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CELEBRATING MÍLA REHCÍGL'S 85TH BIRTHDAY



Mila Rehcigl with Cecilia Rokusek at the celebration, this and following pictures by PH.



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The celebration of Míla Rechcigl's 85th Birthday was planned by his family for Friday, July 31st. It was supposed to be a surprise party in the family tradition, but all the cooking made Míla suspicious. Friday at 5 o'clock, cars from



all directions, close and far, converged on the Rechcigl's' home in Rockville, Maryland. Their complete family arrived first, daughter Karen and son Jack, one granddaughter and three grandsons, two of which were accompanied by their fiancées. The Czech Embassy was represented by its Deputy Chief of Mission, Jaroslav Zajíček. The leadership of SVU was represented by Dagmar White, Petr Hausner and Jiří Stavovčík, who also presented the gift of the SVU leadership, an oil painting by Jiří Stavovčík (see last page of this issue). Cecilia Rokusek, a former SVU executive board member visited from Florida.

The positive mood of the celebration was set by the youthful presence of Milas' beautiful, intelligent and friendly children and grandchildren, the



charmingly decorated backyard of the Rechcigl's home, the cooperating balmy summer evening weather and the excellent food prepared by the family. Míla, as always, was on top of issues, in a good mood, welcoming

and pleased to see old friends. He was, as always, hiding his calendar age behind his much younger biological age.

Jaroslav Zajíček delivered greetings from Czech Ambassador Petr Gandalovič. He stressed the irreplaceable position Dr. Míla Rechcigl created for himself by working relentlessly over many decades for the good of Czechoslovakia and its successor republics as well as for expatriates from these countries. The amount of work Míla produced was made visible by a biography of his writings, which SVU printed for this occasion (available on the SVU webpage at http://www.svu2000.org/publications/85th_Birthday.pdf) and which also forms the core of this celebratory issue of *Zprávy*. In a short address, I was able to praise Míla's contributions. It followed my tribute printed in this issue of *Zprávy*. We all wished Míla many happy returns of the day, hoping that he will continue his positive work for SVU.

The celebration of Míla Rechcigl's 85th birthday was an extraordinary and unforgettable event, mostly for the presence of Míla and Eva in good health and high spirits, the presence of their friendly family, enthusiastic visitors, many SVU members and many of Míla's and Eva's dear friends.



Text and photo Petr Hausner

DR. MILOSLAV REHCIGL: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dr. Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr., is one of the founders and past presidents of many years of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU), an international and professional organization based in Washington, DC. He is a native of Mladá Boleslav, Czech Republic, who has lived in the US since 1950. After receiving a scholarship, he went to Cornell University, where he studied in the years 1951-1958 and received his B.S., M.N.S., and Ph.D. degrees, specializing in biochemistry, nutrition, physiology, and food science.

Dr. Rechcigl then spent two years conducting research at the National Institutes of Health as a postdoctoral research fellow. Subsequently, he was appointed to the staff of the Laboratory of Biochemistry at the National Cancer Institute (NCI). For some 10 years, while he was at NCI, he conducted extensive research relating to cancer biochemistry and enzyme turnover *in vivo*.

During 1968-1969 Dr. Rechcigl was selected for one year of training in a special United States Public Health Service executive program in research management, grants administration, and science policy. This led to his appointment as Special Assistant for Nutrition and Health in the Health Services and Mental Health Administration. In 1970 he joined the Agency for International Development, US Department of State, as Nutrition Advisor and soon after was promoted to the position of Chief of Research and Institutional Grants Division. Later he became a Director with the responsibility for reviewing, administering and managing AIDS research.

Dr. Rechcigl is the author or editor of over 30 books and handbooks in the field of biochemistry, physiology, nutrition, food science and technology, agriculture, and international development, in addition to a large number of peer-reviewed original scientific articles and book chapters.

Apart from his purely scientific endeavors as a researcher and science administrator, Dr. Rechcigl devoted over 50 years of his life to the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU). In 1960-1962 he served as secretary of the SVU Washington, D.C., Chapter. He was responsible for the first two of the Society's World Congresses, both of which were a great success and which put the Society on the world academic map, so to speak. For a number of years, he then directed the publication program of the Society.

Dr. Rechcigl also edited the Congress lectures and arranged for their publication, under the title *The Czechoslovak Contribution to World Culture* (1964, 682 pp.) and *Czechoslovakia Past and Present* (1968, 2 volumes, 1900 pp.). The publications received acclaim in American academic circles and greatly contributed to the growing prestige of the Society worldwide.

Dr. Rechcigl was also involved, one way or another, with most of the subsequent SVU World Congresses, including the recent SVU Congresses in Prague, Brno, Bratislava, Washington, Plzeň, Olomouc, and České Budějovice. Prior to his last term as the SVU president in 2004-2006, he held the same post in the terms 1974-1976, 1976-1978, and again in 1994-1996, 1996-1998, 1998-2000, 2000-2002, 2002-2004.

Together with his wife Eva, Míla published eight editions of the *SVU Biographical Directory*, the last of which was printed in Prague in 2003. He was instrumental in launching a new English-language periodical, *Kosmas: Czechoslovak and Central European Journal*. It was his idea to establish the SVU Research Institute and to create the SVU Commission for Cooperation with Czechoslovakia and its Successor States, which played an important role in the first years after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Under the sponsorship of the Research Institute he and his colleagues conducted a series of seminars about research management and the art of “grantsmanship” for scientists and scholars, as well as for administrators and science policy makers, at Czech and Slovak universities, at the Academies of Sciences and in both national governments.

Dr. Rechcigl was also instrumental in establishing the National Heritage Commission, with the aim of preserving Czech and Slovak cultural heritage in America. Under its aegis, he has undertaken a comprehensive survey of Czech-related historic sites and archival materials in the US. Based on this survey, he has prepared a detailed listing, *Czech-American Historic Sites, Monuments and Memorials* (2004), which was published through the courtesy of Palacký University in Olomouc. The second part of the survey, bearing the title *Czechoslovak American Archivalia*, was also published by Palacký University (2004).

In this connection, Dr. Rechcigl also organized several important conferences, one in Texas in 1997, the second in Minnesota (1999), the third in Nebraska (2001), and the fourth in Iowa (2003). Through his initiative, a special Working Conference on “Czech & Slovak American Materials and their Preservation” was also held at the Czech and Slovak Embassies in Washington, DC, in November 2003. It was an exceptionally successful conference which led to the establishment of the new Czech & Slovak

American Archival Consortium (CSAAC). Later, he also organized, jointly with the ACSCC of North Miami, a conference on “Czech and Slovak Heritage on Both Sides of the Atlantic,” March 17-20, 2005. The conference was co-sponsored by the US Commission for the Preservation of America’s Heritage Abroad, under the aegis of both Presidents of the Czech and Slovak Republics.

Among historians, Dr. Rechcigl is well known for his studies on history, genealogy, and bibliography of American Czechs and Slovaks. A number of his publications deal with the early immigrants from the Czech Lands and Slovakia, including the migration of Moravian Brethren to America. In the last few years he has been working on the cultural contributions of American Czechs and Slovaks. A selection of his biographical portraits of prominent Czech-Americans from the 17th century to date has been published in Prague, under the title *Postavy naši Ameriky* (Personalities of our America) (2000). On the occasion of his 75th birthday, SVU published a collection of his essays, under the title *Czechs and Slovaks in America* (2005). Three years later, he published a voluminous monograph, *On Behalf of their Homeland: Fifty Years of SVU*, an illustrated eyewitness account of the history of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (2008, 671 pp). And finally, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, the SVU published his personal memoirs, *Czechmate: From Bohemian Paradise to America Haven* (2011). In the same year, Rechcigl published his unique *Czech American Bibliography: A Comprehensive Listing with Focus on the US and with Appendices on Czechs in Canada and Latin America* (2011).

In 1991, on the occasion of its 100th anniversary, the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences awarded him the Hlávka Memorial Medal. Subsequently he was also given the Bolzano and the Comenius Medals. In 1998 he received the newly established prize *Gratias agit* from the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs. More recently, he was given an honorary title, “Admiral of the Nebraska Navy,” by the Governor of Nebraska and the key to the Capital of Nebraska by the Mayor of Lincoln, and the SVU Prague Chapter awarded him “2002 Praha SVU Award.” In 2005, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic honored him by awarding him the Jan Masaryk Medal for his contributions to preserving and fostering relations between the Czech Republic and the United States. In February 2010, the President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic presented him a Silver Medal of the Senate for his efforts on behalf of Czechs abroad and for fostering of good name and the traditions of the Czech Republic. In 2012 he was awarded by the Minister of Interior of the Czech Republic, Jan Kubice, a medal for his lifetime contributions to the Czech archival science.

TRIBUTES

Míla Rechcigl has many admirers and many colleagues from SVU who recall their many years of work and friendship with Míla in our learned organization. Below, in alphabetical order by surname, are a few tributes from them:

Petr Hausner, SVU President:

His Work Speaks for Itself

A difficult to believe truth, the youngster, who still swims on most days, works at least 12 hours a day and would not skip a good fight, is turning 85!

Míla Rechcigl, the heart and soul of SVU for the past 60 years, the prolific encyclopedic writer, 8 times former president of SVU, current SVU Writer in Residency, SVU Archivist and SVU Council Speaker will celebrate next to his biggest supporter, his wife Eva, yet another round birthday. With his relentless push towards bigger and better SVU, it was Míla who has most likely recruited you into SVU. He sure did recruit me and became an invaluable mentor. By living and breathing SVU, Míla has substantially advanced the cause of the Czech and Slovak communities in the world and considerably enriched their life. He painstakingly documented the contribution of Czechs and Slovaks to American science, arts, sports and social life in a soon to be published monumental work. By doing so, he furthered the international standing of the Czech and Slovak Republics.

We wish him strong health, many happy returns of the day and promise to continue his work at the best of our abilities.

Tom Holbik:

Dr. Míla Rechcigl recruited me to join the Executive Board of the SVU as Treasurer in the spring of 2014. I was appointed at the 2014 conference in Plzeň. I had known Dr. Rechcigl from the early 2000's, when I was the email liaison between my father, Dr. Karel Holbik, who had prepared a paper for the 2004 conference in Olomouc, and Dr. Rechcigl. I recall that there was much discussion about the conference that year to make sure that the details regarding my father's presentation were all in order. My father was proud to have worked with Dr. Rechcigl in making his presentation a success.

Then last year, I received an email from Dr. Rechcigl about filling the

Treasurer vacancy on the SVU Board. After some reflection about the role and responsibilities, I sent in my biography. As Dr. Rechcigl was interested in people as human beings and in their histories, he requested not just a C.V. listing accomplishments as if I were applying for a job, but also a narrative that described my background and connection to the Czech community, which I was happy to provide. The next thing I knew was that I was appointed Treasurer! The role has provided not only an opportunity to help restructure the finances of the SVU and help move the organization to the next level of financial management, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to connect in a more profound way with my Czech heritage. I have Dr. Rechcigl thank for this wonderful opportunity.

Louis Reith:

I owe several debts of gratitude to Mila Rechcigl over the last dozen years. First, I believe it was he who first made me aware of SVU and the wonderful conferences which it sponsors. I must have met him at the Czech Embassy and at subsequent diplomatic and social events. Although I no longer remember when I joined SVU as a full-time member, I do remember that my first European conference was in Olomouc in 2004, with a paper about the 17th century Baroque composer Pavel Vejvanovský. Second, it was Mila who encouraged me to consider writing a paper about the “American Beethoven,” the 19th-century Czech/German Bohemian composer Anthony Philip Heinrich. Thanks to Mila’s suggestion of that topic, I later found almost 40 boxes of his musical manuscripts and papers in the Library of Congress’s Music Library, and I then presented the paper at the Great Plains Czech Conference which Prof. Mila Sašková-Pierce sponsored at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in April 2011. Later, with Mila’s encouragement, I added footnotes and Hugh Agnew just published it in *Kosmas* last year. Third, Mila encouraged and nominated me for the SVU Board of Directors in 2012, and he and his wife put up with me for my final weekend in Washington, early in February 2013, when I attended a Board meeting in Potomac, MD, before racing in my 1992 Toyota to beat the moving van to Seward, NE (I made it to Seward barely the night before the van arrived). These are but three major reasons why I will drink a toast of good Nebraska wine in honor Mila’s birthday this coming Friday evening.

Milo, šťastné narozeniny z Ludviku!

Peter Ujhazy:

I have learned about Mila from my long-term friend and the current President of SVU, Petr Hausner. “Mila is a force of nature,” prepared me Petr for meeting Mila, and he was right. Over the years, I have always admired

Mila's energy, deep comprehension of SVU's history and, most of all, his commitment to the organization he helped to shape over the decades. His incredible knowledge of Americans with Czech or Slovak roots will be now brought to light in his masterpiece that he has been working on for many years. Mila, all the best wishes to you and may the SVU benefit from your vast experience for many years to come.

Dagmar White:

Mila and I are going back many years. We soldiered on the SVU world congresses, executive boards, and local SVU activities.

Milo, your total dedication to SVU, hard work, leadership, and uncompromising stand made this organization successful and lasting. Your vast literary output on the rich culture of the Czechs and Slovaks is outstanding.

Milo, on your birthday I am wishing you all the best and hope that we both can soldier on for many more years.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MÍLA REHCÍGL'S WRITINGS ON CZECHS AND SVU

In July, SVU issued David Z. Chroust, ed., *Dr. Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr., Past President of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences in America (SVU): A Celebration of His 85th Birthday, July 30, 2015*. This 53-page publication included the biographical sketch and tributes printed above. It also included the following three bibliographies in 47 pages (Mila's son Jack kindly sent them to us, along with the biographical sketch of Mila):

[1] CZECHOSLOVAK AMERICA: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WRITINGS BY MILOSLAV REHCÍGL, JR. (26 p)

For this bibliography, with some of its sections reduced to narrative summaries, see below.

[2] BIBLIOGRAPHY OF OTHER PUBLICATIONS: Also Authored or Edited by Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr. (7 p)

This bibliography included a section titled "Writings about and Tributes to Mila Rechcigl," listing 52 articles, arranged chronologically from 1965 to the present. Most appeared in *Zprávy SVU* and document Mila's

remarkable career and achievements in SVU. The other major section in this bibliography is “Interviews with Míla Rehcígl” and lists 26 interviews, some printed in *Zprávy SVU*, *Český Dialog*, *MF Dnes*, *The Prague Post* and elsewhere, and others broadcast by *Český rozhlas*, the Czech Republic’s public radio company, and its foreign-language service, *Radio Prague*.

The two smaller sections in this bibliography are “Scholarly Publications,” a listing of Míla’s published books, and “Biographical Listings,” with the titles of 16 biographical publications that carry entries for Míla Rehcígl,

[3] MILOSLAV REHCÍGL’S SCIENTIFIC WRITINGS (12 p)

This bibliography documents Míla’s writings in nutrition, metabolism, genetics and agriculture. It has two successive sections. The first is titled “A. Books, Monographs and Dissertations” (4 entries). His 1955 master’s thesis at the Cornell University School of Nutrition was on “Synthetic Vitamin K and Oxidized Flavor in Milk,” and his 1958 Ph.D. dissertation there on “Studies on the Metabolism of Nonessential Amino Acids and D-Amino Acids in the Rat.” In 1969 Dr. Zdeněk Hruban and Dr. Miloslav Rehcígl, Jr. published *Microbodies and Related Particles* as a supplement to the *International Review of Cytology*. Three years later, the Moscow publishing house Mir put out of a Russian edition in 312 pages. The second section in this bibliography of Míla’s scientific writings is “B. Edited Works,” with subsections on 10 books Míla edited, successive editions of several handbooks, 15 contributions to books, almost 50 peer-reviewed articles, 32 abstracts, 3 book reviews, and 11 research reports and aids.

Here we reproduce, with some sections summarized, the first bibliography (see no. [1] above), which has the following structure:

- A. Bibliographies
- B. Biographical Compendia
- C. Monographs
- D. Book Chapters
- E. Historic Articles
- F. Tributes and Memorials
- G. Abstracts
- H. SVU Related Articles
 - 1. SVU in General
 - 2. SVU Aims and Aspirations
 - 3. Specific Projects and New Initiatives
 - 4. Congresses and Conferences

-
5. President's State of SVU Reports
 6. Executive Board Reports
 7. Publication Committee Reports
- I. SVU Cultural Heritage Reports

A. Bibliographies:

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F. Tributes and Memorials:

Dr. Rechcigl has written many obituaries of SVU members. This part of the bibliography listed obituaries for 61 individuals and various tributes for another 19 individuals in *Zprávy SVU* and elsewhere from the years 1975 to spring 2008. In the seven years since then, Míla has written many more obituaries for *Zprávy SVU*. He has made the Society’s newsletter a rich biographical dictionary that will be a welcome source for future scholars who write about scholarship, science, art, life and achievement in the Czech

and Slovak diasporas in America in the last quarter of the 20th century and in the first quarter of the 21st century.

Obituaries listed from 1975-2008 in this bibliography were for Francis Dvornik in 1975, Dr. John G. Lexa (1914-1977), Marika Šumichrastová in 1986, George J. Vlasák in 1994, Hugo Keszler (1916-1994), Božena Šeborová (1910-1995), René Wellek (1903-1996), Emil Royco (1908-1996), Ella Traub (1911-1996), Franta Marlow in 1996, J. George Corn (1920-1996), Jiří Nehněvajsa (1925-1996), Edward Táborský (1910-1996), Bohumil Šámal (1933-1995), Jaroslav Drábek (1901-1996), Frank Liberský in 1997, Zdenka Sommer (1901-1996), Milič Čapek (1909-1997), Charles Bruml (1912-1998), Vladimír Dostál (1913-1998), Joan Winn (1910-1999), Jaroslav Mracek (1928-1999), Pavel Horecký (1913-1999), George Gibian in 2000, Frank Steiner (1922-2000), Otakar Koldovský in 2000, John Henry Wotiz (1919-2001), Jan F. Tříška (1922-2003), Antonín Měšťan (1930-2004), Gleb Nikolaevich Žekulin (1922-2004), Jarka M. Burian (1927-2005), Martin F. Andic (1940-2005), Zdeněk Lojda (1927-2004), Emilia Royco (1909-2005), Jaroslav Pelikan in 2006, Vladimír Slámečka in 2006), Karel Holbík (1920-2006), Ferdinand Hoffmeister (1914-2006), Václav Mostecký (1919-2004); Pavel Albrecht, Pedro J. Pick, Adolph Švehlík, George Sadek, Jeronym Zajicek, Oskar Morawetz, Irma Anna Ourecky and Inka Smutna in 2007; Alena M. Polesný, Jan Lang, Mojmir Drvota, Louis Gogela Sr., George Brecher, Thomas G. Winner, Ivan Alexander Getting, Lewis Weiner, Mirek Josef Plavec, Josef Podzimek, Andrew Fejer, Victor Miroslav Fic, Ladislav J. Doubek and Peter Rybar in 2008.

Tributes in 1999 were for Tomáš Baťa at 85, Jiří Kolaja at 80 and Emilka Royco; in 2002 for Dr. Jaroslav Němec (1910-1992); in 2003 for Charles E. Townsend, Zdeněk Slouka at 80, Jaroslav Folta at 70 and to Slovak ambassador to the United States Butora and his wife Dr. Zora Butorová; in 2005 to Jan Hird Pokorný, “2005 Seifert Prize Awarded to Two SVU Members,” “SVU Member Honored with Woodrow Wilson Award,” “SVU Member is New President of the Czech Academy,” and “SVU Member Donates \$105 Million to University”; in 2006 to Sáša Bořkovec at 80, Mark Slouka, Michael M. Seng and Zdeněk Salzmann at 80.

G. Abstracts:

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“In Footsteps of First Immigrants to America from Czech Lands and Slovakia,” Abstracts, 14th SVU World Congress, Chevy Chase, MD, September 15-18, 1988, 71.

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in America, Inc., Dr. Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr.," *SVU Bulletin*, Los Angeles, 7, No. 4 (October-December 1975), 5-7.

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“Významní Američané čs. původu,” *Zprávy SVU*, 36, No. 1 (January-February 1994), 32-33. Ibid., “SVU Information Clearinghouse,” 37, No. 3 (May-June 1995), 4-6; “World Who’s Who of Czechs and Slovaks,” 39, No. 6 (November-December 1997), 4-8. “A New SVU Initiative: Notable Americans with Czech Roots,” *Zprávy SVU* 48, No.6 (November-December 2006), 7.

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“Czechoslovak American Archivalia,” *Zprávy SVU* 43, No. 1 (January-February 2001), 17-19. Ibid., “SVU Archives,” 45, No. 3 (May-June 2003), 23-24. “SVU Archival Material - Urgent Message for SVU Local Chapters and Past SVU Officers,” 45, No. 6 (November-December 2003), 16. “Preserving Czech and Slovak American Archival Material,” *Kosmas* 17, No. 2 (Spring 2004), 95-96. “Additional SVU Archival Material Moved to IHRC,” *Zprávy SVU* 48, No. 1 (January-February 2006), 10-11.

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4. Congresses and Conferences:

In the 18 years between 1988 and 2006, Míla Rechcigl contributed some 81 items to the SVU newsletter, *Zprávy SVU*, about the society’s annual conferences. These were conference announcements and his speeches and impressions from the conferences in Prague (1994), Brno (1996), Belton, Texas (1997), Bratislava (1998), Minneapolis-St. Paul (1999), Washington, DC (2000), Lincoln, Nebraska (2001), Plzeň (2002), Cedar Rapids, Iowa (2003), Olomouc (2004), North Miami (2005) and České Budějovice (2006).

5. President’s Annual State of SVU Reports to General Assembly:

During his 18 years at president of SVU (1974-1978, 1994-2006), Dr. Míla Rechcigl wrote annual reports and delivered them to the general assemblies of members at SVU conferences. Each one then appeared in *Zprávy SVU* in the fall, in one of the newsletter’s last two or three issues for the year, most often in the September-October issue but sometimes in July-August or November-December. They were in Czech and titled “Zpráva předsedy SVU dr. Miloslava Rechcigla Valnému shromáždění SVU” in the years 1976-1978, 1995-1996 and 1998. They took up from 4 to 9 pages in the newsletter, where they appeared as the first or second item. (In the first year, 1976, *Zprávy SVU* published “Výroční zpráva předsedy SVU” in its January-February issue and a “Zpráva předsedy SVU dr. Miloslava Rechcigla Valnému shromáždění SVU” in September-October.) In 1997 and then for good in 1999, Dr. Rechcigl switched to English and titled his annual messages “State of the SVU: Report of SVU President Dr. Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr. to the SVU General Assembly.” From 2000 it became “State of the SVU in the Year” His last one was in 2006.

H. SVU Cultural Heritage Reports:

Czech American Historical Sites, Monuments and Memorials: A Tentative Listing, SVU Information and Reference Series, C. Cultural Heritage Documents, no. 1 (Rockville, MD: SVU, 1999), 112 pp.

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to Emigres and Exiles from the Territory of the Former Czechoslovakia and Relevant Holdings Bearing on Their Ancestral Land: A Tentative Listing, SVU Information and Reference Series, C. Cultural Heritage Documents, no. 2 (Rockville, MD: SVU, 2000), 294 pp.

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In preparation are *Czech Societies in the US* and *Czech Newspapers and Other Serials*.



Eva and Mila Rechcigl, October 2012 Cosmos Club

Photo Petr Hausner

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