

# ZPRÁVY

SPOLEČNOSTI PRO VĚDY A UMĚNÍ

CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIETY OF  
ARTS AND SCIENCES, INC.  
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# SVU

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## ANNOUNCEMENT – SAVE THE DATE

### SVU World Congress 2014

**Place:** Plzeň (Pilsen) Czech Republic  
**Date:** June 29<sup>th</sup> through July 5<sup>th</sup> 2014  
**Organizer:** Západočeská Univerzita  
**Local organizing committee chair:** Ivo Budil ([budil@khv.zcu.cz](mailto:budil@khv.zcu.cz))  
**Main Theme:** Contribution of the Czechs and Slovaks to the Modern World

*Plan on participating; consider organizing a panel or symposium!*

## EDITOR'S PAGE



### **A Social SVU: The Newsletter As “Letter”?**

*by David Chroust*

The SVU put on another conference this year. This time in Seattle, Washington, at the end of the summer, on the weekend that joined August and September. Did you go? What was it like? Would you like to write about it for this newsletter? Or even about past conferences that you still think about?



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As the new newsletter editor I had some conversations with colleagues from the board and chapters on what we could do with this newsletter. How to bring more SVU life into view? How to bring in more writing from more people? There is a lot of life in SVU. Conferences every year on alternating continents, where we meet colleagues from disciplines (and worlds) far from ours and learn from them. The board gets together to do the chores and form the ideas that keep SVU going. Other lives go on in our learned society's chapters. Some even put out their own newsletters (Cleveland) or send me calendars.

“Newsletter” is a compound word.

“News” we already do here: *Zprávy*

*SVU* keeps you up to date on upcoming conferences and covers board meetings. (Still, we should consider and reconsider what SVU news is and how to do it.) But the other part of “newsletter” is “letter.” Please think about that and write to me. A “letter” is something personal and social, a story or an essay, a “something” with expansive borders or maybe none at all. Well, it is always a narrative from one person to another in a common social group. But think also about all that is possible beyond that. The *New Yorker* prints essays about places around the world and calls them “Letters from ....”

I’ve edited a few issues now. Getting enough “material” together is a struggle. Some of it I can’t use. It may be about an SVU chapter, but it’s just a calendar. Or about an event, but just an announcement. Eventually, we have enough items to make an issue—items on SVU business and other



Example of one chapter's newsletter.

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matters that belong. We have some familiar columns to make *Zprávy SVU* interesting and organized. But it would be nice to broaden the repertoire, to read more narrative, to feel like more voices are speaking here. To go from conference announcements that help me to get there and follow the schedule to a personal essay on what a past conference meant to you. To go from an executive board report that briefs me on SVU business to your reflections about diversity and discovery and how SVU could become new and broader as a social group and idea.

It would be nice to have more to choose from for each issue and to hear from you. You belong to SVU (by dues or other connections) and you know SVU (or think about it). Write about yourself or about another part of the society. Something we overlook and something to help us think differently and move forward. Take a chance. From 500 to 1,000 words per piece is a good size for this newsletter. If you want me to cut it down, write up to 1,500 words. Write well and by email to me at [d-chroust@tamu.edu](mailto:d-chroust@tamu.edu). I hope to see you next year in another city!

## SVU CONFERENCE RETROSPECTIVE

### 2013 SVU Regional Conference

*by Petr Hausner, Peter Ujhazy and Dagmar White*

The 2013 SVU Regional Conference held in Seattle, Washington between Friday, August 30 and Sunday, September 1 was deemed by its participants a success. The conference was small since it brought together only 26 speakers and around 50 attendees, yet it reflected in a spectacular way the creativity and depth of scholarship of our SVU community. It was conducted in a relaxed, friendly, positive and cooperative atmosphere. We were also fortunate to have excellent weather throughout the conference. The



*Photos by Petr Hausner, 2013*

choice of Seattle for the conference, suggested by Dagmar Hasalova-White, turned out to be superb. Seattle is a beautiful city, located on the Puget Sound and surrounded by the snow-covered Cascade Mountains; its inhabitants are self-confident, successful in business, different intellectual and technical endeavors. The local community of Czechs and Slovacs was very enthusiastic and eager to help in every way.

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Wayne Jehlik, the recently appointed Czech Honorary Consul for Seattle, proposed that the conference be held on the beautiful and impressive campus of the University of Washington. Wayne is a member of the Slavic Department of the University and president of the Czech Cultural and Education Council. The dormitories, lecture halls, and social rooms were all conveniently located close together. With the help of Alexandra Bartell and the local organizing committee, the arrangements by Wayne for the conference turned out well. There was an opening reception so everyone could become acquainted, a bus tour of the city, and a farewell banquet at the Burke Museum. The program, which was published in the July-August issue of *Zprávy*, was followed without cancellations or changes. It proceeded in two parallel panels on Saturday and three parallel sessions on Sunday.

All of the participants demonstrated extraordinary expertise and scholarship in their respective fields. Rosie Bodien (Washington) has amassed a large genealogical database on Czechs and Slovaks in the Pacific Northwest. Mary Kozy (Washington) demonstrated technical brilliance by introducing DNA analysis into genealogy. A number of lecturers spoke on various aspects of the Czech and Slovak historical experiences: Dagmar Hasalova-White from Virginia, Hugh Agnew from Washington, D.C., Michael Kukral from Indiana, John Palka from Washington, Louis Reith from Nebraska, Ludmila O'Donnell from Oregon, Milica Hasalova-Moravcik from Canada, Bruse Vlk from Virginia and Zdeněk David from Washington, D.C. The speakers demonstrated analytical and synthetic skills and often offered original interpretations which are expanding our understanding of some historic events. The talks in the theater session were informative, entertaining and elating: Lauren B. McConnell from Michigan, Doug Bennet from Pennsylvania Virginia Leech from Texas, Nora Linhart from British Columbia, Jarmila Enochová from the Czech Republic. The session on hobbies ("koníčky") contrasted in unprecedented and powerful manner different aspects of visual beauty namely the natural and the one in graphic and figural art. Jan Soukup from Alberta documented his explorations of the Canadian wilderness. Andrej Ujhazy from New York introduced us into the artificial beauty of art included into computer games, whereas Rosie Bodien from Washington introduced us to unique beauty of glass figurines from Bohemia.

In the philosophical and literary section, exciting new and well supported interpretations were offered: Zdeněk David from Washington, D.C., Norma Comrada from Oregon, John Palka from Washington. The music session was both informative, thanks to meticulous scholarly analysis and entertaining: Hugh Agnew from Washington, D.C., Judith Mabury from Michigan, Dagmar Hasalova-White from Virginia.

The medical session informed about progress in cancer therapy. It exuded newly found optimism which was based on advances in the genetic analysis

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of cancer (Peter Ujhazy from Maryland) and advances in the understanding of the regulation of the immune response (Petr Hausner from Maryland). An eye-opening talk, based on deep analysis and extensive experience in the field of phone and e-mail privacy shed light on the reality and offered practical recommendations (Ladislav Goč from Virginia).

In the field of linguistics, supported by many examples, there was a very erudite presentation by Zdenko Frankenburger-Daneš from Washington. In the end Jan Soukup, based on his extensive experience wandering through the vast expanse of the Canadian wilderness, presented evidence about the possible existence of Sasquatch or Big Foot, a humanoid, living in Canada and the U.S.

During the conference there were multiple exhibitions. Rosie Bodien showed enchanting and very old Czech glass figurines. Andrej Ujhazy exhibited his personal forays into original graphic art, often inspired by the artificial world of computer games. Virginia Leach made available DVD recordings of her original stage musical "Heart of the Tin Trunk." Some books were sold by their authors: *My Slovakia my Family*, by John Palka, and *Sedm ohňů k Nahanni* (*Seven Fires to Nahanni*) by Jan Soukup.



*Ladislav Goč in the audience*

Kudos go to Wayne Jehlik for choosing and negotiating a beautiful venue for the conference, Dagmar Hasalova-White for being the engine of the conference, getting the project off ground and keeping everything together, to Hugh Agnew and Lida Cope (North Carolina) for putting the academic program together in a constructive, imaginative, and logical way. Herman Levy (Virginia), the conference treasurer, demonstrated on spot that master accountants don't need computers. Many more SVU members chipped in, in particular Peter Ujhazy and the local organizing committee in Seattle, led by Sandra Bartell, Rosie Bodien, Helen Low and Marjorie Bianco Vernon.

And the best for last: there was a handful of young participants who enjoyed the conference.

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## GETTING INVOLVED



### **Young Talents Program - An Opportunity to Get Involved**

We are looking for academicians, scientists, researchers, and PhD students to lead/mentor exceptionally talented Czech and Slovak gymnasia students in challenging online courses in math, physics, chemistry, biology, informatics and English.

For the past two years we have been piloting online courses in the Czech and Slovak Republics. Developed by the Center for Talented Youth (CTY), Johns Hopkins University, these courses are an excellent way to prepare students for admission to some of the most prestigious world universities. Over 200 Czech and Slovak students have benefited already. This year we are setting up CTY Central Europe, an affiliate of CTY Johns Hopkins in the Czech Republic.

It would be great if you—accomplished professionals, academicians, PhD students—would get involved in guiding exceptionally talented Czech and Slovak gymnasia students using methods CTY Johns Hopkins developed over the last 30 years. The courses are ready. It would be up to you to guide the students through them and to evaluate their performance working with staff of CTY Johns Hopkins. If necessary, training is available.

We expect about 200-300 students to register for CTYOnline this September. Classes start on October 1. Our top priority is to find accomplished professionals—mentors—to be lead or shadow instructors for these courses. Scattered around the world, many Czechs and Slovaks became accomplished academicians, professionals and researchers in their fields. Most would like to help their old country do better. This is one practical way to do it.

To lead a CTYOnline course should be easy for someone who is comfortable in the subject matter—say physics—and its English terminology, is PC literate, responsible and diligent. It would help, if that person could do it pro bono. He/she could start as a shadow instructor—an understudy of an experienced CTY instructor and take only a few students so it's fun, not a burden. The rewards are intangible, and extremely emotionally and intellectually satisfying.

See more on <http://cty.jhu.edu/ctyonline>, <http://www.afcsls.org>, <http://www.uptoyou.cz>, <http://www.uptoyou.sk>, [www.facebook.com/afcsls](http://www.facebook.com/afcsls).

If you would like to get involved, please write to Martin Herman at [mherman@afcsls.org](mailto:mherman@afcsls.org).

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## **Report on the August 31, 2013, Executive Board Meeting of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences**

Minutes of the SVU Regional Conference General Assembly  
Alder Hall, University of Washington, Seattle  
31 August 2013 at 9:00 am PST

Officers in attendance: Petr Hausner, Peter Ujhazy, Hugh Agnew, Dagmar White and Mike Kukral.

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### ***Introduction and Welcome***

Petr Hausner:

The assembly was called to order and welcomed by SVU President Dr. Petr Hausner. He thanked Dagmar White and the local and conference committee for organizing such a fine venue and meeting. Also thanks must be given for the support of the Czech Embassy and Slovak Embassy in Washington, DC, and an official letter from Ambassador Gandalovic was read. Dr. Hausner informed the participants that a General Assembly must have 100 members in attendance and we are a bit short today.

We are reminded by Petr Hausner that SVU income and budget is mostly derived from membership fees and donations. Also, that we must work hard to encourage younger members worldwide. Our application is available on our website—at <http://www.svu2000.org/>—and we need to promote it.

Dagmar White:

The banquet tonight is very “Pacific Northwest” and includes salmon and chicken. It will be held at the Burke Museum and parking will be limited due to a major UW football game tonight. Walking the four blocks is suggested.

Peter Ujhazy:

Many sincere thanks to Hugh Agnew for sorting and organizing the program today. It was indeed an amazing scholarly event. Hugh Agnew responded that he was assisted by Lida Cope, Co-Chair, who is now in the Czech Republic, and credit must be given to her as well. He stated that it is a nice and informal meeting as intended.

Petr Hausner:

Now called for was approval of the Minutes of the last General Assembly held in Žilina, Slovakia. Motion seconded and minutes approved.

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## ***Money and Chapter Reports***

Peter Ujhazy:

Treasurer needed for SVU. Revenue is obtained from 303 dues-paying members, donations, *Kosmas* and book sales. Expenditures are for *Zprávy SVU*, *Kosmas*, United States Post Office box rental, insurance, website and mailings. Herman Levy is thanked as acting conference treasurer. For this year there is so far a positive balance of SVU expenditures and revenues in the amount of \$1,135.52. Thanks are also given to Petr Hausner and his wife for hosting SVU meetings in their home and providing food and drinks.

Dagmar White stated that a new chapter should be formed in the Seattle-Portland area for the Pacific Northwest.

We have 12 active chapters and nine less active. Noted active chapters include Prague (Czech Republic), Cleveland (Ohio), New York City, Alberta (Canada), Munich (Germany), Washington (DC) and Basel (Switzerland). Chicago currently requires some help. Bruce Vlk introduced himself from Virginia.

Jan Soukup, Professor of Physics at the University of Alberta, reported on the Edmonton, Alberta, chapter: thirty-five members and activities include music and academic lectures, vacation slide shows, scholarships for younger members, and philanthropic work with Children's Hospital. He noted that they have a casino event that raises \$70-80,000 every other year! An exemplary chapter.

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## ***Publications***

Petr Hausner:

Our editor for *Zprávy SVU* remains David Chroust at Texas A&M University. We are reminded that it is our newsletter. So, we should not hesitate to contribute anything. Let's make it interesting to read for a change. Let us know what you did this past summer.

*Kosmas* is a high quality academic publication, and its editor has been Francis Raška. Hugh Agnew will now become the editor, and he states that it is a wide-ranging journal, not just for history. It included literature, music, etc. Bruce Vlk commented that it should be available online as an e-journal with a searchable data base.

In conclusion, the aims and goals of the SVU since its inception in 1958 were recounted. And that our efforts involve helping members achieve their goals. If you want to be included on LinkedIn, please email your information to Jiří Eichler in Algiers for our database. He handles our website from Algeria.



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## ***Discussion and Comments***

Petr Hausner: Next General Assembly will be in the Czech or Slovak Republics.

Peter Ujhazy:

Ambassador of the Czech Republic is “concerned” about our name and perhaps we should think about change from Czechoslovakia to a more contemporary usage. Suggestions wanted!

Motion to adjourn and close meeting at 9:55 a.m. passed. Less than 100 people were in attendance.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Michael A. Kukral, Secretary-General.

## **WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING**

### **Student Field Studies in Kenya with Professor Mike Kukral**

In late May of 2013 and with my colleague Kenyan-born mechanical engineering professor Richard Onyancha, myself and 12 students from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology departed from Chicago for East Africa. I can think of no better method of teaching geography than to actually



take students into the field and experience and learn first-hand the educational, cultural, and personal rewards they would harvest from this summer's adventure throughout the country of Kenya. I am always reminded of Professor Svambera's (Charles University) work in the Congo over 90 years ago and inspired by my teacher, the late Dr. Milos Sebor (SVU member), and his field

work on geomycology in Haiti. Svambera, Sebor, and I, were all trained in the field of Geography.

Most of the group of 12 had taken Africa geography courses that I taught as part of Rose Hulman's humanities and social sciences curriculum. Others students and recent graduates sought a meaningful international experience from the 17-day journey before beginning their careers. Every day would be filled with new challenges and opportunities for students in learning about the people, the way of life, engineering education, and the tremendous diversity of East African physical geography and wildlife.

After a rainy night in Zurich (for many of my students it was their first

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time out of the USA) we continued on Swiss Air to Nairobi, capital of Kenya and home to over 3 million people, and spent a quiet night there before heading west and into the Great Rift Valley of East Africa. We spent the next three days as guests of Egerton University in Njoro. The university housing was nice, hospitality and food was excellent, and weather was cool in this highland location. During the day we met with students and university officials and then spent much of our time visiting the local Lake Nakuru National Park where seeing wildlife up close is nothing less than spectacular. Admission fees to the park were \$80 USD per person. One student had a closer encounter with African wildlife than she wanted when a baboon leaped upon her and stole a granola bar out of her hand! No harm done, but a reminder that we are not in a zoo. We also visited the world's second largest caldera, Menengai Crater, British colonial Lord Egerton's castle, and the city of Nakuru, all with the professional guidance of local geography professors and vehicle drivers (I don't recommend driving in Kenya at all- please leave it to the professionals!).

We also visited local high schools as my colleague Dr. Onyancha hoped the trip would encourage young Kenyans to pursue education in a STEM



field, increase global awareness about Rose-Hulman, and introduce Class of 2013 graduates as international role models to Kenyan school children. Alex Schwier, a biomedical engineering alumnus, helped inspire several students attending the Morop Girls Secondary School after showcasing how women can strive for a career in science and engineering-which, historically, has not been encouraged in Kenya. She has continued email contact with many of the girls, one of whom wants to become a neurosurgeon.

"Managing to have that effect on multiple people is truly an amazing feeling," says Schwier, the 2013 Herman A. Moench Distinguished Senior Commendation Award winner. After the trip, the deputy principal of the Kipsyenan Secondary School, Laurette Mueni, wrote to professors Kukral and Onyancha that the students "touched our hearts in a special way, which we cannot easily put into words. It is also important to let you know that our students are taking the science subjects more seriously since your visit."

Next we headed south in two safari vans to the world famous Masai Mara Reserve, a continuation of the fabled Serengeti Plain in Tanzania and home to a large concentration of the "Big Five" mammals. The roads were terribly poor and a 150 mile trip can easily take five to six hours here, but the

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experience is much better than flying as most tourists do. Rainy season ended in May and we were just starting June, so everything was much greener than anyone expected. Corn and potatoes and tea dominated the fields and cows and goats were always nearby and often in the road, too. As we approached the Masai Mara the landscape changed to semi-arid grasslands and pastoralism prevailed in the remote Masai villages. Staying here in tented camps was a magical experience and hiking with Masai in the hills will always be in my great experience memories.

During the rest of our 17 days in Kenya we visited and studied the alkaline and fresh lakes Baringo, Bogoria, and Victoria, and again saw spectacular wildlife from flamingoes to crocodiles. All of us took daily anti-malaria medicine throughout the trip but otherwise did not require other health precautions than normal practices. Food included high amounts of fresh vegetables, including the staples of corn and kale, wonderful fresh local fruits like papaya and plantains, chicken or beef, fish from the lakes, and rice and flat bread. Tea was the drink after every meal for me and bottled water was always a must. There is good beer in Kenya called "Tusker" that any Czech would enjoy, too!

Our last safari stop was at Ol Pejeta Wildlife Conservancy near Mount Kenya, home to endangered white rhinos with a connection to the Czech Republic. On December 20th, 2009, the Ol Pejeta Conservancy welcomed four special new arrivals to the conservancy. Najin, Fatu, Sudan and Suni are four of the world's last remaining seven northern white rhinos. All 4 were brought from the Dvur Kralove Zoo, which up until late 2009, had been their home in the Czech Republic! I actually saw these very rhinos in Dvur Kralove many years before. This connection reminded me of the story and movie "Born Free" and the fact that Joy Adamson was a native of Opava in the Czech Republic.

Maybe one of my students sums it up best here: Alex Cochrane, a recent applied biology graduate, plans to return to Kenya through the Doctors



Without Borders program after earning his medical degree. "Kenya is a magical place, and a wild, developing, historical, and beautiful land," states the 2013 John T. Royce Award winner (for campus involvement). "The world is no longer separated by country or continent

thanks to the advents of mass information sharing, cellular technology, and travel. It is our responsibility as budding engineers, scientists, and humani-

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tarians to gain as much knowledge as possible—a feat only achievable through direct contact with these places." I strongly believe that students can only benefit from more programs like this one.

My plans are to make this an annual program for students and others interested. In fact, if members of SVU are interested in going to Kenya with me as a guide please see our website here: [www.kukralandtaylor safaris.com](http://www.kukralandtaylor safaris.com). Kenya is changing fast. The Chinese are investing heavily. Please see the Kenya you imagine before it's gone. I'm interested in learning more about Czech-Africa connections, past or present, for my future research and look forward to your responses or questions.

Dr. Michael A. Kukral, Ph.D.  
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Editor's note: Dr. Kukral was a Fulbright Scholar in Prague in 1989-1990 and wrote the book *Prague 1989: Theater of Revolution*. He serves SVU as secretary-general. At his university he participated in the Rose-Hulman Faculty Without Borders (Kenya 2012) and Rose-Hulman Field Studies in Kenya Program 2013

## EVENTS

### **First-Ever Virginia Czech & Slovak Folklife Festival a Success**

*by Bruce Vlk*

SVU recently co-sponsored the first Czech & Slovak Folklife Festival in Prince George County, Virginia on October 19. The festival, made possible by a grant by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, was organized by SVU member Bruce Vlk and a dedicated local arrangements committee. Since January, the group had met monthly to plan the festival and associated research activities. The goal was to preserve the unique Czech-American and Slovak-American culture in Virginia.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, hundreds of Czech and Slovak families came to live in Virginia. The greatest number settled in the counties sur-

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rounding Petersburg and Richmond, mostly on farmlands abandoned after the Civil War.

The festival featured musical performances, polka dancing, baking demonstrations, a farm life exhibition and activities for children. Bob Rychlik of Maryland performed traditional Slovak folk songs on the *fujara* and other instruments. A local band performed music from song books of one of the community's past band leaders, Barta Vinsh. Food sold at the festival was



from recipes passed down through the generations.

Special guests included two NATO officers—Colonel Gabriel Kovacs for the Czech Republic and Lt. Colonel Peter Brauner for Slovakia. A letter from the Czech ambassador to the United States was read during the opening ceremony.

As a research component, the Library of Virginia hosted a

documentation and digitization program to document and preserve materials related to the community. Attendees brought old family photographs, letters and documents for preservation in the Library's permanent collection.

More than 1,000 people attended the festival, some from as far away as Wisconsin. Many old friends reconnected and new friendships were made over Czech and Slovak beer. The festival served as a catalyst for many to preserve their culture and to celebrate it with a larger community. The event host, the Prince George County Regional Heritage Center, is already making plans for next year's festival. Additionally, they are currently raising funds to complete a special immigration wing of its museum. This wing will highlight the unique culture of the Czech and Slovak immigrants who have called Virginia home for generations.

If you would like to keep up with the activities of the Virginia group, please e-mail [vaczechslovak@gmail.com](mailto:vaczechslovak@gmail.com) to be added to the Virginia Czech/Slovak Heritage Society's e-mail list.

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**NEW YORK, NY – Chelsea’s Agora Gallery** featured the original work of **Czech photographer Dušan Swalens** in **In Illumination: An Exhibition of Fine Art Photography**. The exhibition ran **from October 29, 2013 through November 19, 2013**. The opening reception was held on **Thursday night, November 7, 2013 from 6-8 pm**.

### **About the Artist**

**Dušan Swalens’**limited edition prints on archival grade photo rag inspire abstract thinking. Using photographic representation as a means of inspiring positive ways of seeing and being, Swalens’ current series takes an interest in biological minutia, particularly the delicate folds, rivets, ridges and buds of plants and flowers. Although the artist is working with real objects in time and space, his style of macrophotography often renders his chosen subject matter indistinct, even abstract. A virtual windfall of rich hues and beams of light characterize his images, foregrounding each individual’s unique interpretation. Says Swalens, “An observer viewing a macrophotograph changes its appearance through the dimension of his mind.” Playing with vision, perspective, and the power of visual representation, these works ask broad metaphysical questions concerning mankind’s relationship to nature’s ecosystems and our larger place within the universe.

Czech artist Dušan Swalens graduated from Zlín Film College specializing in photo and video. He has exhibited professionally in Belgium and the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Lithuania and currently organizes creative photography courses for children, young people and adults.

**Exhibition Dates:** October 29, 2013 – November 19, 2013

**Reception:** Thursday, November 7, 2013, 6-8 pm

**Gallery Location:** 530 West 25th St, New York City

**Gallery Hours:** Tues – Sat, 11a.m. - 6 p.m.

**Event URL:** [http://www.agora-gallery.com/ExhibitionAnnouncement/photography\\_10\\_29\\_2013.aspx](http://www.agora-gallery.com/ExhibitionAnnouncement/photography_10_29_2013.aspx)

### **About the Exhibition**

**Illumination: An Exhibition of Fine Art Photography** displays the tremendous power of which photography is capable, both as a means of expression and as an art form. These creations employ the potential of the medium to the full, in the service of the guiding ideas and instincts that animate them. Each artist infuses their work with a sense of vision and clarity, conveying a new and intriguing way of looking at life which both appeals and excites. Intelligent, insightful, and full of a captivating appreciation for the world, this is fine art photography at its memorable best.



### **Featured Artists:**

Lella Beretta | Mili DC Hartinger | Lynne Douglas | Patricia Gilman | Stuart L. Gordon | Debbie Klein | George Ligon | Tom McGee | Klaus Pfeiffer | Maria Pisaca | S.L.S. | Dušan Swalens | Sylvio Tabet | Natalie Wollmann

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### **About Agora Gallery**



Agora Gallery is a fine art gallery, established in 1984 and located in the heart of New York City's Chelsea art galleries district. It is famous for showcasing a spectacular array of talented artists from around the world and around the corner, while providing quality and original art to collectors. Exhibitions are usually group exhibits, presenting the work of a number of artists, but sometimes solo exhibitions focus on the work of one particular artist. The gallery publishes ARTisSpectrum Magazine, a bi-annual magazine that is distributed to museums, galleries, art institutions and art schools around the world. It provides artists, collectors, museums, galleries, art organizations and enthusiasts with access to the work of international talented artists as well as feature articles, reviews and interviews. Agora Gallery is the proud sponsor of ARTmine, one of the most comprehensive resources available worldwide to view and purchase fine art. The gallery also runs Agora Art Blog, a blog designed to provide helpful information and advice for artists while providing a forum for artists to help one another by sharing their experiences and thoughts.

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## PUBLICATIONS

### **Coffeetown Announces the October Release of *Better You Go Home: a Life-Altering Visit to the Czech Republic***

Seattle, WA.—On October 1, 2013, Coffeetown Press will release *Better You Go Home* (\$13.95, 236 pp, 6x9 Trade Paperback ISBN: 978-1-60381-170-5), a work of literary fiction by debut novelist Scott Driscoll. While visiting the Czech Republic in search of his half-sister, a critically ill American man unearths long-buried family secrets.

“Moving, powerful, and compulsively readable, *Better You Go Home* is the unforgettable story of a man's journey to save his own life, and how he discovers himself along the way.”

—Garth Stein, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Art of Racing in the Rain*

“At once an immigrant story, a medical thriller, and a tale of love. Driscoll keep all the skeins taut in his hand.”

—Kathryn Trueblood, author of *The Baby Lottery* and winner of the Goldenberg Prize for Fiction

“Terse with poetry, broad in history (and heart), and with all the suspense of an Eastern Block espionage thriller. Driscoll delivers.”

—Layne Maheu, author of *Song of the Crow*

Seattle attorney Chico Lenocho wonders why his Czech father refuses to contact family left behind the Iron Curtain. Searching through his father's attic after the Velvet Revolution, Chico discovers letters dated four decades earlier revealing the existence of a half-sister. He travels to the Czech Republic to find his forgotten sister and unearth the secrets his father has buried all these years.

There is self-interest behind Chico's quest. Most urgently, he is nearing kidney failure and needs a donor organ. None of his relatives are a suitable match. Could his sister be a candidate? Chico also meets Milada, a beautiful doctor who helps him navigate the obstacles to finding his sister. While Chico idealizes his father's homeland, Milada feels trapped. Is she really attracted to him, or is he a means of escape to the United States?

Chico confronts a moral dilemma as well. If he approaches his sister about his need for a kidney, does he become complicit with his father and the Big Shots of that generation who've already robbed her of so much?

Says Driscoll, “A parish priest in Iowa, a Czech relative who'd grown up on the dark side of the Iron Curtain, solemnly shook my hand upon returning the letters I'd asked him to translate, and said: ‘You have what you came for. Please do not trouble me again with this.’ There had been a suicide, a child who could not be





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traced, a sudden departure. This visit to the priest happened in 1994, not long after the Velvet Revolution. I went to Prague that fall, found my family's village in eastern Bohemia. Relatives occupying the family farmhouse remembered the former residents. They had some stories, some questions of their own. Walking through that village, I began to speculate. What became of the unidentified child? What if my life had deployed on her side of the Iron Curtain? Once that question lodged in my psyche, like a small wound that wouldn't heal, I knew that I had to write this story."

**Scott Driscoll**, an award-winning instructor (the University of Washington, Educational Outreach award for Excellence in Teaching in the Arts and Humanities 2006), holds an MFA from the University of Washington and has been teaching creative writing for the University of Washington Extension for seventeen years. You can find Driscoll on the Web at [www.scott-driscoll.com](http://www.scott-driscoll.com).

*Better You Go Home* is currently available for pre-order on Amazon.com. After October 1st, it will also be for sale in eBook and 5x8 trade paperback editions on BN.com, the European Amazons, and Amazon Japan. Wholesale orders can be placed through [info@coffeetownpress.com](mailto:info@coffeetownpress.com), Partners West, Ingram, or Baker & Taylor. Libraries can also purchase books through Follett Library Resources or Midwest Library Service.

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## IN MEMORIAM

### *Thomas M. Messer (1920-2013)*

Our long-time SVU colleague and notable art historian Thomas M. Messer died at his home in New York City on May 15, 2013, at the age of 93. Thanks to his leadership, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, which he directed for more than a quarter-century, advanced to its place among the world's great museums of modern art. During his tenure—one of the longest of a director of any major American art museum—the Guggenheim deepened its collection, expanded its exhibitions program, vastly improved its publications and took its first steps toward becoming a global institution.

Thomas Maria Messer was born in Bratislava on February 9, 1920. His father was an art historian and a professor of German. His mother came from a family of musicians. Though Thomas himself had an artistic bent, he

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was sent to study chemistry, first in Prague and then in the United States, at Thiel College in Pennsylvania. He left home on September 2, 1939, for England. From there he would cross the Atlantic. The next day England declared itself at war with Germany, and within hours the *Athenia*, the ship on which Mr. Messer was traveling, was torpedoed and sunk. He was rescued and subsequently made it to the United States on a different ship.

From Thiel College Thomas went to Boston University to study modern languages, graduating in 1942. Afterward he joined the United States Army and served in Europe as an interrogator for military intelligence. After the war he remained in Europe, to formally study art for the first time, at the Sorbonne in Paris. When Thomas returned to the United States, he became director of a small museum in Roswell, New Mexico, and earned a master's degree in art history from Harvard. Before landing at the Guggenheim, Thomas directed the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston.

(Source: Mila Rechciogl.)

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### ***Zora Procházka Pryor (1926-2008)***

Zora was a noted economist living in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. She died of lung disease on August 23, 2008.

Born in Prague, Zora spent her childhood and teens partly under Nazi occupation. A gifted linguist who spoke six languages, she began studies at the Interpreters School in Geneva shortly after the end of World War II. In 1948, after the Communist coup in her home country, her mother and others advised her not to come back until the political situation changed. It was 14 years before she saw her family in Prague again.

By working clandestinely she earned enough money to finish her studies in Geneva and move to Paris, where she earned a master's degree in economics. Work in France was too hard to get, so she moved to the United States in 1952. Soon accepted at Harvard, she earned Ph.D. in economics, while working as a housemaid and at similar jobs.

Zora then worked in Washington, D.C., on the economics of Eastern Europe, first for the Census Bureau and later at the United States Army's Research Analysis Corporation. In 1964 she married a fellow specialist on Eastern Europe, moved to New Haven, Connecticut, and then to Swarthmore.

Zora taught economics, first at Temple University and later for many years at St. Joseph's University. During her academic career she published a number of scholarly articles and short monographs on the economic history and current economic problems of various of East European states.

Zora was active in SVU and in local organizations where she lived and worked—the ABC program, the Wallingford-Swarthmore Community Classes, the Delaware County Youth Orchestra, Orchestra 2001, and the Swarthmore Friends of Music and Dance.

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Zora is survived by her husband Frederic, with whom she had been married for 44 years, her son Dan, a businessman in Washington, D.C., three grandchildren, a brother in New York State, and a sister in Prague.

(Source: Mila Rechcigl.)

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### ***Dr. Oldřich Černý (- 2013)***

On November 9, 2013 in Prague, Czech Republic, SVU founding father and dedicated member Dr. Oldřich Černý, passed away surrounded by family. He is survived by his loving wife, Alicja and the Neumann family of Prague. Dr Černý was an active member of the SVU Swiss chapter and participated in many exile organizations abroad. Together with the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he helped organize several congresses in Prague of Czech exiles from around the World. For all his passionate work, he was awarded, by President Václav Havel the Thomas Garique Masaryk Medal. He was cremated November 18, 2013 in Prague.

(Source: Jana Kanska)

## **Metropolitan Opera to Feature Rusalka Met: Live in HD**

**Do not miss the opportunity to watch the performance of Rusalka in your local theater on February 8, 2014 at 12:55 p.m. ET during a live performance transmitted to local theaters in the Live in HD series directly from the Metropolitan Opera in New York City which will feature soprano Renée Fleming.**

**Renée Fleming** sings her first *Live in HD* performance of one of her signature roles, the lovelorn mermaid Rusalka, in Dvořák's sumptuously melodic opera. **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** conducts a cast that also includes **Piotr Beczala** as the handsome Prince Rusalka yearns to love; **Dolora Zajick** as the cackling swamp witch Ježibaba; **Emily Magee** as the Foreign Princess, Rusalka's rival; and **John Relyea** as Rusalka's father, the Water Sprite.

*The Met: Live in HD*, the world's leading provider of alternative cinema content, is now shown in more than 1,900 theaters in 64 countries, making the Met the only arts institution with an ongoing global art series of this scale. The Met was the first arts company to experiment as an alternative content provider, beginning on a modest scale in 2006. Since then, its program has grown every season, with more than 12 million tickets sold to date.

For specific locations and times consult the Metropolitan Opera's website homepage.

Louis J. Reith

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Periodical

**“Women’s Parliamentary Representation in the Czech Republic: Does Preference Voting Matter?”** by Mary Stegmaier, Jale Tosun, and Klára Vlachová. Forthcoming in *East European Politics and Societies*, available online at: <http://eep.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/07/22/0888325413494771.full.pdf+html>

The U-shaped trajectory of women’s parliamentary representation in Central and Eastern Europe over the post-communist era has generated interest among scholars and non-governmental organizations. One particularly interesting case of the recent increase in women’s parliamentary representation can be found in the Czech Republic. After the initial post-communist drop in representation, the proportion of female Members of Parliament (MPs) hovered around 15 percent for nearly 15 years. However, in the 2010 parliamentary election, something happened. After years of little change, the percent of women MPs jumped from 15.5 percent to 22 percent. What caused this increase? Here, we conceive the 2010 elections as a ‘natural experiment’ and discuss the primary factors that produced such an increase: the change in preference voting rules, activities of non-governmental organizations, and the political context surrounding the election. To test the effectiveness of these factors, we carry out a multi-method research design based on original data. We find that the reduction in the preference vote share threshold required to move up the ballot benefitted female candidates more than men in the 2010 election.

Mary Stegmaier