

## The Vacation of a Lifetime

by Fran Vojík

While many of you were enjoying the light fare, music, and fellowship of the Spring 2024 CSHA Festival, I was on the vacation of a lifetime. Late last year my brother and I decided to celebrate our April birthdays by visiting, for the first time, the home of our forefathers in the Czech Republic.

My grandfather and grandmother were born in southern Bohemia in the 1870's. They emigrated to the U.S. in the 1880's from a small village in southern Bohemia and settled in the Little Bohemia section of East Baltimore. My grandfather, a tailor by trade, bought a home close to St. Wenceslaus church. He worked in his tailor shop, and he and my grandmother raised their large family. I am named after my grandfather and great-grandfather.

So, our trip was a homecoming of sorts.

For our trip, our plans were three-fold: See as much of Prague as we could in roughly one week, travel to southern Bohemia to visit my grandfather's birthplace, and visit some of the natural sights of the Czech Republic. We succeeded on all counts. Except for day trips to the Northern and Southern parts of the Czech Republic, we walked everywhere we went. Old Town, New Town, Lesser Town, the Castle District and various gardens, all on foot.

Our first day was spent getting over jet lag and becoming acclimated to the area. We stayed in a large Airbnb 5th floor apartment in Old Town near the Jewish Quarter on *U Obecního Dvora*, conveniently located right next door to the James Joyce Irish Pub. Our first dinner was outdoors at the Monastery Restaurant on *Anežská Street*.

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Fran Vojík (front left) and his family in Prague

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



## REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

### CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Children's Language School began the Fall Semester online the week of September 16, 2024. The Czech beginner's class meets on Fridays at 6 PM. Advanced speakers meet on Tuesdays at 6:00 PM. Slovak Language children's classes continue to meet on Sundays starting September 15, 2024. Beginners meet at 9 AM, advanced speakers at 10 AM. Our Fall 2024 semester will end the week of December 4, 2024. For more information, or to register a student, please visit our website at <https://cshamaryland.org/>

### ADULT LANGUAGE SCHOOL

CSHA is one of the few organizations in the USA that offers Czech and Slovak language instruction for adults. Online classes are offered on Saturday mornings. Beginning Czech, Intermediate Czech and Intermediate Slovak classes meet at 9:00 AM. Beginning Slovak meets at 11 AM. Czech 102 and Czech Conversation meet at 11:15 AM. Fall semester classes began on September 7, 2024 and will end on December 7. The spring semester is tentatively planned to begin on January 11, 2025. For more information contact Lois Hybl at 410-428-6012 or e-mail: [LHybl@verizon.net](mailto:LHybl@verizon.net) or [info@cshamaryland.org](mailto:info@cshamaryland.org).

### HERITAGE SINGERS:

We welcome singers of all voice parts. Contact Margaret Supik (443-739-2025) for more information or if you want to join. Future events will be announced on the CSHA website and on our Facebook page. Our next singing opportunity will be Veterans' Day at the Bohemian National Cemetery.

CSHA ONLINE - For more information about any of these activities, joining Heritage Singers or to register for classes, you can contact CSHA at: [info@cshamaryland.org](mailto:info@cshamaryland.org).

The CSHA Board of Directors will respond to answer your questions and provide information, and we are eager to hear your ideas and suggestions. Also, please check our website [www.cshamaryland.org](http://www.cshamaryland.org) and follow us on Facebook at Czech and Slovak Heritage Association of Baltimore.

## OCTOBER 2024

The 36th Annual CSHA Festival will be held at the Legacy Hall in Sykesville, Maryland on Sunday, October 27, 2024, 12-6 PM. Please come to join us and if possible offer yourself as a volunteer.

## NOVEMBER 2024

Celebration of Veterans Day will be scheduled on November 11, at 11 AM at the National Bohemian Cemetery, 1300 Horners Lane, Baltimore in lieu of the Memorial Day celebration that was canceled due to the inclement weather.

## DECEMBER 2024

The traditional Christmas Carol singing at St. Wenceslaus Church in Baltimore is planned for Sunday, December 8, 2024, at 2 PM. We are already coordinating with Mikuláš and Anděl to bring children traditional goodies. Due to some important changes within the Catholic Church in Baltimore, this will be our last opportunity to celebrate the Czech foundations of St. Wenceslaus Church. We are anticipating that many of our members will be in attendance.

## JANUARY 2025

The CSHA General Meeting will be held virtually on Sunday, January 26, 2025. The Board of Directors will review the current financial standing of the organization to prepare the budget for the upcoming events.

## APRIL 2025

The 4th CSHA Spring Festival is planned at the Maryland State Game & Fish Protective Association at Perry Hall. It featured live music by Orchestra Praževica and included children's activities and sports games. Date TBD.

### CSHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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Olga Mendel - graphic design

If you have any suggestions or comments or want to contribute to the Hlas by writing an article, email us at [info@cshamaryland.org](mailto:info@cshamaryland.org).

# President's Message

Dear friends,  
Welcome to our quarterly newsletter. As you may know, CSHA has been publishing the printed HLAS for several decades now. HLAS brings you the latest news from our community here in Maryland, what events our Association is planning, as well as interesting stories from our members. The fall issue is always special, because it brings you the poster announcing our favorite annual event. We are proud to invite you to the 36th Czech and Slovak Festival.

Last year's festival was held at a new location in Sykesville, MD, and the event couldn't have gone better. Visitors enjoyed our wonderful performers, Czech and Slovak food and drinks, and the various vendors. This year, you'll find the same attractions and more. The success of this large event is not possible without volunteers and we appreciate their hard work. We still have openings in some areas, so please email us if you would like to help. We are grateful for the support from our community and we look forward to seeing you again in large numbers on Sunday, October 27th, 2024.

I can safely say that the Czech and Slovak communities here in the U.S. are very interested in what is happening across the Atlantic, in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Thanks to social media, it is easier than ever to stay informed and connected. Our Association regularly receives financial and material support from both embassies in Washington, DC for which we are grateful. But some of you may wonder whether people in Czechia and Slovakia, who do not have relatives and friends here, are interested in expat communities abroad. A couple of years ago, I met with Mr. Jiri Kratky from the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who is the Special Envoy for Expatriate Affairs. He assured me that the Czech government continues to work on maintaining a strong connection between the expatriates living abroad and Czechia. Last month, one such

years-long effort of the Czech government came to fruition. Czech citizens living abroad permanently or temporarily will now be able to vote by postal mail in elections for the Czech Parliament, the European Parliament, and the presidency. This amendment was signed into law by President Petr Pavel. It is a victory for all Czechs who were not able to vote around the world due to the complicated and potentially very costly process of voting in person at the Embassies or the Consulates. This change shows that people of Czechia see us and care about us. I am hopeful that Slovakia will follow suit.

Finally, I cannot resist mentioning the sporting events that captivated us this summer: the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris. Our family watched competitions in various sports, following American, but also, of course, Czech and Slovak athletes, who were successful in canoeing, fencing, and tennis. Our highest admiration belongs to the amazing Paralympic athletes who showed what can be achieved with the right support and strong will. We were mesmerized by the blind teenage swimmer, David Kratochvil, who won gold, silver and bronze medals in freestyle, breaststroke and individual medley for Czechia. Watching Slovak shooters, Veronika Vadovičová and Radoslav Malenovský, who won gold and silver medals for Slovakia, was truly inspiring. I am excited that the next summer Olympic and Paralympic games will take place in the United States. Our family will be cheering for the American, Czech, and Slovak teams in Los Angeles, CA.

Thank you and see you all at the Festival.

Se srdečným pozdravem,



Petr Justin - CSHA president

## Adult Czech and Slovak Language School

During the summer, Czech 102, 201, and a combined Slovak class met biweekly. The Czech 201 class took a break from the regular textbook to read some Czech fairy tales (*Hloupý Honza*, *Šípková Růženka*, *Princ Bajaja*, *Dvanáct měsíčků*) and other stories (*Paštika* and *Osudy Dobrého Vojáka Švejka* [Good Soldier Svejk]). The Slovak class met on Tuesday evenings. Some Slovak students have been practicing together on Thursday evenings on WhatsApp without the teacher.

In the Spring 2023 Hlas, you were introduced to the beginnings of a video about Jarek/Dzarek based on the stories

by Natalie Karlinsky and her former students. The most recent version of Jarek-Džarek - A Slovak Language Story can be viewed on YouTube.

Fall classes began September 7. We continue to offer online classes on Saturday mornings and have 15 students registered for Czech classes and 10 for Slovak. Our students come from nine different states. Iva Zicha teaches Czech 101 and Czech Conversation. Andrea Kletetschka teaches Czech 201. Natalie Karlinsky teaches Slovak 101 and 201. If you would like to donate used textbooks in good condition, contact Lois Hybl or bring them to the book table at the festival.



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Vojik Family at the Old Town Square

The second day we explored *Staroměstské náměstí* and the surrounding area. We were ably assisted by Olga Mendel ([www.omdesigns.cz](http://www.omdesigns.cz)), a vendor at the CSHA Festival and a person familiar to many of you. Olga is a licensed tour guide and a Prague native. Educated as an architect, she brought a unique perspective to our tour. She showed us not only the sites, but explained their significance from an architectural perspective. The spirit of Alphonse Mucha, the artist and graphic designer known primarily for his work in the Art Nouveau movement, was evident wherever we walked. We visited the *Orloj* (of course) and took more pictures than I can count, toured St. Nicholas Hussite Church and the Church of Our Lady before Tyn, an edifice that dominates the skyline of Old Town. Olga also took us to *Karlův most* and *Prašná brána* (Powder Tower). During our visit we spent a lot of time back and forth on the Charles Bridge.

Tuesday we took a walking tour to the Prague Castle area. We bought passes to visit all the sites, and started with the Presidential Palace. We saw the changing of the ceremonial guard at noon and spent considerable time in St. Vitus Cathedral and St. George Basilica. Prague Castle is particularly impressive. A tourist spot unknown to us beforehand was the *Zlatá ulička*, the Golden Lane. It consists of a series of brightly painted, small homes that now serve mainly as souvenir shops. We went into every store. Finally, we had a delightful late lunch in Prague Castle's Café Galerie. Eating on the balcony gave us a beautiful view of Old Town, New Town and the Prague skyline.

On Wednesday our niece - who lives in Stuttgart with her army officer husband and family - drove us south to my

grandfather's hometown in southern Bohemia. Located 20 minutes west of *Strakonice*, *Střelské Hoštice* is a small village of 800 souls. I had the great fortune of obtaining copies of my family tree through Ancestry.com and my grandfather's baptismal record, taken from the *Kniha narozených* or Book of Births from the *Kostel svatého Martina*.

St. Martin's church is still there today, although it has seen better days. The church was closed, so we walked through the church graveyard. We saw many headstones with the inscription *Rodina Vojikova*. The grave sites and headstones were all well-maintained but contained no information that I could use to connect with my American family. Luckily, we met the church sexton and we had a short conversation. My Czech is better than the tourist variety but not great, but I made myself understood and we had a conversation about



St. Martin Church in Střelské Hoštice



Cemetery in Střelské Hoštice



my last name. He said there was a *Vojík* family that still lived up the street from the church. He took me to the house but there was no one at home. Am I related to any of the *Vojík's* in the graveyard? Quite probably, but, as I pointed out to the sexton, my grandfather left *Střeské Hoštice* in the 1880's. Any relations left in the area would be my 4th or 5th cousins at best. Still, I got to see where it all began for my family, and those memories will last my lifetime.

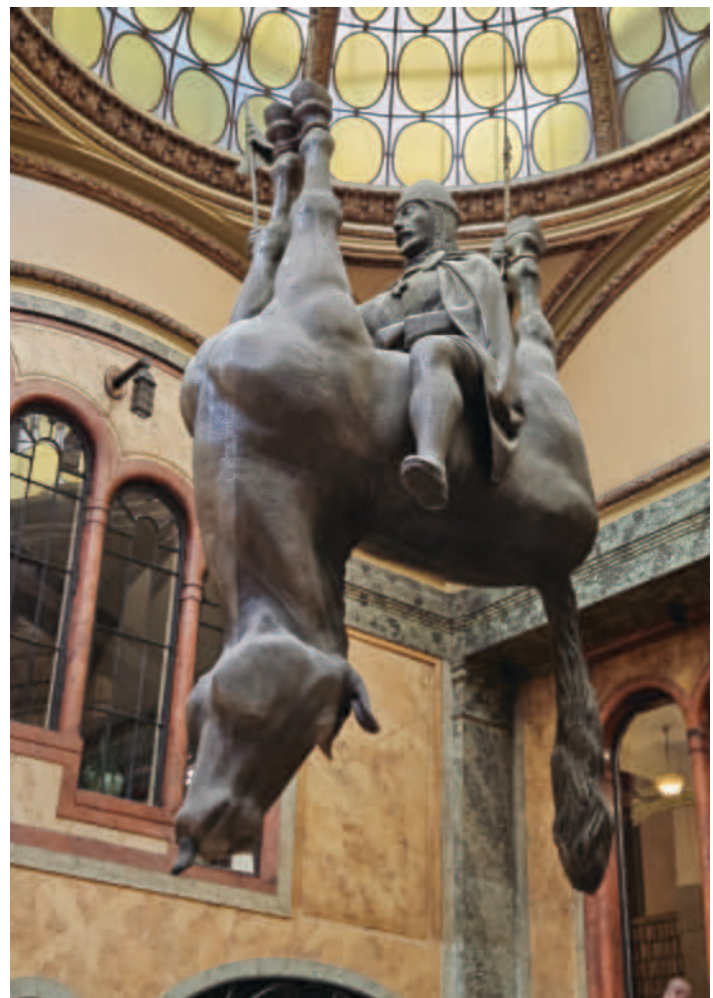
My niece and her husband are big outdoor people, so on Thursday we took a trip to northern Bohemia, driving through large fields of mustard plants to *Ústí nad Labem* and *Děčín*, and then to *Národní park České Švýcarsko* or Bohemian Switzerland National Park. It's a protected nature region in the Elbe Sandstone Mountains very close to the German border. It's best known for the *Pravčická brána* or sandstone



Bohemian Switzerland National Park Sign



View of Elba River



Upside down St. Wenceslaus in Lucerna Passage

arch, the largest in Europe. It is a beautiful park for hiking and we were reminded that we were in the mountains when it started to snow! For lunch we ate at a local restaurant called *Restaurace U nás*. I had *guláš s bramborovým knedlíkem* and a cold beer. I spoke with the owner who speaks both Czech and German, as he serves both cuisines. We ended our visit by crossing the border into Saxon Switzerland National Park in Germany. The German side is equally impressive with large gorges and sandstone pillars. From a park observation point there is a stunning view of the Elbe River, thousands of feet below.

Friday we spent the day in New Town. Where we enjoyed *Václavské náměstí* and *Národní Muzeum* and other attractions. At Olga's suggestion we ate lunch at the *Café Louvre* at *Národní 22*. This restaurant has a history. It was a hub of Café Society in the early Twentieth Century and Albert Einstein and other luminaries often dined and drank there.

In the afternoon we visited the National Memorial to the Heroes of the Heydrich Terror beneath the Orthodox Cathedral of Saints Cyril and Methodius on *Resslova Street*. This is an impressive memorial, and I recommend it to everyone. This was the most somber part of our vacation.

# Sedmidenní válka - Czechoslovakian's Forgotten War

by McLean Lunko

Today, The Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland are close allies and enjoy amicable relations. For over 30 years, all three countries (along with Hungary) have been members of a cultural and political alliance, the Visegrád Group. All are members of the European Union and NATO. One hundred years ago, though, things along the Czechoslovak-Polish Border weren't so friendly. The 1919 Czechoslovak-Polish War, also called The Seven-Day War was a minor footnote in history; however, it had repercussions 30 years later, during the German invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The Czechs had been under Austrian rule since 1620, Slovak lands had been ruled by Hungarians since the 10th Century, and Poland had been partitioned by Prussia, Austria, and Russia in 1795 and had ceased to exist as a country. In anticipation of the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czech, Slovak, and Polish diplomats frantically met in the closing days of the First World War in an attempt to find a compromise on the issue of their national boundaries. Throughout centuries of foreign rule, ethnic groups had co-mingled, and no one worried about boundary lines. Suddenly, the maps of Central Europe were being redrawn; towns, villages, mines, and railroad lines took on extraordinary importance as their ownership would certainly have economic and strategic consequences.

Overnight, a small town in Silesia found itself at the center of this controversy. The Czechs called it *Těšín*, the Poles Cieszyn; the surrounding hills were home to numerous coal mines, and through the town ran a rail line that connected the Czech lands with Eastern Slovakia. The region had historically been part of the Bohemian crown lands, but Poles vastly outnumbered the Czechs. Control of the town, and the region surrounding it, meant that raw materials, commerce, and communication, all essential resources coveted by both nations, would fall to the nation which controlled that region.

With both groups struggling to emerge from the ashes of a world war, Czecho-Slovak and Polish diplomats were at loggerheads over the frontiers of their respective nations. On November 5, 1918, less than a week before the end of the war, local Czech and Polish leaders reached an interim agreement, dividing the area roughly along ethnic and linguistic lines. Unfortunately, this locally negotiated agreement was unacceptable to the new Czechoslovak national government because it threatened control of the railway line. If *Těšín* officially became Cieszyn, Poland could block the railway line, cutting off Eastern Slovakia from Moravia and threatening the stability of the new fledgling nation of Czechoslovakia.

The fuse was lit when Polish authorities announced local elections for the Polish Parliament, the Sejm, despite the fact that formal control of the region was still being negotiated. The Polish government was already fighting Ukrainian nationalists in Galicia and hoped that local elections in *Těšín* would cement their control over that region. The Czechoslovak government decided to attack the Polish controlled parts of *Těšín* before the vote could be held.

While Czechoslovakia was a new nation, it had a well-seasoned army, the Czechoslovak Legion. The legionnaires were just returning home from France and Italy when the crisis over *Těšín* erupted. On January 23, 1919, Czechoslovak forces sent their Polish counterparts an ultimatum: evacuate the area west of the Biala River in two hours or be forced out. The Poles refused, and the Czech Legionnaires attacked from the West, while Slovak Legionnaires attacked from the South. 15,000 Czechs and Slovaks forced 10,000 Poles out of *Těšín* in only four days. The Poles retreated across the Vistula River, and Czechoslovak forces prepared to continue the attack. However, on January 31, pressure from the Entente Powers (France, England, and the US) forced a halt to further hostilities. Czechoslovak and Polish diplomats worked out an agreement in Paris in February, 1919, and the war was concluded with the Czechoslovak-Polish Treaty on February 3. The region was held under international control until July of 1920, when a conference, held by the Entente Powers in the Belgian town of Spa, officially divided the region. The area north of the railway line became part of Poland, as did most of the city of *Těšín*. The railway line, the areas to the south, most of the coal mines and the steel works at *Třinec* became part of Czechoslovakia, the area now known as *Český Těšín*.

As stated earlier, the repercussions of this seemingly forgotten war would have a negative effect on Czechoslovakia just 20 years later. Due to the souring of relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia, Poland was not invited to join The Little Entente, a mutual defense pact signed by Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania and France. This had a profound impact





on what was to come. Had Poland been a member of The Little Entente, Czechoslovakia might have had the means to resist Adolf Hitler's demands at Munich. The combined militaries of Czechoslovakia and Poland could have been more than a match for the German Army in 1938. Instead, after Czechoslovakia was forced to give up the Sudetenland to Germany, Poland coerced the weakened Czechoslovak government into ceding all of *Český Těšín* to Poland in October of 1938.

Only after the war, and with both nations under Soviet occupation, were the 1920 borders restored. The years of shared suffering under Nazism and Communism have brought the Czechs, Slovaks, and Poles closer together, and membership in the European Union, NATO, and the Schengen Zone have made crossings much easier.

There is one humorous final chapter to this story, however. In June of 2020, during the lockdowns caused by the Coronavirus, in an attempt to slow the spread of Covid-19, Polish soldiers were sent to the Czech border to set up a roadblock. Just 12 miles (20 kilometers) from *Těšín*, Polish soldiers misread their maps and crossed the border into the Czech Republic before setting up their checkpoint. After an apology from the Polish armed forces, this accidental invasion was laughed off by citizens of both nations.

MacLean Lunko has a Bachelor's degree in Manufacturing Engineering from Pennsylvania College of Technology. An interest in the history of manufacturing in Czechoslovakia between the world wars, led to him joining CSHA and studying Czech since 2016.

## Czech and Slovak Recipe Corner:

by Dana Havlik

### Plum Buns (*Švestkové buchty*)

Traditional *buchty* have a special place in Czech cookbooks and there are many variations of recipes which date several centuries back. This pastry even appears in many children folk tales.

The buns can be made with a variety of fillings - including cottage cheese, prunes, poppy seed, apples, peaches, apricots or plums.

#### INGREDIENTS:

2 tablespoons active dry yeast	Plum filling:
1/2 cup sugar	1 lb Italian plums (pitted)
1 cup warm milk	1 cup sugar
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
2 large egg yolks	1/2 teaspoon grinded lemon peel
1 teaspoon salt	1 teaspoon of plum or cherry brandy
1 cup softened butter	<i>Slivovice</i> or <i>Třešňovice</i> or rum (optional)

#### DIRECTIONS:

Mix yeast with half of the lukewarm milk, a spoonful of sugar and spoonful of flour. Cover with a towel and let rise for 10 minutes. Combine flour, sugar and salt in a mixing bowl and add yeast. Stir the egg yolks into the other half of the milk and slowly add to the rest of the ingredients. Finally add the melted butter and mix everything into a soft and flexible dough. Set it aside, cover with a towel and let it rise for 30-45 minutes.

Cut up plums into quarters, place in a small pot and boil for 10 minutes with sugar and lemon peel. If you want to enhance the flavor, you can add a teaspoon of brandy or rum. Set the fruit mixture aside to cool off.

Roll out the dough to 1/8-inch-thick sheet and cut into 4 x 4 inches squares. One batch makes about 20 squares. Place a tablespoon of the filling in the middle of each square, wrap, roll into balls and place on the greased baking sheet. Let the balls rise 20 minutes, paint with melted butter and bake at 350F for 25-30 minutes. Serve sprinkled with powdered sugar.



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We walked out of the Cathedral reflecting on the sacrifice those brave soldiers made in defense of their country. Friday night for my birthday we went for dinner to the *Lod' Pivovar restaurace* which is anchored on the *Vltava* River. More music, food and great beer. Plus, I got a great beer mug as a birthday present!

Saturday was our last full day in Prague. We spent most of it exploring the shops in Old Town, and my brother and I made another side trip to the *U Fleků Pivovar a Restaurace* on *Křemencová* Street for the second (or was it the third?) time. More music, beer, food and fellowship. I've since read that some local residents consider this business to be a tourist trap, saying that the servers are rude (well, they are), the beer ordinary (I respectfully disagree) and the food pedestrian (I disagree again).

Sunday morning, we left bright and early for *Václav Havel* Airport and our long flight home. I had to connect twice, but was back in Myrtle Beach by 11:30 Sunday night. I was tired, but it was the trip of a lifetime.

Fran Vojik is a long-time member of CSHA and currently serves on the association's board of directors. A Baltimore native, he currently lives with his wife Sandy in Surfside Beach, SC.



*Two brothers, two beers*