



Friends of Slovakia NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Issue 2 • Summer 2006

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Prime Minister Dzurinda Visits Washington DC

On Monday, March 13 Slovak Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda was in Washington, DC for a meeting with President George Bush and Congressional leaders. The Prime Minister was invited to stay in Blair House, the Presidential guest house reserved for high ranking guests. Later that day, the Slovak Embassy hosted a reception in the Prime Minister's honor which was attended by several hundred guests, including members of the FOS boards: Dr. Sharon Fisher, David P. Frankel, Ambassador Ted Russell, Joe Senko, Tom Skladony, Bill Tucker, Prof. Sharon Wolchik, Ambassador Julian Niemczyk and Julie and Juraj Slavik.



Joe Senko listens as Julie Slavik greets P.M. Dzurinda

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Slovak Ambassador Rastislav Kacer, also a member of the FOS Board of Directors, welcomed the guests and introduced the Prime Minister,

Slovak Military Leader, FOS Members Lunch Together

Friends of Slovakia hosted an April 7th luncheon in Washington for Brigadier General Mikulas Regula, Commander, Marshall Andrej Hadik National Defense Academy in Liptovsky Mikulas. General Regula, accompanied by members of his staff, COL Jan Pida and Captain Michal Harnadek, was visiting his sister institution in the United States, the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Virginia and the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

US defense companies were invited to participate. Raytheon co-sponsored the event with FOS. Attendees included Bill Tucker, Vice Chairman of FOS, Anne Meesman, John Miller, Raytheon and member of the FOS Board of Directors, and COL Miro Giertli, Slovak Defense Attache and his deputy, LTC Peter Knanik. The conversation focused on General Regula's interest in modeling and

simulation capability. General Regula was briefed on FOS and its activities.



Bill Tucker and John Miller, FOS board members, flank Brig. Gen. Mikulas Regula.

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Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan and Acting Parliament Speaker, Bela Bugar, who were part of the delegation. In his remarks, Dzurinda referred to his warm welcome by President Bush and emphasized the strength and importance of the relationship between Slovakia and the U.S. He went on to discuss Slovakia's role in promoting democracy and freedom in the Balkans and Eastern Europe and beyond with peacekeeping troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Following the Prime Minister's remarks, FOS Founding Chairman, Ambassador Ted Russell, welcomed the Prime Minister on behalf of FOS and recalled Slovakia's enormous progress under his leadership since 1998. He also praised the Prime Minister's consistent promo-



P.M. Dzurinda chats with Ann Johnson, FOS newsletter editor

tion of Slovak-U.S. friendship and cited his dramatic gesture of coming to New York after 9/11 to run in the NYC Marathon as a sign of solidarity with the American people. The Prime Minister, recovering from a broken leg, responded that he hoped to soon be running again in

marathons and mentioned that President Bush had presented him with a very fine running suit and kit. FOS Vice Chairman Bill Tucker and other members of the FOS Board of Directors then presented the Prime Minister with the FOS Medal of Honor and thanked him for his strong support of Friends of Slovakia and its objectives.

Other guests seen at the reception included FOS Wall of Honor supporters Brooks and Olga McClure, Mira Hatala, Archie Casey, Dr. and Mrs. Frank Lysy, Elizabeth Guran, John Karch, Dr. and Mrs. Zoltan Mesko, Ken Bombara, and Peter Kukura. Also in attendance were Milan Jezovica and Peter Kmec, two former Deputy Chiefs of Mission at the Slovak Embassy and now advisors to Prime Minister Dzurinda and Minister of Foreign Affairs Kukan respectively. u

FOS Welcomes New Board Members, Gail Naughton and Kenneth J. Bombara

At its April meeting the FOS Board of Directors elected Gail Naughton, President and CEO of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML), in Cedar Rapids, Iowa to its Board of Advisors. During her tenure, NCSML has increased its endowment by 250 percent, established a Legacy Society with an estimated value of \$3 million, developed a four-year strategic plan, and solidified plans to expand its growing library. Gail, her able staff, and a cadre of 200 volunteers welcome 25,000 visitors a year, mount 10 to 12 original and traveling exhibits, and conduct 160 programs a year at NCSML.

NCSML has established a relationship with the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising in Banska Bystrica and is working with the National Museum of the Slovak Republic regarding an original exhibition. NCSML now houses the archives of the Czechoslovak National Council of America and administers the endowed CNCA Freedom Fellowship, whose first fellow was PhDr. Slavomir Michálek from the Historicky ústav SAV, Bratislava. Prior to joining NCSML in 2002, Gail held three senior positions at

Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa – Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Director of Development, and Director of Public Relations. In the early 1990s, she and her husband, Dennis, launched Buffalo Bill's Tex

Mex Bar and Grille in Prague, the first Iowa corporation in the Czech Republic. From the first batch of salsa, to working with designers on the logo and menu, to arranging for export of items like bar-becue sauce and chili powder, to baking the first Thanksgiving pumpkin pies in the new Czech Republic, Gail was involved in every aspect of the business. At the same time, she was working at Clarke College, keeping their three sons on track, and holding down the fort in Dubuque. She has traveled extensively in the Czech and Slovak Republics and is a frequent speaker at Czech and Slovak events. New Board of Directors member, Kenneth J. Bombara is currently Senior Economist with the U.S.



**Board of Advisors
Gail Naughton**



**Board of Directors
Ken Bombara**

Government Accountability Office's (GAO) Center for Economics. In a government career spanning more than twenty-six years, he has conducted research and analysis for the

U.S. Congress on a wide array of topics and has contributed to numerous GAO reports, testimony, briefings, and other materials. During the bulk of his career, however, he has focused on retirement income programs and policies, producing influential analyses of Social Security issues that include Trust Fund financing, benefit issues, and the ongoing reform debate. He has also produced and contributed to work on numerous private pension policy issues. In his current role at GAO, he continues to follow retirement income issues while analyzing a wider range of topics that involve government programs and international issues. Ken is a third-generation Slovak American,

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whose immigrant grandparents came from the regions of Spis and Saris. As a result, being active in the Washington-area Slovak American community has become his “hobby” and he currently serves as President of the Slovak American

Society of Washington (SASW), which organizes a number of cultural and other programs both on its own and in collaboration with others. A native of Pittsburgh, he attended Duquesne University, where he received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration. He also has earned

Master’s degrees in economics from SUNY at Stony Brook and from George Mason University. Ken and his wife Patricia reside in Centreville, Virginia, and have three adult sons (Colin, Justin, and Ryan) who are living independently—for the foreseeable future. ♦

Major Honor for Cleveland-Bratislava Program

Sister Cities International will present its 50th Anniversary Award to the Cleveland-Bratislava Sister Cities organization on July 15th in Washington, DC. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Edward Keshock, Slovak honorary consul in Cleveland, the group has carried out many activities in its 15-year history.

A major accomplishment of the organization was the solicitation and shipment of medical supplies and equipment valued at \$15,000,000 to medical institutions in Slovakia (1992-93). This effort was achieved with the assistance of the

Youngstown-Spisska Nova Ves partner cities organization and the State of Ohio.

Its greatest achievement was partnering with Turcianske Teplice, Martin and Banska Bystrica in programs sponsored by USAID, administered by the American International Health Alliance, and in partnership with the Cleveland MetroHealth Hospital system. Two major programs, dealing with community health initiatives, extended over a four-year period (1995-1999) and involved visits of more than 200 doc-

tors, hospital administrators and community officials between Slovakia and the U.S. These programs still thrive today, while others have served as models that have been replicated in other parts of the region.

The Cleveland-Bratislava program has also contributed to community life through presentation and sponsorship of a wide variety of educational and cultural programs, along with sponsorship and planning of visits and presentations by many business and political leaders and delegations from Slovakia. ♦

Award for Jan Figel

On February 6, 2006 His Excellency Jan Figel, European Commissioner responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, was presented the *Andrew Elias SVU Tolerance and Humanitarian Award* by SVU President Miloslav Recheigl at a special ceremony at the Slovak Embassy. A luncheon hosted by Slovak Ambassador Rastislav Kacer followed. The SVU is the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Andrew Elias, a member and strong supporter of FOS, is the sponsor of the Society’s annual Human Tolerance Award. Mr. Figel is the third recipient of the award. Previous awardees were Father Anton Srholec of Skalica, founder and director of the “Roseta” Home for the Homeless in Podunajske Biskupce, Slovakia, and Rev. Tomas Halik, Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies at Charles University in Prague. Rev. Halik has been and continues to be a strong voice and advocate for tolerance. As European

Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, Mr. Figel’s responsibilities include youth and sports as well as relations with civil societies. Mr. Figel has served in several top positions in the Council of Europe. At the same time, Mr. Figel finds time for more personal humanitarian activities, including the care of two adopted children in less fortunate countries, and his involvement with charities helping children with cancer and mentally disadvantaged children. ♦



**Jan Figel and Joe Senko
at embassy reception**

Slovak Historical Institute Symposium on Juraj Slavik

On October 25, 2006, at the Palfy Palace in Bratislava, the Slovak Historical Institute will host a symposium on the life and career of Juraj Slavik (1890-1969). A team of scholars assembled by Slavomir Michalek (SHI), including Martin Butora, Erick Dulovic, Milan Podrimavsky, Natalie Krajocovicova, Jan Nemecek, Ludmila Simkova, Bohumila Ferencuhova, and Dana Kraskova, will trace his life, his careers as a leading Slovak politician and diplomat, patron of the arts, publisher, and poet. Juraj and Julie Slavik will present personal vignettes on Juraj and Gita Slavik.

Additionally, Juraj and Julie Slavik will announce the establishment of the Juraj and Gita Fund, housed at the Bratislava Community Foundation (Komunitná nadácia Bratislava), and made possible in cooperation with Friends of Slovakia.

For information, please contact Slavomir Michalek at MICH2412@yahoo.com.

Film Series Launched in Washington

Earlier this year, Friends of Slovakia launched a Slovak film series in Washington, DC, in cooperation with the Slovak Embassy. The film events, which offer local residents an opportunity to see movies that are not otherwise available to the U.S. market, are aimed at helping to promote Slovak culture in the United States. Attendance at the film series is free of charge, with an optional donation to Friends of Slovakia.

The first movie to be screened was Martin Sulik's 1995 film, *Zahrada* [The Garden], a comedy that chronicles the escapades of its main character, a teacher named Jakub. The film begins when Jakub is thrown out of his home after he is caught having an affair with a

married woman, who happens to be one of his father's clients. Jakub is sent to his grandfather's garden, where he embarks on a series of adventures that offer new insights on the meaning of life. He meets a girl named Helena – dubbed the Miraculous Virgin – who helps him to appreciate life's mysteries. *Zahrada* was the most popular Slovak film of the 1990s, and it won several international prizes.

The second film was Dusan Hanak's 1976 masterpiece, *Ruzove sny* [Rose-tinted Dreams]. The film centers on Jakub, a mailman in the countryside who falls in love with a Romani girl named Jolanka. Their relationship is faced with prejudice on both sides.

Tensions culminate at a dance, where a group of white villains beat up Jakub, while Romani youths threaten him to stay away from Jolanka. Their relationship continues in town, where Jolanka finds a job as a tailor. However, their love does not survive, and the film ends with Jolanka's marriage to a young Romani man. *Ruzove sny* explores the coexistence of different ethnic groups, while also reflecting on the meaning of dreams.

Future film events will be announced on Friends of Slovakia's website and through an e-mail distribution list. Please contact Friends of Slovakia if you would like to have your name added to the list. ♦

2006 FOS Slovak Scholars

As in the past two years, FOS has, with the help of generous donations from our members and sponsors, including those who contributed to the Gala Dinner held in November in Bratislava, made two scholarship awards to Slovak students to enable them to participate in the summer programs of the Fund for American Studies. Ms. Eva Majernikova, an International Economic Relations major at the University of Economics in Bratislava, was accepted to the Engalitcheff Institute on Comparative Political and Economic Systems. Ms. Anna Stancakova, a law student at the University of Pavol Jozef Safarik, was accepted to the Bryce Harlow Institute of Business and Government Affairs. The students will be in Washington from June 10 to August 5. In previous years, the FOS Slovak scholars were Ondrej



Guests at reception seated l.-r. Amb. Jay Niemczyk, Anne Meesman, Ann Johnson, David Frankel, Sharon Fisher, Ken Bombara, Anna Stancakova, Eva Majernikova, Ingrid Aielli, Jana Frankel and standing, Tom Skladony and Bill Tucker.

Socuvka (2004), who completed an internship with US Steel in the US after the program and currently serves as advisor to Prime Minister Dzurinda for foreign direct investment, and Martin Mikulas (2005) who won a scholarship to study in France following his attendance at the Fund for American Studies

Institute. The programs of the Fund for American Studies take place at Georgetown University and allow participants not only to increase their knowledge through courses but also to interact with students from top universities in the US. The program is organized to allow the students to intern in the mornings, and take classes in the afternoons. The internships allow the students to gain some practical work experience, which is of particular interest to the students from other countries like Anna and Eva. Anna is interning at the Washington office of U.S.

Steel and Eva is interning with Radio Free Europe. On June 14 Ingrid Aielli, a member of the FOS Board of Directors, hosted a reception for the two students at Teatro Goldoni, her restaurant in Washington, DC. In addition to the two Slovak scholars, the reception was

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attended by the following members of the FOS Board of Directors: Tom Skladony, David and Jana Frankel, Scott Salmon, Ken Bombara, Sharon Fisher, Ingrid Aielli and Bill Tucker.

Ambassador Julian Niemczyk, Member of the FOS Board of Advisors, Anne Meesman and Ann Johnson also attended. The students expressed their gratitude for the financial assistance provided by FOS and are very excited about the program at Georgetown University. ♦

CSIS-FOS Slovakia Elections Roundtable Draws SRO Attendance



On July 18 Friends of Slovakia sponsored a roundtable at CSIS on “Slovakia after the Elections: Domestic and Foreign Policy Implications.” This is the ninth in a series of CSIS Roundtables sponsored by FOS since 2001 on major Slovak issues and US-Slovak relations. The results are posted on the CSIS website (<http://www.csis.org/>) and are being added to the FOS website at www.friendsofslovakia.org.

The distinguished panel, co-chaired by Janusz Bugajski, Director of the CSIS New European Democracies Project, and FOS Founding Chairman and first US Ambassador to Slovakia Ted Russell, included Ambassador Rastislav Kacer, his predecessor as Ambassador to Washington, Martin Butora, Zora Butorova, and Grigorij Meseznikov, President of the Institute of Public Affairs in Bratislava.

The roundtable drew great interest and about 90 participants from a number of US government agencies, Congressional

staffers, diplomats including the Czech Ambassador, think tanks, VOA and RFE/Radio Liberty, international organizations, international firms, including US Steel and Lockheed Martin, members of the FOS Board of Directors and Board of Advisors and FOS supporters.

Panelists and members of the audience discussed concerns raised in Europe and the United States regarding the formation of a SMER-SNS-HZDS government in Slovakia following the June 17 elections and prospects for the new coalition. The discussion produced a range of views regarding the possibility of a roll back of progress Slovakia has made in recent years in democratization and economic reform and a foreign policy supporting democratic reform in Central and Eastern Europe and strong transatlantic ties. Several participants emphasized that those who wish Slovakia well should have faith in the Slovak people and their institutions to maintain a positive course over the long term. ♦

Slippery Rock University Celebrates Student Exchange Program

Fifteen years ago, Dr. Pavol Demes, then Slovak Minister of Education, came to Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania to initiate a student and faculty exchange program between Slippery Rock’s Art Department and the Academy of Art and Design in Bratislava. Since that time, over 120 students have participated in this program.

To commemorate the 15th anniversary of this excellent program, three of the participating professors came to Slippery Rock from the Bratislava academy. They were David Carsky, Jan Hoffstadter and Rastislav Trizma. As part of the ceremony, Joseph Senko, FOS treasurer, presented the Friends of Slovakia Medal of Honor to Dr. Robert Smith, president of Slippery Rock University, for the Art Department’s continuous support of the exchange program with Slovakia. ♦



Joe Senko, FOS treasurer, presents award to Dr. Robert Smith

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Minimum contribution for an annual membership to Friends of Slovakia is:

- \$35 for individuals
- \$250 for Fraternal and other non-profit organizations
- \$2,500 for companies interested but not currently doing business in Slovakia
- \$5,000 for companies currently operating in Slovakia

Note: Companies not doing substantial business in Slovakia may wish to make a contribution to individual FOS initiatives and participate as a non-member in selected FOS events.

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

- Yes, I would like to become **a new member** of Friends of Slovakia
- Yes, I would like to **renew** my membership of Friends of Slovakia

My Membership contribution: \$ _____

In addition to the membership fee, I would like to contribute \$ _____ to the following FOS project (please check appropriate box):

- FOS Scholarship Fund
- Corporate Involvement in Slovakia
- General Contribution to FOS

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FOS WALL OF HONOR PLAQUE

If you would like to receive some information on how you can get your name, family name or the name of a loved one on the Friends of Slovakia Wall of Honor (located on the grounds of the Slovak Embassy in Washington, DC) please call Friends of Slovakia at 703-671-0926.

Please send this form with your check, payable to *Friends of Slovakia*, to:

Friends of Slovakia
P.O. Box 40733
Washington, DC 20016-0733

For more information, please go to: www.friendsofslovakia.org



Friends of Slovakia NEWSLETTER

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FOS Wall of Honor Update

The Friends of Slovakia Wall of Honor on the grounds of the Slovak Embassy in Washington is expanding. Thanks to the generous support of individuals, corporations and organizations, the current rectangular wall is nearly full! To accommodate new plaques for the classes of 2005 and 2006, we are refurbishing the current wall and adding a new section. The expansion wall will be installed this summer on the back wall of the Slovak Embassy.

Archie Casey is the craftsman responsible for the construction of the Wall,

its upkeep, and now its expansion. Archie owns A.R. Casey Historic Building Restoration in Everett, PA and has been associated with the Embassy for the past seven years. He began working at the Embassy during the early construction phase and has become a loyal supporter of Slovakia and FOS. We are deeply appreciative of Archie's assistance and efforts.

The 2005 and 2006 plaques will be unveiled in early September at the Embassy's Constitution Day Celebration. As soon as the date is

finalized, FOS will notify plaque donors in the hope that they can attend the unveiling. We look forward to greeting you in person in September!



Archie Casey and Amb. Rastislav Kacer at an embassy reception

Our Mission Statement

Friends of Slovakia's mission is to strengthen friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation between the United States and Slovakia, as nations sharing similar values of freedom, democracy and a market economy. We seek to promote this cooperation in economic, business, political, security, cultural, educational and humanitarian fields and to improve mutual understanding between our two peoples.

To achieve this purpose, we have set the following three goals for ourselves:

To educate the US public about Slovakia, its history, its culture, and its numerous ties to the United States.

To enhance the relationship between Slovakia and the United States in all its various aspects, including promotion of increased cultural and economic exchanges between our two countries.

To promote understanding and friendship between our two peoples. ♦

Focus Areas

Political Ties:

Friends of Slovakia seeks to promote a greater understanding of Slovakia and its domestic, foreign and security policies by America's decision-makers. Primary areas of activity include building networks and increasing Slovakia's visibility in the United States through a series of Roundtables on major topics of interest. ♦

Economic Ties:

Friends of Slovakia works with Slovak and American companies and entrepreneurs to explore and advance bilateral economic ties of trade and investment. ♦

Academic, Cultural and Social Ties:

Friends of Slovakia is committed to enabling Slovaks and Americans to share with each other the rich and diverse artistic and cultural heritage of both countries. In this area, Friends of Slovakia brings young Slovak leaders to the United States through a summer Slovak Scholars program and promotes a variety of cultural exchanges. ♦