

A publication of the Czech and Slovak Heritage Association of Maryland

Hurvínek On a Trip Around the World

by Pavel Novák and Dana Havlík

The history of Czech and Slovak puppetry is several centuries long and is known for its artistry and unique characters. Wood-carved string marionettes have a rich cultural tradition, deeply tied to national identity

and heritage. Evolving from folk customs to professional theaters, puppets have been used for storytelling, education, entertainment, and for keeping the language alive during oppressive times. The puppet theatre became very popular in



the 19th century during the nationalist movement. It was the only cultural theatre performed in Czech.

The most famous Czech marionette characters of the 20th century are the comical father-son duo *Spejbl* and *Hurvínek*, *Mánička* (cousin), and Mrs. *Kateřina* (grandmother), who influenced the entire puppet world. The characters were created by puppeteer Josef Skupa in the 1920s, and they continue to be popular even today, after 100 years of performing in over 30 countries and in multiple languages.

The Puppet Museum in Pilsen, a branch of the West Bohemian Museum in Pilsen, prepared a project recognizing *Hurvínek's* approaching 100th birthday. In cooperation with schools abroad, *Hurvínek* began his journey around the world at the Czech Secondary Educational Service in Brussels in May 2025, and he has been

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Hurvínek, Žeryk, P. Kolláriková (Slovakia Embassy), T. Janáková (Czech Republic Embassy) P. Novák (Czech Radio correspondent), P. Justin (CSHA President)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Children's Language School Spring 2026 semester classes will resume in the second week of January. The Czech beginner's class will meet on Mondays at 4:00 PM. Advanced speakers will meet on Wednesdays at 6:00 PM. Slovak Language children's classes continue to meet on Sundays. Beginners will meet at 9:00 AM, and advanced speakers will meet at 10:00 AM. 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. Second-Year Czech, Intermediate Czech, and Intermediate Slovak classes meet at 9:00 AM. Beginning Slovak meets at 11:00 AM. Beginning Czech and Czech Conversation meet at 11:15 AM. The Spring 2026 semester will start on January 17 and will end on April 18, 2026. Beginners should plan to wait for fall classes because classes are continuing from the fall semester. For more information, contact Lois Hybl at 410-428-6012 or 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 <https://cshamaryland.org> and our Facebook page.

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.

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 and follow us on Facebook at Czech and Slovak Heritage Association of Baltimore.

JANUARY 2026

The CSHA General Meeting will be held in-person on Sunday, February 1, 2026, from 2 PM- 4 PM at the St. Ursula Catholic Church, 8801 Harford Road, Parkville. Refreshments will be served. We encourage all our members to follow our website for details about the meeting and any future ones, upcoming events, and how to get involved with CSHA activities.

MAY 2026

The 5th CSHA Spring Festival is tentatively scheduled on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at the Maryland State Game & Fish Protective Association at Perry Hall. It featured live music by Orchestra Praževica.

OCTOBER 2026

The 38th Annual CSHA Festival will take place at the Legacy Hall in Sykesville on Saturday, October 3, 2026, from 12-6 PM. Visit the CSHA website <https://cshamaryland.org> and our Facebook page for additional details.

DECEMBER 2026

The traditional Christmas Carol singing is tentatively scheduled on Sunday, December 6, 2026, at 2 PM. Mikuláš and Anděl will bring children traditional goodies, and a small reception will follow the celebration. Location TBD.

CSHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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President - Petr Justin
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HLAS - Dana Havlik - editor
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If you have any suggestions or comments or want to contribute to the Hlas by writing an article, email us at info@cshamaryland.org.

President's Message

Dear friends,

It is with a mix of gratitude and nostalgia that I write to you today at the end of my term as President of the CSHA. Serving this incredible organization has been one of the greatest honors of my adult life.

We have worked together to celebrate and preserve our rich Czech and Slovak heritage. We've organized countless cultural events, language classes, and community gatherings that have brought joy and connection to so many of us. The passion and dedication I've witnessed within this diverse community are truly inspiring.

Our focus on equity was centered on ensuring fair and just treatment, access, and opportunities for all individuals in the greater Maryland area.

I am endlessly inspired by the dedication, talent, and hard work of our Board of Directors. Their commitment to our mission is the engine that drives our success.

I extend my special thanks to the former CSHA president and current board member Margaret Supik, as well as the late Ales Vanicky, who supported me during my tenure. Their guidance and encouragement meant the world to me.

I also wish to mention the special representatives from our homelands whom I had the pleasure to meet. It was my honor to meet the former prime minister of Czechia, Petr Fiala, in Washington, D.C., and to personally welcome the former ambassador of Slovakia, Radovan Javorcik, at one of our fall festivals. We were so grateful for their support.

To our generous members, donors, and partners, your trust and belief in our mission have made everything possible. Your support has kept our community thriving, and for that, I am profoundly grateful.

And to our amazing volunteers, who give so selflessly of their time and energy—you are the heart and soul of this organization. Your passion is a constant source of motivation for me.

One of my key roles as president was to foster a culture of inclusion where diverse individuals feel valued, respected, and supported, with a genuine sense of belonging. This involved ensuring that everyone could participate fully in the community and decision-making processes. I trust that this commitment to inclusion will be honored by the new leadership.

There is always a high demand for organizations like ours within immigrant communities and among their descendants. This need persists as we strive for democracy and freedom, especially now, when European nations are grappling with a dual threat of destabilization from both Eastern adversaries and Western political shifts.

I hope we can continue to believe that there is enough goodwill among smart and positively thinking people to preserve valuable relationships, built on true values of freedom, prosperity, and respect.

Beyond our shared commitment to democracy, I will remain a dedicated member of this vibrant community and look forward to participating in events and supporting the association's mission in new ways.

"Work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed." Vaclav Havel

Thank you again for the honor of serving as your president.

With warmest regards,

Outgoing President,



Petr Justin - CSHA president

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Hurvínek, Mánička, Spejbl, the Puppets

traveling with his dog Žeryk to other Czech schools around the world. Hurvínek will return to Pilsen in May 2026, where his journey around the world will culminate in an exhibition of experiences, photographs, and stories from individual countries at the Puppet Museum. The main objectives of the project are to show *Hurvínek* where Czech children live around the world, how they are doing, and to introduce him to the beauties of individual countries.

The pair of puppets has been traveling without any puppeteer in a plastic box from school to school around Europe, including Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. They have visited schools in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. In October and November, *Hurvínek*, on his visit to Washington DC and the Baltimore area stopped by the CSHA festival in Sykesville, where children from the Czech Language school, American Sokol Washington, Slavic American Sokol, and Sokol Baltimore had this unique opportunity to meet him.

We would like to thank the Puppet Museum

in Pilsen and the Czech School Without Borders Brussels for organizing and supporting this project, as well as Pavel Novak, who became the local puppeteer, incredibly well mimicking *Hurvínek's* original voice. This was a wonderful opportunity for children in our community to meet this legendary character of the Czech puppet theatre.

Hurvínek (a jeho vodič) na festivalu v Marylandu

Byl jsem tam a viděl jsem tam spoustu nadšených lidí. Já, Hurvínek a můj pes Žeryk. Přiletěli jsme z Plzně a cestujeme po Spojených státech. V Marylandu jsme se ale cítili moc dobře. Zase jsme byli na podiu. Tedy tam, kde jsme jako doma.

To mi vzkázal Hurvínek, loutka, které bude v květnu 2026 už 100 let. Měl jsem to potěšení s ním vystoupit na Českém a Slovenském festivalu v Sykesville, 45 minut na západ od Baltimoru, tahat za jeho nitky a pohybovat jím a taky, snad aspoň trochu podobně jako originál, jeho hlasem i mluvit. Bylo to moc pěkné setkání. Hurvínek i já jsme s obdivem zírali na gymnasty z baltimorského Sokola. Já s otevřenou pusou. Hurvínek s vykulenýma očima. To bylo prostě "wow". Klobouk dolů, cvičenci i cvičitelé. Když jsme odložili loutky Hurvínka i Žeryka a zase je uložili do kufru a nechali odpočívat, byl čas ochutnat kuřecí na smetaně s knedlíkem. Díky, pane kuchaři. Hezká vzpomínka na Evropu, na Česko, na Prahu, na kuchyň maminky i babičky. Ale abych to nebral jen přes kuchyň. Měl bych to vzít spíš přes prádelnu. Já na tom festivalu propotil košili. Ostatně, kdy se mi zase poštěstí tancovat s ženami „krev



Žeryk and Hurvínek at the Festival

a mlíko“, které znají polku i valčík. A zkusili jsme i polku doleva. To je trochu vyšší „level“. Tu košili jsem ale propotil při čardáší. Super instruktor, skvělá hudba a nadšení tanečníci. Díky. Asi tak na 4 hodiny jsem byl, řekl bych, o 10 (možná i o 20) let mladší. Ta propocená košile byla jasný důkaz.

Pavel Novák

Zpravodaj Českého rozhlasu v USA

Člen American Sokol Washington

Hurvínek (And His Handler) At The Maryland Festival

I, *Hurvínek*, and my dog *Žeryk*, were there and saw many enthusiastic people. We flew in from Pilsen and are traveling around the United States. We felt very comfortable in Maryland. We were on stage again, where we feel at home.

That was the message from *Hurvínek*, a puppet that will be 100 years old in May 2026. I had the pleasure of performing with him at the Czech and Slovak Festival in Sykesville, a 45-minute drive west from Baltimore. There I was pulling his strings and moving him and also, perhaps at least somewhat similar to the

original, speaking with his voice. It was a very nice gathering. *Hurvínek* and I stared in admiration at the gymnasts from the Baltimore Sokol; I with my mouth open, *Hurvínek* with wide eyes. It was simply, “wow”. Hats off to both the trainees and the trainers. When we put the *Hurvínek* and *Žeryk* puppets back in the suitcase and let them rest, it was time to taste the chicken paprika with dumplings. Thanks to the Chef. A nice memory of Europe, the Czech Republic, Prague, my mother’s and grandmother’s kitchen.

But let’s not just take it from the kitchen. I should take it from the laundry. I sweated my shirt off at that festival. Besides, when will I ever be lucky enough to dance again with women “blood and milk” who know the polka and the waltz? And we also tried the polka to the left. That’s a little higher “level”. But I sweated my shirt off at the czardáš. Great instructor, great music, and enthusiastic dancers. Thanks. For about 4 hours, I was, I would say, 10 (maybe even 20) years younger. That sweaty shirt was clear proof of it!

Pavel Novák

Czech Radio correspondent in the USA

Member of the American Sokol Washington



Lucy Petran and Pavel Novák with the puppets



Žeryk and Hurvínek checking out the Vendors’ tables

The 37th Czech and Slovak Heritage Association Festival

On October 26, 2025, the Czech & Slovak Heritage Association hosted the 37th Annual Czech and Slovak Festival at the Sykesville Legacy Hall. The event was attended by over 350 guests, including our honored guests from the Czech and Slovak Embassies – Ms. Tereza Janáková from the Diplomacy Department, Embassy of the Czech Republic, and Ms. Paula Kolláriková, Cultural and Public Diplomacy Counselor, Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Washington, DC. Both ladies provided the latest updates on upcoming cultural events organized by the Embassies and information regarding the Czech Embassy renovation project. The CSHA president, Petr Justin, welcomed all attendees in his opening remarks. The event moderators were the Czech Radio USA reporter, Pavel Novak, and the puppets Hurvínek with his little dog friend Žeryk. This famous couple from the Puppet Museum in Plzeň kindly stopped at our festival on their busy tour around the world, organized by the Museum in cooperation with School Without Borders in Brussels. Their adventure started in May 2025 and will end in May 2026, just

in time for a big celebration of Hurvínek's 100th birthday in Prague.

As in the past several years, Pajtaši, the traditional Slovak folk ensemble from New York City, created a wonderfully festive atmosphere with their high-energy performance of Czech and Slovak folk music. Roman Lewkowicz, Slavic folk dancer, instructor, and choreographer, attracted a large crowd to the dance floor to participate in his popular traditional dance lessons.

The festival program included wonderful singing and dancing performances by children and parents from Slavic American Sokol, and an impressive gymnastics performance by young members of Baltimore Sokol.

The festival guests enjoyed shopping at numerous vendors' stands that offered a variety of products such as local honey, chocolates, honey cakes, Slavic sweets, homemade Christmas cookies, deserts, kolaches and other pastries, traditional



Flag Ceremony at the beginning of the Festival



Dance Classes with Roman



Slavic American Sokol dancing performance

handmade arts, crafts, gifts, jewelry, Czech and Slovak calendars, embroidered clothing, and more.

This year's menu offered delicious traditional Czech and Slovak meals, including goulash and dumplings, pork roast with cabbage and dumplings, chicken paprikash, and halušky, in addition to hot dogs and bratwursts with Kate's homemade cabbage toppings. Our bar offered a variety of Czech and Slovak liquors and beer, handpicked by Russ.

In addition to the program, many of the children enjoyed activities in the art room, including glass, shells, and rock painting, as well as a puppet show performance by Pavel Novak (impersonating *Hurvínek*) and Lucia Petran (as *Mánička*). The raffle tickets were drawn by Nicole Iskra, and the winners enjoyed a variety of prizes and gift baskets donated by CSHA



Sokol Baltimore practicing in the hallway before their performance

Czech and Slovak Recipe Corner:

by Dana Petran

Black Kuba (Černý Kuba)

We hope that you enjoyed nice Holidays filled with love and joy, sharing delicious food and drinks with your families and friends. When the New Year comes, we all should keep in mind our resolutions and visions of healthier living. We can help with that! If you are looking for a meatless, highly nutritious, delicious, and easy-to-prepare dish, you may want to try Mushroom Barley Casserole, known in many different regions by a number of different names.

It was traditionally served on Christmas Eve in our Giant Mountains, Krkonoše, region for centuries. In the old days, moms served the family "Black Kuba" (a nickname for Jacob) on Christmas Eve with the promise that if they do not touch meat during the day, they will see a Golden Pig, a symbol of luck and happiness for the entire year ahead.

The original recipes used widely available, delicious mushrooms, which are almost impossible to confuse with any other fungus, due to their distinctive appearance. Called black horn (*Craterellus cornucopioides*), they are found in Europe, North America (Pacific Northwest), East Asia, and Australia.

To make this dish we can substitute dried wild mushrooms, fresh portabella or shitake, or any combination of available mushrooms.

INGREDIENTS (serves 8-10):

2 cups of dry pearled barley	1-2 tablespoons of marjoram
1lb of fresh or 20oz dry mushrooms	5-10 cloves of garlic
3 tablespoons of lard or butter	2 teaspoons of salt
2 big onions, finely chopped	



DIRECTIONS:

Soak barley in cold water for 4 hours or overnight in a large pot. Add water to cover the grain, salt, and boil slowly until tender (stir occasionally so it will not burn on the bottom). Black pepper is optional; I use it. Strain remaining water if needed.

Sauté the coarsely sliced mushrooms with onions in lard or butter until mushrooms are done. Mix in pressed garlic and crumbled marjoram. Add more garlic, marjoram, pepper, or salt to taste.

It can be served as is, but you can make it even better if you bake the dish at 370°F for 20 minutes. You may garnish with fresh chopped curly or Italian parsley.

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Board Members and volunteers.

We would like to extend our warmest thanks to our volunteers, sponsors, and supporters – we could not have made the event successful without their help. We also extend our sincere thanks to the Sykesville Freedom District Fire Department for renting us their beautiful Legacy Hall and to the CSHA leadership for working tirelessly over several months

on planning, coordination, and preparations for the festival. We hope that all our guests enjoyed this annual event, and we will see everybody at the next Fall festival on October 3, 2026, at the Sykesville Legacy Hall.

If you would like to help with planning the next festival and other events, or just to meet the new Board members and enjoy some refreshments, please join us at the CSHA General Meeting on Sunday, February 1, 2026, from 2 PM- 4 PM at the St. Ursula Catholic Church, 8801 Harford Road, Parkville.



CSHA Volunteers serving dinners



Pajtáši performing - making the festival a festive and fun place to be