

CZECH THE NEWS - SF

Miloš Zeman Elected New President of the Czech Republic



President Miloš Zeman

The Czech Republic recently held the first direct presidential elections in its history, in contrast to previous elections that were determined by a parliamentary majority vote. Almost two-thirds of Czech nationals (61.3%) cast initial votes on January 11-12, and nominated former Prime Minister Miloš Zeman and current Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg as run-off candidates, with a narrow result of 24.2% and 23.4%, respectively. The two final contenders were elected from a total of nine eligible candidates.

The second, determining vote on January 25-26, 2013 elected Mr. Miloš Zeman as the new President of the Czech Republic, with 55% of the popular vote. He will be inaugurated on March 8 of 2013.

While Mr. Schwarzenberg received much of the young, urban vote especially in Prague, Mr. Zeman dominated the countryside and elderly voters. Almost 60% of eligible Czech voters turned out for the final round of the presidential election, with about 2.7 million (54.8%) voting for Zeman and over 2.2 million (45.2%) voting for Schwarzenberg. The term of the President is five years.

Mr. Zeman is the former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, a position he held from 1998-2002. Currently, he is only the third president in Czech history, and the first to be directly elected by the Czech people. Before his presidential bid, Mr. Zeman was a member of the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Czech Parliament, and held the Speaker position from 1996-1998. In the 1990s Mr. Zeman led the Czech Social Democratic Party before founding the Citizen's Rights Party in 2009 (Strana Práv Občanů – Zemanovci; SPOZ).

Dear Friends in the California, Happy New Year 2013!

I hope you all had a happy Holiday season and a good start into 2013! We have just experienced a wonderful exercise of democracy during the first direct presidential elections in our history. Former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Milos Zeman, who visited California in 2001, was elected the new Czech President and will be inaugurated on March 8, 2013. I thank all of you who came to the Consulate and cast your votes. It was delightful to see so many of you interested in Czech affairs and I am very glad that the Czechs living abroad have the opportunity to participate in Czech elections...

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Dear Friends in the California

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I am happy to report that the annual Czech film festival will continue under a new name this May – “Czech That Film presented by Staropramen”. This time the Czech Consulate will cooperate with the Czech Center in Prague and we will present new Czech films in ten American cities, including San Francisco.

I am also excited to report that the second edition of our popular Petrof Concert Series will occur again this year. The opening concert of this spectacular music series will happen on February 18, 2013, when famous Czech violinist Jaroslav Svěcený, with his talented daughter Julia, will perform several works of Bach, Mozart and Bleriot as well as an original violin fantasy called Strings for New York, written by Svěcený. Highly regarded Czech singer Jana Fabiánová will return to the Petrof Series in April. After last year's exciting show I very much look forward to her performance.

We already have had a very busy January this year, starting with the successful Opening of the Trnka exhibit. The exhibition runs until the middle of April, so please, do not hesitate to visit the Front Gallery here at the Consulate. We also experienced a fantastic screening of the famous Czech movie Václav, which was followed by a stimulating discussion with one of the leading actors from the film, Jan Budař.

Unfortunately, I cannot conclude on a very happy note since we experienced a great loss in late November. As many of you know, an outstanding compatriot and loving wife, Dasha Kovarik, recently passed away. She was a strong member of the extended Czech community here in California since 1966, and her memory will live on as a dedicated supporter of Czech culture. Her life stories were always entertaining and she will be dearly missed.

It has been two years since my family and I arrived in Los Angeles. I would like to thank you again for your open arms and support. I am just in the middle of my four-year-term and I hope that the second half will be as fantastic as the first one. To get more information about our events, please, visit our website, Facebook page, or follow us on Twitter.

*Michal Sedláček
Consul General*

Czech-founded Business Rapidly Expands

Czech-American businessman John “Jan” Vanhara recently earned the distinction of having created the fastest growing private company in Los Angeles, according to the Los Angeles Business Journal.

Vanhara came to the United States in 1999 to sell software during the dot-com boom. In 2001 he started IncParadise, which helps business incorporate in Nevada and in 2007 he moved to Los Angeles to set up XYZ Bikes. After the financial crisis hit and sales slowed, he used XYZ's warehouse space and set up Shipito.

His Eastbiz Corporation, which runs mail and package forwarding business “Shipito.com”, has rapidly expanded since 2007 to four warehouses in Los Angeles, Oregon and Hong Kong. The company's service acts as an international intermediary, receiving ordered goods from US-based businesses and shipping them abroad.

Shipito.com maintains headquarters in Torrance, CA and processes an average of over 50,000 packages a month. Over three years has experienced a whopping 2,046% product growth rate. Inc. Magazine recently named the company “Number 1 in Logistics and Transportation“ in 2011. For more information on the company and its service, visit www.shipito.com.



Czech-American entrepreneur John Vanhara

Forman Honored with DGA Lifetime Achievement Award

The Directors Guild of America (DGA) honored critically acclaimed Czech director Miloš Forman with the coveted Lifetime Achievement Award. This recognition cements Forman's status as one of the greatest contributors to international directing and cinema. His *One Flew Over A Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) was the second of only three films to ever win the Big Five major Academy Awards, which include Best Picture, Director, Screenplay, Actor in Lead Role, and Actress in Lead Role.

"It is a tremendous privilege to present the DGA Lifetime Achievement Award for feature film to one of the greatest filmmakers of our time, Miloš Forman," said DGA President Taylor Hackford. "No matter what subject or genre he tackles, Miloš finds the universality of the human experience in every story, allowing us – his rapt audience – to recognize ourselves within the struggle for free expression and self-determination that Miloš so aptly portrays on the silver screen."

Forman has directed multiple Academy Award-winning and nominated films, including "The Fireman's Ball" (1967), "Amadeus" (1984), and "The People vs. Larry Flynt" (1996), and has seen exceptional success at many international film festivals.

In its 76-year history, the DGA has distributed the Lifetime Achievement Award only 33 times, and to international film legends such as Frank Capra (1959), Alfred Hitchcock (1968), Orson Welles (1985), Billy Wilder (1985), Akira Kurosawa (1992), Stanley Kubrick (1997), and Martin Scorsese (2003) – among few others. The DGA presented the award at the 65th Annual DGA Awards Dinner on February 2, 2013, in Los Angeles.



Czech filmmaker Miloš Forman

Variety announces 10 Directors to Watch – Czech director David Ondříček

Popular entertainment-trade magazine *Variety* recently listed Czech director David Ondříček ("In the Shadows," 2012; "Loners," 2000) as one of the top ten directors to watch in 2013. Ondříček has been nominated for multiple Czech Lion awards, and his recently successful "In the Shadows" was selected as the Czech nomination for the Best Foreign Language Film Academy Award. The dark film noir comments on the oppressive political system of the communist authorities in 1950s Czechoslovakia. His diverse work – including comedy, romance, and documentary films – has also been decorated at many international film festivals. The recognition from *Variety* follows the legacy of his father, Miroslav Ondříček, who as part of famed director Miloš Forman's production team was Oscar-nominated as cinematographer for "Ragtime" (1981) and "Amadeus" (1984). "My father taught me that you have to make films very realistic," Ondříček says. "It's my mantra: Don't make any artificial things." Ondříček plans to continue filmmaking with inspiration from his father and Forman, and hopes to continue shooting in Europe for a new, meaningful project.



Director David Ondříček

Consul General Meets with Mayor of San Diego

The Consul General of the Czech Republic in Los Angeles, Michal Sedláček, officially met with recently elected Mayor Bob Filner of San Diego on Friday, December 20, 2012. The discussion was dedicated to improving bilateral trade and to strengthening economic cooperation between the Czech Republic and California. Clean-tech energy, an essential development for modern and competitive businesses, was an important focus. The Mayor and Consul General later exchanged ideas on the importance of integrating cultural ties, especially with the large Czech population in the area. Czech compatriots in San Diego maintain the House of Czech & Slovak Republics as well as two Czech language schools with growing classes and programs. The meeting in San Diego was an indication of the successful US-Czech relations the two countries continue to enjoy.



Consul General Michal Sedláček and Mayor Bob Filner

Ilsa Maier Awarded the Czech National Memory Award

Ilsa Maier, longtime member of the Czech community in California, received a distinctive National Memory Award for her role as a Holocaust fighter and survivor on December 12, 2012. The award ceremony, organized by the non-profit organization Post Bellum, took place at the National Theatre in Prague.

It is truly inspiring that Ilsa Maier (born in 1922), a wonderful part of our Czech family in Los Angeles, is still uplifting after her grim Jewish reality in Czechoslovakia during Nazi occupation. Her story progresses from her birth in Brno to her time in the ghetto at Terezin in 1941, then Auschwitz in 1944 and an assignment to a labor camp, and finally by 1947 to a settled life in Los Angeles. She uses the experience to remind the world of the terrible power of hate, but also of the heroes of the time - those that stood up and resisted, lost and recovered.

Seven other distinctions were awarded to World War II dissidents and victims during the ceremony.

The Post Bellum group is made up of journalist, historians, and students that work to preserve Czech political, cultural, social, and academic life of the 20th and 21st centuries. Founded in 2001, the non-profit organization organizes exhibitions, publishes books, and holds social events in honor of significant Czech nationals throughout history.



National Memory Award Recipient Ilsa Maier

Jaroslav Svěcený – Petrof Concert Series 2013



Jaroslav Svěcený and his daughter Julie

Jaroslav Svěcený, a prominent Czech violin virtuoso, will perform in Los Angeles on Monday, February 18, 2013. The concert will kick-off the much anticipated Petrof Concert Series of this year. A graduate of the prestigious Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Svěcený has gone on to record over 40 classical CDs. His work on TV, radio, and in concert has attracted worldwide attention, and he has toured in a range of countries from the US to Brazil to Saudi Arabia. He has also become an expert on the construction and use of historical violins. Through exhibits, shows, and recording sessions he successfully preserves the history and sound of classic violins. Currently his global concert project, called “VIOLINO“, involves antique violins from the 17th through 20th centuries. In 1996 he was awarded the Masaryk Academy of Arts award for creative artistic accomplishment, and in 2010 he received the Golden Plaque for national significance as a master of classical music from the President of the Czech Republic, Václav Klaus.

“Czech Filmfest Returns to California“

The 2013 Czech film festival “Czech That Film presented by Staropramen” and in cooperation with UCLA Film & Television Archive and Czech Center in Prague is currently preparing for its spring showing. This year the Filmfest is again dedicated to raising the profile of Czech films by celebrating Czech cinema at an international level. Conceived in 2012, it provides an opportunity for enthusiasts of global cinema in the United States to experience successful new Czech films. Screenings and special events at Czech That Film 2013 presented by Staropramen will for three months, coast to coast, introduce new Czech films to local movie critics and representatives of the American film industry, as well as to a wide audience of Americans and Czech compatriots. Screenings include a diverse assortment of Czech filmography, ranging from rotoscoped animation to film noir. The time and place of screenings in Bay area is still to be determined. Many of the films such as “Flower Buds” (2011, directed by Zdeněk Jiráský), “Alois Nebel” (2011, directed by Tomáš Luňák), “Closely Watched Trains” (1966, directed by Jiří Menzel) have won significant international awards, and each screening provides a stimulating perspective from renowned Czech directors.

Look forward to another festival of popular Czech artists in the U.S. and the chance to meet creative Czech directors and seasoned actors in person during the festival.

New York City – June 25-30, 2013

Los Angeles – May, 2013

Salt Lake City - April 24-26, 2013

Chicago – June, 2013

Portland – June 7-9, 2013

Washington, D.C. – May, June, 2013

Phoenix – May 2-4, 2013

Denver – May, 2013

Sponsored by:



Art by Jiří Trnka Exhibited at the Consulate

An exhibition to celebrate the life and work of Czech illustrator, puppeteer, and director Jiří Trnka (1912-1969), continues to be shown in the lobby of the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Los Angeles. Honoring the 100th anniversary of his death, the art exhibit, titled "Serving the Imagination," will run for only a short time until the middle of April.

Trnka's work focused on precise, elegant designs in print and graphic art. Many classic Czech children's stories feature his unique style, and he is known for his illustrations in books by the Brothers Grimm, Shakespeare, Lewis Carroll, and many more. He spent many years refining his passion and ultimately began producing films for an adult audience.

His reputation as an expert animator earned him the distinction of being referred to as the "Walt Disney of Eastern Europe" by biographers. In the early to mid-20th century, Trnka became one of the most celebrated Czech graphic artists of all time and in 1968 won the Hans Christian Andersen Award for his unparalleled illustrating.

In January the Czech Consulate also hosted the screening of three of Trnka's greatest short films: the cartoon "Zasadil dědek řepu" (Grandpa Planted a Beet, 1945); short film "Vášeň" (Passion, 1962); and his last short "Ruka" (Hand, 1965).



Opening night of Jiří Trnka's Exhibition

The Czech School of California

The Czech School of California has now successfully completed its first semester. In December they celebrated the Christmas season with a Christmas party and Czech Christmas Traditions exhibit that was joined by a beautiful children's program complete with Czech carols, poems, and stories. The Czech school brought along new equipment and Montessori teaching aids as special presents to help in the 8 month – 3 year olds class as well as in their pre-school program. In addition, BayCzech representatives offered to the families a real St. Nicholas celebration with traditional Mikuláš, Devil and Angel and gifts for kids.

The classes, which now have more than 70 students, are going to expand to two new locations- San Francisco and Lafayette this spring 2013. Among other classes in those two new locations they will include Czech history and culture classes for the first time.

The Bay area Czechs and Slovaks can get excited for even more special events in the near future including a chance to learn more about the Czech Republic through Czech cuisine class/tasting, Easter traditional „Pomlázka“, Children's Day, a traditional Czech-Slovak ball, and much more. Information about the Czech School of California programs and events can be found on their website www.czechschoolofcalifornia.com and in their e-newsletter.



Czech School of California

Czech StartupYard trip to Silicon Valley

From January 29 to February 6, 2013, in cooperation with the Czech organization StartupYard, the Czech Honorary Consul General in San Francisco Richard Pivnicka and CzechInvest representative Roman Horacek has organized a tour of Silicon Valley for more than 20 technology-oriented entrepreneurs based in Prague. The Czech companies focus on Internet, mobile, e-commerce, and software businesses for the modern economy. Michal Zálešák, the head of the Czech ICT Alliance – a trade and export promoter – will help manage the delegation. Several seminars are offered in order to introduce the Czech Republic as a leader and hub in Central and Eastern Europe for modern technology development. The Czech Tech Showcase, organized by the Bay Czechs Professionals, will take place at the Rocket Space (181 Fremont Street) in San Francisco on February 4, 2013. Find out more about the organization at startupyard.com, or about the visit to Silicon Valley at <http://i02869.wix.com/sytrip2013>.

Prague '68 in photos: a new book and show

A second edition of Paul Goldsmith's remarkable book of photos, *Prague '68*, will be published in February 2013. These are pictures taken by Goldsmith in August 1968, when he was a 19-year-old student visiting Czechoslovakia—and what he thought would be a fascinating, peaceful tour coincided with the Soviet-led invasion. Goldsmith managed to get film out of the country, and photo editors with the Associated Press, *Newsweek*, and other publications made sure that people around the world saw several of the images.

But for four decades, most of the photos sat in a drawer, only seen by a few. After an acquaintance put Goldsmith in touch with Richard Pivnicka, Honorary Consul General of the Czech Republic in San Francisco, that launched a series of events that has ensured that never-before-seen photos from that historic period have been seen by thousands. A show at The Commonwealth Club of California led to a book and video that Pivnicka produced. More recent, Czech journalist Josef Pazderka selected some of Goldsmith's photos for inclusion in his book "*Invase 1968: Ruský pohled*".

The work is currently being shown in an exhibition at the National Czech and Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Six of the photographs are featured in a oral history project traveling exhibition about the cold war immigration to the USA by Czech and Slovak citizens. A show is also scheduled planned for the second half of 2013 in Los Angeles at the Consulate General of the Czech Republic.



Wenceslas Square in August of 1968

Talks by Madeleine Albright in San Francisco and Palo Alto

Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright comes to the Bay Area for two events on Feb. 22. She will be speaking about her new memoir about growing up in Czechoslovakia, *Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948*.

The events are hosted by The Commonwealth Club of California, where Honorary Consul General Richard Pivnicka serves on the board of governors.

Tickets are available at commonwealthclub.org.

San Francisco: Noon on Feb. 22 at the Fairmont Hotel

Palo Alto: 7 p.m. on Feb. 22 at the Oshman Family JCC

In Memoriam of Dasha Kovarik, Czech Compatriot

The Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Los Angeles regrets to inform the Czech community in California of the recent passing of Dasha Kovarik, outstanding compatriot and loving wife. She passed away peacefully in Los Angeles on Tuesday, November 27, 2012, at the age of 89. Mrs. Kovarik, an actress, was a strong member of the extended Czech family in Los Angeles, and her memory will live on as a dedicated supporter of Czech culture.



Dasha Kovarik (center) with Sylvie Trnková and Aneta Campbell from the Czech Consulate

Upcoming Cultural Events in California

February 2013	March 2013	April 2013
<p>Feb. 22, 2013 - Talks by Madeleine Albright</p> <p>Tickets available at: commonwealthclub.org</p> <p>Noon on Feb. 22 at the Fairmont Hotel, SF</p> <p>7 p.m. on Feb. 22 at the Oshman Family JCC, Palo Alto</p>	<p>Mar. 6, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. & Mar. 8, 2013 at 11:30 a.m. - Screenings of the Czech film "In the Shadow" at Camera 12</p> <p>For more information and tickets: www.cinequest.com</p>	<p>Apr. 7, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. – Concert with Jana Fabiánová</p> <p>Residence of the Consul General (upon invitation only) in Los Angeles</p>
<p>Feb. 27, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. – Screening of the Czech film "Polski Film" at Camera 12</p> <p>For more information and tickets: www.cinequest.com</p>	<p>Mar. 8, 2013 at 9:30 p.m. & Mar. 9 at 3:30 p.m. - Screening of the Czech film "Polski Film" at Camera 12</p> <p>For more information and tickets: www.cinequest.com</p>	<p>Apr. 24, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. – Opening of Jiří Jiroutek's Photography Exhibit followed by a screening of the Czech film "The Men's Novel" at 7:00 p.m. at the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in LA</p>
<p>Feb. 28, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. – Screening of the Czech film "In the Shadow" at San Jose Repertory Theatre</p> <p>For more information and tickets: www.cinequest.com</p>	<p>March 2013, place and time TBA – Screening of the Czech film "Kozí příběh" ("Goat Story") followed by a discussion with the director Jan Tománek, San Francisco</p>	

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