



## Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences Cleveland Chapter

[www.svu2000.org/cleveland](http://www.svu2000.org/cleveland)

### Holidays 2017

*Holiday greetings to our Cleveland SVU members! May cheer and joy be with you during this festive time of the year and may 2018 bring you joy, health and happiness!*

#### Look Back at 2017:

The Cleveland chapter hosted or participated in several events last year. Here is a brief recap: **Poetry of Prague** – a photo exhibit at The Intown Club in February. **The Cleveland International Film Festival** - Our Chapter was a community partners for a film dealing with Prague Spring called “That Trip We Took With Dad”. **SVU Cleveland annual meeting**, on April 26<sup>th</sup> at Braumeister Restaurant with program of several short, 6 minute presentations on topics of interest by our members including Barb Golias – Mucha’s Slovanic Epic; the first frame, Georgia Maresh – Community Theater; what it takes, Ted Krejsa – book review; Bliss Was It in Bohemia, Carolyn Huber – Brief overview of Czech engravers and Paul Burik – Czechia; birthplace of the nuclear age. **Singer’s Club Performance:** The Chapter supported a performance by Singer’s Club of Cleveland in May. The performance at the Czech Cultural Center, aka Bohemian National Hall, featured patriotic music as it was a Memorial Day weekend. Special thanks to our members Tom and Elsa Pavlik who spearheaded the effort.

Our Chapter partnered with Cleveland Bratislava Sister Cities in June for a presentation by Jonathan Kinser, then a PhD candidate – now Dr. Kinser, to hear a summary of his thesis work on KKK’s impact on the Slovak community in Youngstown in 1920’s: **KKK and the Slovak Resistance. Picnic in the Czech Garden**, the Chapter held a summer picnic on August 13: As part of the program, presentations on the various busts in the Garden were made by our members. Paul Burik discussed Jindrich Simon Baar, Carolyn Huber presented the story of Karel Havlicek Borovsky, and Georgia Maresh shared her research on Francis Palacky. Food and stories were shared for a pleasant summer gathering.



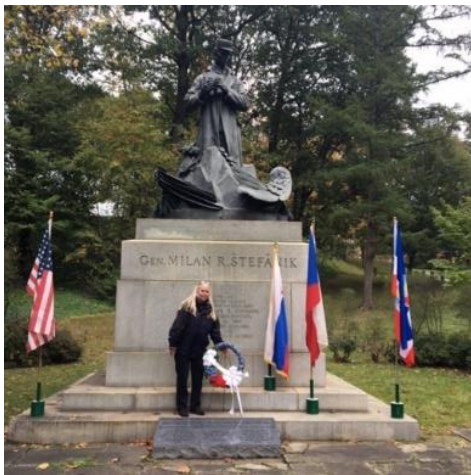
Members picnicking in the Czech Cultural Garden

Janacek's opera **Cunning Little Vixen at Severance Hall**, our chapter hosted Czech operatic soprano Martina Jankova for tour of Cleveland. **SVU at the Art Museum;** in October the Chapter and Sokol Greater Cleveland represented the Czech community with display of Czech dolls and their respective regions at the Museum's International Day.



Cleveland Art Museum, SGC dancers also performed

Most recently: **99 years of Czechoslovakia**, the Cleveland Chapter celebrated the 99<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this historic event on October 28th by placing wreaths at the statues in the Czech, Rusin and Slovak Cultural gardens here in Cleveland. Celebration began with playing of national anthems and brief comments at the statue of T.G. Masaryk in the Czech Cultural Garden, then short parade of flags proceeded to the Rusin Cultural Garden about 500 feet down the street and a wreath was placed there at the bust of Father Duchnovich. After brief remarks, once again the attendees lead by the three flags strolled down another 500 feet to the Slovak Cultural Garden. Father Michael Brunovsky delivered short comments about the role of Gen. Stefanik and a wreath was placed at the monumental statue of Milan R. Stefanik. Warm beverages and pastry were appreciated by the attendees on this cool October day.



Marie Golias places a wreath by the Stefanik statue

The Cleveland SVU Chapter also provided financial support for the **New Czech Voice of Cleveland** – our member John Sabol's weekly radio program, and for the **Lucina Slovak Dancers** as they toured Slovakia this past summer.

## Coming up in 2018

2018 will be a special year as we will be celebrating centennial of the foundation of Czechoslovakia in October of 1918! Stay tuned for events! You will be receiving membership email in January – please rejoin and support the local Chapter. We will likely participate in the Film Festival in March again and in April we will have our annual membership meeting.

As numerous activities are planned for 2018 to honor the 100 year anniversary, both SOKOL and SVU are dedicating their gatherings in Prague to that ideal. Here in Cleveland, a trip has been organized to attend the SOKOL Slet and an extension to attend the SVU Congress is available. The tour starts in Munich on June 24<sup>th</sup>, with stops in Innsbruck, Salzburg, Cesky Krumlov and Pisek before arriving in Prague in time for the opening day parade for the “Slet”. Trips to Kutna Hora and Karlstejn Castle are included. As noted, extension to include the SVU conference is available and the tour is open to all from anywhere in U.S.. Contact Vlad Nemecek at [vjnemecek@aol.com](mailto:vjnemecek@aol.com) for more information and pricing; Subject line “Cz. tour 2018”.



“Krtek” the Czech “Mickie Mouse” readies for the holidays

## The celebrations of the Season!

*Few years ago I approached my Cultural Gardens colleagues to share their holiday customs. The following is a brief summary, here for your enjoyment.*

The Christian religion has enormous stake in this season, but other believes too find a reason to celebrate. The Jewish community celebrates Hanukah – Festival of Lights which this year begins on Christmas Even, December 24<sup>th</sup>. It is an eight day celebration when candles are lit progressively each day to celebrate freedom from oppression. Gift giving is not traditional, but in the modern days parents may give a holiday gift to a child. Oil is significant to the Hebrews and as such is used in the traditional “latka” – a potato pancake. Similarly, the Muslim community celebrates Aid Al Filtr for three days when communal and family gatherings are common, in particular a breakfast gathering before visiting a mosque.

For the Christians the celebrations begin with St. Nicholas day, December 6<sup>th</sup>. An Asia minor bishop known for his assistance to the needy who dropped a piece of gold into an young maiden’s stocking which was hanging out to dry, in order for her to have a dowry and be able to marry – thus started the tradition of stocking stuffing and the bishop

eventually became Saint Nicholas. No, he does not look like the Santa Clause in red suit and white beard that Madison Avenue ads created in the recent past. In Europe this day is celebrated by a figure dressed as a bishop, accompanied by a devil and an angel who brings treats, such as an apple or orange, to the good children and the devil rattles chains at the not so good youth. Walking from house to house, this celebration becomes a community event almost like trick-or-treat on Halloween.

December 24<sup>th</sup> is Christmas Eve and Christians everywhere celebrate the birth of Jesus. The date coincides with pagan celebration in Roman times, Emperor Constantine declared it so in 300s AD. Most modern historians believe he missed the date by about four years - but no one would argue with the emperor. Germany was the birthplace of the decorated Christmas tree – a tradition that spread worldwide. Traditionally the tree was decorated with candy wrapped in foil, fruit and nuts and lit with candles (now electric). The tree magically appears as a gift from the “Christ Child” on Christmas Eve to children in Germany, Poland, Czech and Slovak Republics and many other nations. The “Christ Child” is a religiously inspired entity without a visual form. In Ireland holly and ivy are brought into the home, a tradition that predates Christianity. Candles in the windows are meant to guide the Holly Family of Mary and Joseph, and any travelers, as a sign of welcome.

Gifts are exchanged on Christmas Eve between the family and friends. In Latvia “Ziemassvetku Vencis” figure similar to Santa Clause but with Latvian designs on his coat presents the gifts. “Santy” aka “Father Christmas” does the giving in Ireland.

Food plays a big role in the celebrations. Christmas Eve dinner is not right without fish for the Czechs. The Slovenians also serve fish or pork. Pork and sauerkraut are served by the Latvians, Germans like pork and red cabbage. Lamb, turkey or pork, with grape leaves and Greek salad is the choice of the Greek community, topped with “baklava” pastry. Goose with “rashes” (bacon) is the Irish favored. “Potica” (nut rolled bread) is traditional with Slovenians, and tort is the favored in Germany.

Relatively new celebration is that of the African American community: Kwanza. It starts on Christmas Day. Seven candles are lit each subsequent day to celebrate desired principles, including: Unity, Self-determination, Responsibility and Purpose.



**Tatra Mountains in Slovakia**

*Our chapter is dedicated to advancing the understanding of Czech, Slovak and Rusyn cultures by people of all backgrounds.*