 Politics/Diplomacy Award at the dinner for his long-term efforts building US-Slovak cooperation and partnership.



Rep. John Mica, Joe Senko, Iveta Liskova, Juraj Droba, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Amb. Peter Burian, Mrs. Nina Burian, Frantisek Sebej

Other dignitaries at the event included Slovak Ambassador Peter Burian, US ambassador to Slovakia Theodore Sedgwick, Congressman John Mica, former Slovak Ambassador to the US Branislav Lichardus, former US Ambassador to Slovakia Vincent Obsitnik and Ambassador Daniel Fried, the State Department's Special Envoy for Guantanamo and former Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs.



Frantisek Sebej, Amb. Theodore Sedgwick, Amb. Ted Russell, Amb. Peter Burian

Mr. Sebej's keynote address focused on the strength of the US-Slovak relationship, the lure of living in freedom and democracy and the momentous changes that have taken place in Slovakia since the country emerged from Communism after the "Gentle Revolution" which began on November 17, 1989.

A number of other awards were presented during the evening to the following worthy recipients:



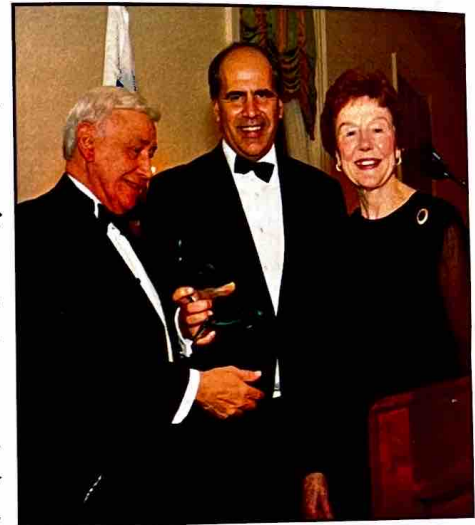
Amb. Theodore Sedgwick, Bill Tucker, Amb. Richard Graber, Amb. Peter Burian

The *Economic Cooperation Award* was presented to Honeywell International, Inc. for the work Honeywell continues to do in Slovakia. Ambassador Richard W. Graber, Vice President of Government Relations, accepted the award on Honeywell's behalf.

The Embassy's *Slovak-American of the Year Award* was presented to Mary Ann Johaneck, President of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association, for her guidance in strengthening the Association's financial position and expanding its membership.

The *Humanitarian Award* was presented to Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of

Washington, for his outstanding decades-long human rights advocacy work. In addition to promoting religious liberty and rights for migrants and refugees, he was chair of the Bishops' Committee on Aid to the Church in Eastern and Central Europe.



Joe Senko, Amb. Peter Burian, Mary Ann Johaneck

The *Culture/Sports Award* was presented to former professional hockey player Peter Bondra for his outstanding sportsmanship and contributions to Slovak-American friendship. Mr. Bondra was a player with the Washington Capitals for 14 years until 2004. He then played with several other teams and ultimately joined the select group of players who have scored more than 500 goals. Since retiring, Mr. Bondra has become general manager for the Slovak National Team.



Julie Slavik and Peter Bondra

A silent auction was held during the gala dinner, which raised just under \$9,000 for the FOS Scholarship Fund and the Slovak Embassy/Honorary Consuls' Roma Scholarship.

Musical entertainment was provided by the renowned Slovak pianist Ms. Eva Virsik, and Charleston Virtuosi, a string ensemble from Charleston, South Carolina. ♦



Guests survey the variety of items donated to the silent auction.



One table gathers for a pre-dinner photo.

## HONEYWELL INTERNATIONAL RECEIVES THE FOS/SLOVAK EMBASSY ECONOMIC COOPERATION AWARD

Honeywell International, Inc. was awarded the Economic Cooperation Award by Friends of Slovakia and the Slovak Embassy at the third annual Slovak-American Awards Dinner on November 17. This award recognizes an individual, company or organization whose career endeavors or achievements have contributed to Slovakia's economic prosperity, thereby strengthening US-Slovak economic and business ties. The award was presented to Ambassador Richard W. Graber, Honeywell's Vice President of Government Relations.



Honeywell, founded in 1906, is a preeminent American company and a Fortune 100 diversified technology and manufacturing leader with approximately \$33 billion dollars in worldwide revenue in 2010 and 130,000 employees. The company also has a growing impact and presence in Slovakia. After first entering Slovakia in the early 1990s, Honeywell currently has over 650 employees in the country. The number of Slovak employees is expected to increase to over 1,000 in three or four years when the turbocharger plant currently under construction in Presov is completed. Honeywell's investment in Slovakia to construct this new plant will be in excess of \$50 million. This is in addition to millions Honeywell invested in Slovakia two to three years ago to establish the Honeywell Life Safety Plant in Partizanske. ♦



### In Memoriam Ambassador Henry Owen

Friends of Slovakia was saddened to learn of the passing of our Board of Advisors' member Ambassador Henry Owen on November 5, 2011. Ambassador Owen had a distinguished career at the State Department with its Policy Planning Staff and subsequently with the foreign policy studies program at the Brookings Institution. He then served as Ambassador-at-Large for President Carter acting as a "Sherpa" for the U.S. government organizing three major international economic summits. Ambassador Owen then served as Chairman of the Bretton Woods Committee building understanding and support for the activities of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization. In his later years, Ambassador Owen helped found and support the activities of Capital Partners for Education providing educational opportunities for low-income students in the Washington area. Friends of Slovakia extends our condolences to his family and many friends. ♦



Former Slovak Ambassador to Washington Martin Butora has informed FOS that The Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) in Bratislava has prepared a unique publication comprising more than 20,000 pages written by more than 200 authors and reviewed by dozens of reviewers. It is a comprehensive electronic version (DVD) of annual IVO reports on the state of Slovak society. It is entitled ***Slovakia 1996 – 2010 A Global Report on the State of Society*** and contains 15 years of analyses\*\* more than 20,000 pages \*\* by more than 200 authors.

#### ***The Slovakia 1996 – 2010 DVD includes:***

- 14 issues of the Slovak version of *Slovensko. Súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti*.
- 9 issues of the English version of *Slovakia. A Global Report on the State of Society*
- 3 more books in English – annual reports on the quality of democracy, *Slovakia 2008, 2009, 2010. Trends in Quality of Democracy*.

You can order the DVD from the IVO e-shop on <http://www.ivo.sk/6668>. Credit card payment available.  
For more information please contact Jan Bartos at [Bartos@ivo.sk](mailto:Bartos@ivo.sk).

## A SPIRITED PARTNERSHIP.....

Can you imagine building an ultra-premium vodka sitting around a dining room table in Princeton, New Jersey? That's exactly what experienced entrepreneur Dr. Malcolm Lloyd and spirits industry veteran John Gellner did when they set out to create their fast-growing Double Cross Vodka brand.

Industry research and contacts indicated that they could potentially partner with a distillery nearly anywhere in the world, including the U.S. But a relationship Malcolm Lloyd had with a college friend who was working in the foreign service in Bratislava led to a summertime visit and ultimately a fruitful business partnership with a family-owned distillery located in the Tatra Mountains in northeast Slovakia.



Master Distiller Jan Krak at Double Cross Distillery, Stara Lubovna

premium vodka segment. Double Cross is now available in more than 30 states across the U.S and can be found in The Palm and Morton's, national steakhouse chains.

"I knew when I saw the distillery, met the people behind it and tasted the vodka that we had found a great partner," says Lloyd. "And it doesn't hurt that it's in such a beautiful location."

Today, Double Cross Vodka is handcrafted by Master Distiller Jan Krak, who runs all spirits production at the distillery, which is located in Stara Lubovna, a 13th-century village in the foothills of the Tatras. Launched in the U.S. in 2008, Double Cross is now available in 37 states throughout the U.S. It has garnered numerous awards since launch, including a 95-point review in Wine Enthusiast magazine and gold medals in both taste and bottle design at the World Spirits Competition.

The award-winning bottle emphasizes the brand's Slovak heritage with 18th-century Slovak poetry emblazoned on the back of the bottle. The lines of poetry are pulled from a number of poems by various famous Slovak poets, including Jan Holly and Vladomir Roy.

On the Slovak side of the business, Double Cross is managed by Juraj Droba, an experienced PR and marketing executive and current member of the Slovak Parliament, along with Double Cross country liaison Eduard Heger. Production of the vodka requires frequent visits to Slovakia by Malcolm Lloyd and other members of the U.S. team, something they all enjoy.

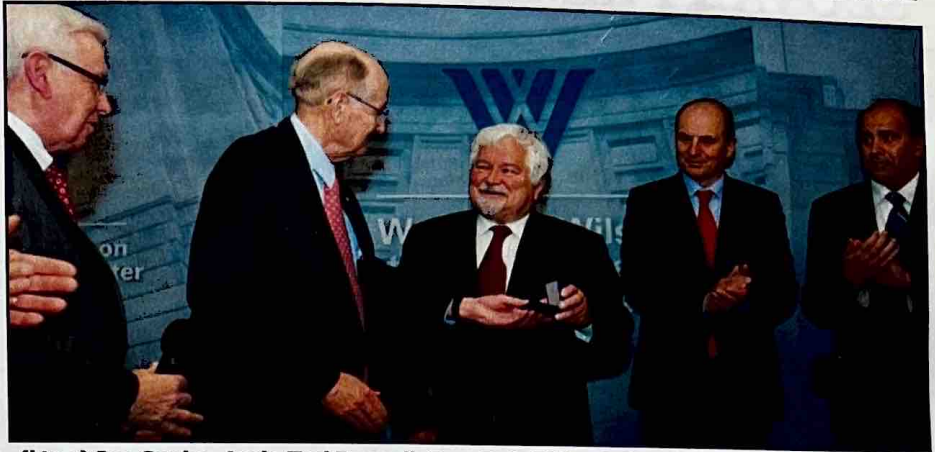
"We've all come to love our trips to Slovakia," says Lloyd. "The people, the landscapes, the food, the old towns and villages – it's truly a pleasure to do business in Slovakia."

Since its launch in the U.S., Double Cross has doubled its sales each year and is on track to be a powerful player in the ultra-premium vodka segment.

"We're thrilled with our growth so far," says Lloyd. "We know that we have an exceptional vodka and a unique brand story. We're honored to be able to bring this world-class Slovak vodka to the rest of the globe." ♦

## FORMER CZECH PRIME MINISTER PITHART DELIVERS 2011 FREEDOM LECTURE

Czech Senate Vice President and former Czech Prime Minister (1990-1992) Petr Pithart delivered the 12th annual Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture at the Woodrow Wilson Center on November 17. The lecture was organized by the American Friends of the Czech Republic, Friends of Slovakia and the Czech and Slovak Embassies. Sen. Pithart spoke to an audience of members of FOS, AFoCR, the diplomatic corps, and representatives of Washington think tanks. At the conclusion of his remarks FOS presented Senator Pithart with its medal of honor and AFoCR presented a joint certificate of appreciation. Senator Pithart's topic was "Does the Czech Constitution Provide a Solid Base for the Nation's Political Health in Comparison with the U.S. Constitution?" He made a compelling case that it does so and praised the "inspiration" provided by the U.S. Constitution.



(l to r) Joe Senko, Amb. Ted Russell, Sen. Petr Pithart, Czech Amb. Petr Gandalovic, Amb. Peter Burian at Medal of Honor presentation

*The following brief excerpts from Senator Pithart's lecture provide the gist of his thought provoking, challenging, but ultimately hopeful remarks.*

"Freedom is unthinkable outside a stable and firm agreed fundamental framework of rights and duties defined by the Constitution.

...the Constitution from 1992 was inspired by the United States mainly by provident conciseness and in-built difficulty to amend it. I believe that it was very good inspiration.

Concise and rigid constitutions need a constitutional court that would not turn away with aversion from rulings which have immediate or indirect implications for politics as such.

In spite of all significant differences (in the United States there is a presidential system in a federation) a strong and independent justice system serves as a relatively most reliable guarantee of democracy and civil rights.

It is often thought that the most important guarantee of freedom is the division of power, i.e. the system of checks and balances, which was for the first time brought to life by your Constitution. But even this system has to be protected by someone in specific disputes concerning its interpretation.

Democracy is not a commodity that can be exported easily, which however does not mean that there can be no inspiration.

A self-confident and strong system of justice requires also self-confident and mainly morally strong judges and public prosecuting officers who will not take heed of interests of political parties or governments.

...we agreed that the Constitution would be concise, i.e. open to future development through judicial interpretation. It was also important that it incorporated into the constitutional system the Senate as well as the Constitutional Court and that the Senate was granted a major say in appointing members of that court. The American inspiration was clear in that respect. Now after almost twenty years I can say that this has proven to be the most important feature.

The American inspiration was followed largely thanks to the late constitutional judge Vojtech Cepl. He was one of the greatest admirers of the United States, among other things on the waves of Radio Free Europe when it relocated to Prague. I just wanted to pay tribute to him in front of this audience.

Provided we know how to use the Constitution, provided we are not afraid to use it, and in particular provided we resist the attempts to rob it – to exaggerate slightly – of its American features, freedom in general as well as the freedom of people and citizens, does not need to be at risk even in the hard times ahead." ♦

## SLOVAK PRIME MINISTER VISITS NEW YORK CITY

Slovak Prime Minister Ivetta Radičová recently visited New York to attend the opening of the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly. During her visit, she had a personal meeting with President Barack Obama. Later that evening, the Prime Minister attended a reception in her honor hosted by Friends of Slovakia, Slovak Ambassador to the U.S., Peter Burian, and Slovak Ambassador to the United Nations, Milos Koterec.



Friends of Slovakia board members Joe Senko (l) and Peter Muzila (r) greet the Prime Minister at the FOS reception

At the reception, she met with representatives of several Slovak-American organizations and fraternal societies. Ms. Radičová was happy to be greeted by many Slovaks and Slovak-Americans who can still speak the Slovak language. Over 100 guests were in attendance. ♦

## FRIENDS OF SLOVAKIA RECOGNIZES DONORS FOR 2011

On September 14th, Friends of Slovakia welcomed and recognized the generosity of its donors as the Wall of Honor plaques for 2011 were viewed for the first time. This event, part of the Slovak Embassy's annual Constitution Day observance, gave the many guests the opportunity to visit the FOS Wall of Honor in the embassy garden. Donors qualify for either individual plaques or an inscription on the large yearly group plaque through their financial support of FOS and its programs.

For 2011, the following individuals and organizations were eligible for inscriptions on the group plaque:

Emmis International – Rádio Expres  
 First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association  
 Dr. Sharon Fisher  
 Rosemary Harvilla Goila  
 Roger Kodat  
 Stefan and Maria Korcek  
 Thomas Kosik  
 Jack Krasula  
 Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Manos  
 Richard Marko  
 Dr. and Mrs. Zoltan Mesko

Cecilia Rokusek  
 Martin Valko  
 Dennis and Rosemary Wisnosky

Individual plaques recognize:

BAE Systems  
 Eco-Invest, a.s  
 Raytheon  
 Kroger Inc./Sipko Family  
 The First Catholic Slovak Union  
 U.S. Steel

Begun in 2001, the FOS Wall of Honor represents tributes, memories and recognition of hundreds of individual Slovak-Americans and our significant corporate supporters.

FOS thanks all who have generously supported the organization and hopes that you, our readers, will visit the Wall of Honor and that you will consider supporting FOS by purchasing an inscription or individual plaque in the coming year. For more information, please visit our website or contact Julie Slavik (JLJSlavik@aol.com). ♦

# SLOVAKIA APPOINTS NEW HONORARY CONSUL

**P**eter Korn was installed as the Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic for the State of South Carolina at a special ceremony on September 25, 2011. He is the 11th Slovak honorary consul presently serving in the United States.

Born in Chicago with Slovak grandparents, Peter moved to South Carolina after serving in the Marine Corps in Vietnam. He earned his law degree from the University of South Carolina and practices real estate law in Columbia, South Carolina. Peter and his wife, Patty, have three

grown children. In his installation remarks, Peter vowed to devote a great effort to assist small businesses in Slovakia to grow and to establish export opportunities. ♦



(l to r) Dr. Belinda Gergel, member of Columbia City Council; Bob Coble, former Mayor of Columbia; Peter Korn; Steve Benjamin, Mayor of Columbia; Milan Jezovica, Slovak State Secretary of Foreign Affairs; and Peter Burian, Slovak Ambassador to the U.S.

## “INVEST IN SLOVAKIA” SEMINAR HELD IN COLUMBIA, SC

**F**OS Chairman, Joe Senko, and Board members Slovak Ambassador Peter Burian, Peter Muzila and Roger Kodat attended a half-day “Invest in Slovakia” seminar in Columbia, SC on September 26, 2011. The seminar was connected with the installation of Peter Korn as Slovak Honorary Consul in Columbia. About 70 people, including representatives of many South Carolina companies, attended the event. Senior Slovak diplomats Milan Jezovica, State Secretary of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Slovak Ambassador Peter Burian were keynote speakers, providing a compelling case for trade and investment from the Slovak perspective. Glen Farrell, of the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency also spoke. American experiences with business and investment in Slovakia were provided by Jake Slegers, Executive Director of the AmCham in Slovakia; Art Simonetti, VP of Honeywell, Inc.; David Ponsar, Senior Commercial Officer at the US Embassy in Slovakia; and Roger Kodat, FOS Board Member and an investment banker with long experience working in and with Slovakia. Based on the positive presentations and the interest expressed by seminar participants, it appears that Peter Korn will be busy working to enhance business and investment links between the Palmetto State and the Slovak Republic. ♦