

# ZPRÁVY

SPOLEČNOSTI PRO VĚDY A UMĚNÍ

CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIETY OF  
ARTS AND SCIENCES, INC.  
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# SVU

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No. 3

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**CALL FOR PAPERS!**

**Czechoslovak Society**

**of Arts & Sciences**

**(SVU) 2013 Regional**

**Conference, August 30-**

**September 1, 2013 in Seattle, Washington**

**"Czechs, Slovaks, and North America:**

**Destination, Example, Opportunity"**



The Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU) is pleased to announce its 2013 regional conference, to be held in the Pacific Northwest on the campus of the University of Washington in Seattle from August 30 to September 1, 2013 (with optional sightseeing extensions through September 2). The general theme of the conference will be "Czechs, Slovaks and North America: Destination, Example, Opportunity."

Papers and panel proposals are urgently solicited on a wide range of subjects in the arts, humanities, and sciences. Proposals for complete panels are preferred, but individual papers will be reviewed and grouped into panels according to the decision of the conference



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organizers. General subject groupings may include: Politics, Economics, Business; Religion and Philosophy; Performing Arts; Plastic Arts; Technology and Industry; Medicine and Laboratory Science; Libraries and Librarians; Heritage Organizations; Immigration and Emigration; History; Czech/Slovak and Slavic Studies; Czech/Slovak and Slavic Linguistics; Language Teaching; Literature and Cinema; Sport. With a view to the region where the conference will be held, we encourage any work concerning Czechs and Slovaks in the Pacific Northwest.

Questions about planned submissions or the submissions process should be directed to Hugh Agnew ([agnew@gwu.edu](mailto:agnew@gwu.edu)) or Lida Cope ([copel@ecu.edu](mailto:copel@ecu.edu)). Email your completed submission (title and 300 word abstract) to [SVUConference2013@gmail.com](mailto:SVUConference2013@gmail.com) by July 15, 2013.

Abstracts conference program and maps will be published in the next issues of *Zprávy*, posted on the SVU website, and distributed electronically. Panel and paper proposals may be submitted by anyone, but a lower registration fee will apply to SVU members in good standing. Information on the activities of SVU, as well as membership information and forms, can be found at <http://www.svu2000.org/>. Please find conference registration form on page 15 of this issue of *Zprávy* .

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This will be SVU's first regional conference in the Pacific Northwest! The University of Washington has a beautiful campus and will offer student dormitory accommodation. You can gaze at the Cascades, the Olympic Mountains and majestic Mount Rainier. Seattle, on Puget Sound, was founded as a logging town: it was easy to roll logs down its steep hills to the harbor for shipping. Seattle has a wonderful waterfront where you can watch boats and feed the seagulls with French fries—but watch your fingers. You can admire the city from a ride on the Great Wheel or from the Space Needle. At Pike's Place Market you can see many kinds of fish and big salmon tossed through the air after purchase to amuse the public. Fabulous restaurants, historic places—all this we want to share with you. You can visit The Rainier National Park and the charming Tillicum Native American Village, on a nearby island. There you can dine on grilled salmon and be entertained by Native American dancers. Seattle is home to Boeing Aircraft, Microsoft, and Weyerhaeuser.

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**RESERVE YOUR DATES FOR THE  
SVU REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE  
CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WASHINGTON, SEATTLE**

Friday, August 30-Sunday, September 1

**The theme of the conference is: “Czechs, Slovaks,  
and North America:  
Destination, Example, Opportunity”**

Please sign up for the Academic program.  
The deadline for the abstract of your paper is July 15.

**Preliminary Program:**

Arrival, Friday, August 30		Registration
	4:00-6:00	Social get-together
		Dinner on your own, either in the university

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		cafeteria or explore interesting restaurants in Seattle.
Saturday, August 31	9:00-10:00	Opening of the conference
	10:00-12:00	Plenary session Academic sessions
	1:00-5:00	Academic sessions
	6:00-8:00	Banquet Followed by a concert
Saturday, Sept. 1	9:00-12:00	Academic sessions and closing of the conference
	2:00-5:00	Bus tour of Seattle

Figurines by famous glass artist Jaroslav Brychta will be exhibited throughout the conference.

Those who are making the conference an extended vacation can explore further this beautiful area on their own.

Seattle's famous "Bumpershoot Festival" runs at the same time as our conference. You might enjoy stopping by.

Definitive program and campus plans will be published in the new issue of *Zprávy*.

You can also find the registration form on our website [www.svu2000.org](http://www.svu2000.org)

Panel submission and abstracts should be directed to Hugh Agnew ([agnew@gwu.edu](mailto:agnew@gwu.edu)) or Lida Cope ([copel@ecu.edu](mailto:copel@ecu.edu)). Abstracts will be published in the next issue of *Zprávy*. The deadline for submission of abstracts is July 15<sup>th</sup>.

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## **Report From the Executive Board May 11, 2013**

The Executive Board meeting took place on May 11, 2013 in Potomac, MD. Petr Hausner, Zdenek David, Miloslav Rechcigl, Louis Reith, Peter Ujhazy, and Dagmar White were present. Lida Cope participated via Skype.

In accordance with SVU traditions, the board recommended to publish a report about the board meeting, rather than actual minutes. The Regional Conference in Seattle was thoroughly discussed. Wayne Jehlik and Dagmar White are working on logistics, Lida Cope and Hugh Agnew on the program. Herman Levy was established as the treasurer for the event.

**EB voted to follow the first request for membership renewal by a second wave of appeals to those who had not paid for 2-3 years; to be followed by a third wave of appeals to those remaining, whose names will be identified from the 2003 SVU Directory.**

Zprávy should become more attractive, by publishing information about SVU members. Please send actual information about SVU members to the editor of Zprávy, David Chroust.

To attract young people to SVU, Mila Rechcigl suggested the creation of a Youth Committee, nominations are welcome. Peter Ujhazy suggested engaging social media. Here too is help welcome. Creating an attractive program for different age categories is obviously crucial. Any ideas, suggestions and help are welcome. PH, ZD

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## Letter about SVU Membership Statistics

May 9, 2013

Dear Members of the SVU Executive Board:

With interest we read your report on the State of the organization in the last issue of ZPRÁVY. Your statements on SVU membership are both incorrect and misleading. First, let us remind you, that during our service years (2006-2012) we listed as members only those who paid membership dues. Our records show that in 2006 there were 491 paying members. We left the office with 384 members who paid their dues. From this factual information it is clear that our numbers are indeed decreasing but not as tragically as portrayed in your report.

The 2003 SVU Directory edited by Rechcigl et al. lists at most 3,000 names. SVU records (from 2004 through 2012) show, however, that the majority of them never paid membership dues. Thus your number cannot be compared to our numbers. Please, correct your records because as scientists we have to work with facts.

We would appreciate your publishing our letter in the next issue of ZPRÁVY and also on the SVU website. We definitely hope that in coming years you will succeed in increasing membership numbers.

Sincerely

Past Members of the Executive Board

Karel Raška    Zdeněk David    Vlado Šimko  
Vlado Kysucky    Eugene Martin

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## OBITUARIES

**Jaroslav Geber** was a Czech painter and long-time head of the Scenic Arts Department at Universal Studios in Hollywood. He died last February in Tarzana, California, after a long illness, at age 86. Geber studied painting and sculpture at the Academy of Arts in Prague. He escaped the country after the communist putsch in 1949, and with other Czech refugees, among them Věra and Saša Bořkovec, worked for the International Refugee Organization in Munich. The Bořkovecs became good friends of Jaroslav Geber and attended his wedding there to Czech soprano Adela.

Eventually, the newlywed Gebers moved to Bogotá, Colombia, where Jaroslav (“Jarda” to his friends) painted portraits and murals commissioned by the government and the Catholic Church. In the 1950s Jaroslav Geber resettled in the United States, where at first he was creating covers for Capitol Record Artists such as Nat King Cole, Peggy Lee, and Joan Baez. He then moved to become scenic designer at Hollywood studios, first at MGM and later at Universal. The bulk of his work was original paintings and fine arts copies for movies and TV shows, among them a remarkable reproduction of Michael Angelo’s Sistine Chapel frescoes for the 1968 film *The Shoes of the Fisherman*. His commissions also included portraits of the artists and high military brass that hang in the Pentagon.

Here is a personal remembrance of Jarda Geber from Dr. Dagmar White:

“At the time the Gebers were living in Bogotá, I was also living in Bogotá teaching voice at the National Conservatory of Music. My singing career was developing rapidly. There I also met my husband, who was a young vice consul at the American Embassy.

“In the large emigré group I met Adela Gebr, who had a beautiful coloratura soprano. I was a dramatic soprano. So together we created a program for the national television sponsored by the Colombian Tobacco Company. The program consisted of arias and

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duets from various operas (e.g., *Aida*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Marriage of Figaro*). The scenes were staged and in costume. While the announcer was telling the story of the opera, describing the characters who did not appear in the program, the camera was focused on Jarda Geber's hand while he was sketching in lightening speed the characters the announcer was describing. The program was very popular. I still have those beautiful pictures. Eventually, we were posted to another diplomatic post and the Gebers sailed to America with a new baby. Jarda survived Adela by many years.”

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**Ladislav Matějka (1919-2012)**, professor of Slavic languages and literatures at the University of Michigan, and a long-time member of SVU, passed away on September 29, 2012, at the age of 93. Professor Matějka was born in Suché Vrbné near České Budějovice. He earned his Ph.D. at Charles University in 1948 and another at Harvard in 1961. In Czechoslovakia he edited the cultural section of *Lidové (Svobodné) noviny* in the years 1945-1948. From Czechoslovakia he went to Sweden, where he was lecturer in the Slavic Department at Lund University from 1949 to 1954. In the US Matějka first taught at Harvard University (1955-1959). He then joined the faculty at the University Michigan in Ann Arbor as assistant professor of Slavic literature and linguistics and rose quickly to the rank of professor in 1965.

In 1962 Matějka helped found *Michigan Slavic Publications* and became its general editor. With little funding, he built this Slavic department press into a prominent publisher of scholarly works in Slavic languages, literatures and cultures. Some 100 volumes were published in the series by authors such as Roman Jakobson and Nikolai Trubetzkoy. From 1982-1993 he edited the annual *Cross Currents: A Yearbook of Central European Culture*. For over a decade it published works by leading dissident East European authors, including Václav Havel, Ivan Klíma, Bohumil Hrabal, Milan Kundera, Josef Škvorecký, Ludvík Vaculík and Czeslaw Milosz. Professor Matějka was a scholar with many interests, especially semiotics and linguistic theory. He translated and published many

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contributions from the famous Prague Linguistic Circle. Matějka wrote five books and many articles himself. He also edited and published three volumes of 1945-1980 Voskovec and Werich correspondence, and these are a rich source on the lives and careers of these famous actors of the interwar Liberated Theater in Prague. In 2009, the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs awarded Professor Matějka the prestigious Gratias Agit Award for his “promotion of the good name of the Czech Republic abroad.” He was a great man and a great friend. (Source: Míla Rechcigl.)

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## **Cedar Rapids NCSML Honored With National Medal**

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Iowa was proclaimed the recipient of the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The award by the Institute of Museum & Library Services is the nation’s highest honor conferred on museums and libraries for service to the community. The National Medal was presented to the NCSML at a celebration in Washington, D.C. on May 8.

“The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library played an essential role in rebuilding a Cedar Rapids neighborhood following the horrific 2008 flood, and we are very proud to name this museum one of this year’s National Medal for Museum and Library Service winners,” said Susan Hildreth, director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

“We are immensely proud of being recognized for helping our city recover from its major disaster,” said Gail Naughton, President/CEO of the NCSML. “Not only did we rebuild and expand our museum and library, but we also helped inspire local citizens and businesses to have faith in the future of the city.” (Source: NCSML.)

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## **Czech and Slovak Community in West TX Hit Hard**

Dear Friends,

With horror and great sadness we watched the tragic events of April 17th 2013 in which over 20% of the town of West, TX was destroyed by a horrendous explosion of the fertilizer plant. A large and unique Czech and Slovak community was deeply affected. To rebuild, the community needs help.

Please consider contributing to West Texas Relieve Fund by donating to AFoCR (American Friends of the Czech Republic) USA account. Send your check to AFoCR, 4410 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 391, Washington, DC 20016-5572. Kindly put on the check memo line “West, Texas Disaster Relief Fund.”

DW, PH, PU

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## **Life in the Society (part 1)**

*By Peter Ujházy and Věra Bořkovec*

Our Society is only as strong as are its individual Chapters. They provide the heartbeat of the Society, the true venue for intellectual exchange, artistic experience, and, most important, for the feeling of belonging and dedication to a noble cause.

In the beginning of this year in the attempt to establish a healthy relationship with their representatives and membership, the SVU leadership requested individual Chapters for information updates and for an account of their past year activities. We have received a rich and colorful response from many, some sad notes from others. We see that the society is still blossoming in numerous places while striving in a few. The most active Chapters have their regular meetings, updated websites, and active membership. Some chapters are slowly losing their membership mostly due to the aging of the original affiliates.

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Here we would like to present some examples of events that brightened the life of individual Chapters. The account may serve as example, you may also call it inspiration, or just information of what is going on in a different part of the world, among people with the same heritage and mission.

We will start with two chapters here in the United States.

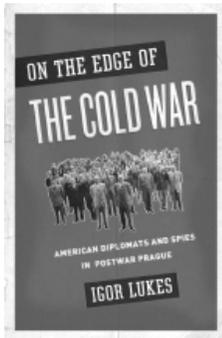
The **New York SVU Chapter** is one of the oldest SVU Chapters with roots reaching to early sixties of the last century. Located in the vibrant ever changing and attractive atmosphere of New York City, this Chapter has a lot to offer to its members. With ties to the Bohemian National Hall and other organizations, the Chapter had a good past year in organizing various interesting events.

In March 2012, a presentation by Prof. Eugen Strouhal, PhD, DrSc., a leading expert on Egyptian medicine explored the beginnings of scientific medicine in ancient Egyptian civilization. Thirteen ancient medical papyri recorded the level of the empiric knowledge of anatomy, patho-physiology and therapy. Prof. Strouhal presented the amazingly advanced surgical practices in ancient Egypt while the internal medicine and gynecology still relied mostly on religious rituals and remedies of plant, animal and mineral origin.

In April, Prof. Miroslav Barta, PhD from the Institute of Egyptology at the Charles University in Prague gave an update on Czech research in Abusir, one of the most important archeological sites in Egypt. The Czech Institute of Egyptology worked here for more than 50 years. It contains royal tombs from the 5th dynasty (Old Kingdom), mastabas (tombs) of high officials, as well as shaft tombs from the Saite-Persian period.



In May, Cold War experts could indulge in the presentation by Prof.



Igor Lukes, PhD on the topic “American Diplomats and Spies in Postwar Prague: Was the 1948 Communist Takeover Inevitable?” Professor Lukes explored the communist conquest of Czechoslovakia from the perspective of American diplomats and intelligence officers who served in the U.S. Embassy from the spring of 1945 to 1949, as presented in his latest book “On the Edge of the Cold War: American Diplomats and Spies in Postwar Prague”, just published by Oxford

University Press.

Another presentation in May was given by John Righetti, the National President of the Carpatho – Rusyn Society, on “The Melting Pot of Eastern Slovakia: Slovaks and Rusyns”. For centuries, Slovaks and Carpatho-Rusyns have lived alongside one another in the Central Carpathians, causing many to not be able to clearly define these groups culturally. Participants could enjoy a fascinating journey into the two ethnic group’s history, language, food, dance and their identities.



In September, SVU invited the author Martina Formanová to talk about and read from her new book “Snědla dětem sladkosti” (She ate sweets that belonged to children). Mrs. Formanová is a bestselling author in the Czech Republic and this is her fifth book.

In October the Chapter participated in the Czech Street Festival and organized the exhibition of photography “Landscape Revisited” by Eva Heyd, who has chosen and designed the show specifically for the space at the Bohemian National Hall. She was inspired by the correlation between the landscape in certain parts of the North American Eastern coast and the Czech landscape in Central and Southwestern Bohemia. In November, another author, Monika Zgustova discussed her book “Goya’s “ featuring three extraordinary women in three centuries: The



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Duchess of Alba, known as Goya's muse, in times of Inquisition, the Czech writer Božena Němcová, member of the national Enlightenment movement in Austro-Hungary, and the Russian writer Nina Berberova who escapes persecution during the Russian Revolution.

The New York Chapter is currently led by its President Jitka Illnerová and Vice-Presidents Pavel Illner, Zuzana Halsey, and Vlado Šimko. You can find their website at <http://www.svu2000.org/newyork/>. Zuzana Halsey also manages a very active LinkedIn SVU site <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Czechoslovak-Society-Arts-Sciences-SVU-4594914/about>

The second Chapter we will discuss is the **Washington DC Chapter**, the founding chapter of SVU. Its early history is well described by Mila Rechcigl in his classic work *On Behalf of Their Homeland*. The Chapter still maintains a multifaceted life recently supported by the new leadership of SVU. The convenient location in the vicinity of the US Czech and Slovak Embassies as well as the Slavic American Sokol and other organizations leads to collaborative activities and events that bring together not only SVU members but also broader Czech and Slovak communities in the area.



In March the SVU Chapter hosted a presentation by Dr. Judith Fiehler "The Unknown Leoš Janáček". Dr. Fiehler is the Secretary of the Washington Chapter of SVU. She works in the Library of Congress and is an expert musicologist, with a special interest in Czech music, Leoš Janáček's works in particular.

In May the Chapter held the elections of the new Washington Chapter Executive Board. Elected for the period 2012-2014 were: President: Věra Bořkovec; Vice President: Helena Fabry; Secretary: Judith Fiehler; Treasurer: Magdalena Clyne; Board Members: Eva Hausner, Juraj Slavik, Jaroslava Vojtová.

June brought a discussion with Czech World War II Veterans Colonel Thomas Gibian and LTC Frank Backer. This event was

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co-organized by the Czech Embassy and Slavic American Sokol. Dr. Gibian and Frank Backer are two of our war heroes living in the Washington DC area. They discussed their lives in the military and their contributions to the war effort.

It was a very informative and thought-provoking speech, greatly appreciated by the audience.



In October, together with the Slovak American Society of Washington the Chapter organized a fascinating talk by Dr. Joan Mohr about her book “The Czech and Slovak Legion in Siberia 1917-1922“. The turbulent fate of World War I troops was re-lived by the audience during the captivating narration of the author.

November was traditionally devoted to the Czechoslovak Christmas Bazaar. Typical Christmas delights were served together with a potpourri of Czech and Slovak literature and memorabilia. Most precious items were auctioned to the benefit of the organization.



In December the SVU new President, Dr. Petr Hausner and Executive Vice President Dr. Peter Ujhazy introduced their vision of the SVU in “The Future of SVU – Vision and Ways“. It was followed by an engaging discussion with the audience.

The Washington DC Chapter is led by its President Věra Bořkovec and Vice-President Helena Fabry.

In the next issue of ZPRÁVY we will report about the 2012 activities of our Western European Chapters.

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**Registration Form**  
**SVU Conference, University of Washington, Seattle**  
**August 30 – September 1, 2013**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee  
 \$95 (SVU member) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$110 (nonmember) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$45 (spouse) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 (spouse) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee includes printing of abstracts, social get-togethers, and concert.

**Accommodations:**

University of Washington housing – dormitories with private bath

From Aug. \_\_\_\_\_ to Sept. \_\_\_\_\_

\$48.50 per person per night **double** occupancy

Number of nights \_\_\_\_ x 48.50 = Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$82.50 per night for **single** occupancy

Number of nights \_\_\_\_ x 82.50 = Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Participants who prefer hotel accommodations will need to make arrangements themselves.

Hotel Deca (will hold blocks of 10 rooms)

Single or double for \$159-179 per night

4507 Brooklyn Ave., N.E. Seattle, WA 98105

Tel. 1-866-460-7456 E-mail: <http://www.hoteldeca.com/>

University Inn (will hold blocks of 10 rooms.)

Single or double \$159, including continental breakfast

4140 Roosevelt Way, N.E., Seattle, WA 98105

Tel. 206-632-5055 E-mail: <http://www.universityinnseattle.com>

**Meals.** Participants can buy meals individually at various campus cafeterias

Banquet \$ 36 x Number of people \_\_\_\_ = Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

3 Hour Seattle Bus **Tour**

\$ 59.00 x Number of People \_\_\_\_ = Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Payment to be made in US dollars only, payable to “SVU Conference , Seattle” either by check or international money order (e.g. American Express).

**Mail completed registration form with your check to SVU, P.O. Box 34617, Bethesda, MD 20827**

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## A Czech and Slovak Folk-Song Website

**Zpěvník - Lidové Písničky** is a Folk Song Website which presents over 1000 songs from Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia.

The website contains links to texts of the songs, the music and selected performances. Access the website at <http://www.zpevnik.org>

As an example, songs starting with the letter A can be found at [http://www.zpevnik.org/ukazky\\_seznam\\_a.htm](http://www.zpevnik.org/ukazky_seznam_a.htm). You will find the website a very practical and entertaining resource.

The author is soliciting from users a contribution of \$10 per year.

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