

## Treasures from the NCSML National Collection Featured at Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

**N**CSML curator Stefanie Kohn is busy preparing a spectacular exhibition of the most beautiful items in our national collection. “The majority of our artifacts are in great condition,” said Kohn. “This is a wonderful opportunity for the NCSML to have our most celebrated objects out for everyone to enjoy while we rebuild our own gallery space.”

Fine Royal Dux porcelain pieces, glass and crystal from Moser, Rindskopf and Teplice showcase the superior craftsmanship these makers are famous for. Textiles embellished with beads and embroidery, including several full folk costumes (*kroje*), will also be displayed. One of the more unusual artifacts in this exhibition is a painting entitled, “Paul and Andy” by Paul Warhola. Paul is the older brother of the acclaimed leader of the pop-art movement, Andy Warhol.

“We are so grateful to the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art,” said Naughton. “Gallery space is a prized commodity for museums and the gift of a prominent space is very meaningful.” The exhibition titled *Treasures from the National Collection* opens June 20.

*Right: This delicate Moser vase was a gift from Evelyn and Emil Lamparek. The Moser glass factory, named after Ludwig Moser (1833-1916), was established in Karlovy Vary, Bohemia (formerly Karlsbad) in 1857. Moser glass can be recognized for its decorations of applied glass and enameled “jewels” in the shape of acorns, bugs, leaves and fruits.*



# NATIONAL CZECH & SLOVAK MUSEUM & LIBRARY

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## FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Welcome to the new *MOST*, your bridge to the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. As you have surely noticed, we've given it a whole new look and feel. *MOST* is now published three times per year instead of two, and we have included the Kalendář in each issue. We hope that you will find it more than informative; our goal is to make it fresh, timely and engaging.

The last nine months since the flood have been the most challenging of my entire career. Last June I remember thinking, how will we save this museum after such a huge disaster? But we have devised a plan that will not only save it, but make it an even larger and stronger institution.

First, we have focused on our mission and made it central to our planning. And while our Mid-Term Plan and Long-Term Vision for Recovery are all about mission, we have to have the infrastructure in which to achieve them. I want to share a brief outline of each step of rebuilding and expanding our campus as it is envisioned now.

**1 Kosek Building.** In this historic Czech Village building we will open a major exhibition to reestablish our visitor destination and educational program. Administrative offices on the second floor will place staff back in our own neighborhood.

**2 Collection Center.** Our precious artifact and library collections are in need of a permanent home and we will build one outside of

the flood plain that will allow for future growth.

**3 Historic homes.** The immigrant home and Babi Buresh Center will undergo historic restoration and interpretation to again be an integral part of the visitor experience.

**4 Main building.** Plans have been drawn to repurpose this signature building as a cultural and visitor center for a variety of NCSML programs—over 100 each year. When we aren't using it, we will make it available to the community for weddings and other events, restoring an important source of earned revenue.

**5 Exhibition Center and Research Library.** The capstone of our plan will reestablish our major exhibition program, featuring both an enlarged permanent exhibition on Czech and Slovak immigration and galleries for traveling and original exhibits. Plus our research library and genealogy resources will once again be available to the public.

These are big plans, but we must envision the future as it could be, not just as it was. We must challenge ourselves to peer years into the future, and see how the NCSML could be the largest and most influential ethnic museum in the United States. How it could be a center for examination of the immigrant experience of the 19th and 20th centuries. How it could attract an even wider audience to the understanding and appreciation of Czech and Slovak culture and its importance to the American experience. Thank you for your ongoing enthusiasm and support as we move forward to make our dreams a reality.

Best regards,

Gail Naughton



## From our Board Chair

**G**reetings! I'm pleased to have this opportunity to share my thoughts on the future of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. Like all of you, I am deeply committed to the complete recovery of our beloved museum and library. As the national museum for Czechs and Slovaks, the NCSML draws international and national visitors and dignitaries to the city, region and state. On average, 35,000 persons came through the doors each year, resulting in over \$1 million in economic impact. We want to restore that impact as quickly as possible to help our community recover from the devastating effects of the June 2008 disaster. But even more, we want to reinvigorate and expand our national presence and impact.

The board is fully engaged in the planning and implementation of a step by step strategy



to do that. The board held a two-day retreat with staff last October that helped us focus on the future. There were many great ideas during those two days. It was inspiring to participate, and one thing at our retreat became perfectly clear: We are united behind a vision of an even stronger and more vibrant institution that meets and exceeds previous levels of success.

This will take a lot of hard work and support from many people. While it warms our heart that so many members and supporters have stepped up after our flood, we know this is only the first step in our important journey in recovery. Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

Gary Rozek

## We welcome our new board members

**NEIL HAVLIK** currently serves as Executive Vice President of Corridor State Bank in Coralville, IA. Neil previously served over 10 years with McGladrey & Pullen & RSM McGladrey working with financial services companies in the Midwest. Neil has Czech heritage with his father being full-blooded second-generation Czech who can still speak the language. He lives in Marion, IA with his wife Keri and three children.



**ANN POE** is currently the Executive Assistant to Iowa Governor Chet Culver and State Liaison Long Term Planner to Governor Culver's Rebuild Iowa Office. She is a former Development Director for the NCSML and was the lead organizer for the Presidential Dedication of the NCSML in 1995. Ann has three children, two step children and three grandchildren and is married to Stan Poe. She is the great-granddaughter of Lud Landmichel.



**SCOTT L. WHITE** is the Vice President of Business Development for Rockwell Collins Government Systems. White joined Rockwell Collins in January 2009 after 24 years with Rockwell International and 9 years with The Boeing Company. He was President and CEO of a joint venture company with Aero Vodochody in the Czech Republic from 1998-2000. He and his wife Donna lived on Thunovska Street at the base of the Prague castle.



*Vitame Vás!*

## NCSML Board Member Dick Damrow dies at 60



**M**embers of the NCSML board and family were shocked and saddened by the death of Board Member Dick Damrow on Feb. 24, 2009, from injuries suffered in a fall in his Cedar Rapids home. Chair of the marketing commit-

tee of the NCSML board, Dick was instrumental in helping the museum establish and orchestrate communication after the flood. He was honored by his peers for his marketing expertise and is warmly remembered by his friends for his ability to listen and willingness to share his wisdom and knowledge to help others.

# National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library Receives Highest National Recognition

**T**he National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) has achieved accreditation from the American Association of Museums (AAM), the highest professional national recognition for a museum.

After a very strenuous and exacting three-year process of self-study and peer review, the NCSML's accreditation application was on the agenda for final approval by the AAM in July 2008. Because of the flood, the application was tabled and a follow-up report of the current situation was requested. "We were so close," said Gail Naughton. "There was a part of me that was concerned we would have to start the process all over again."

Prior to the flood, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library met every standard for full accreditation. In a letter to AAM, Gail described how the museum responded to the flood as any accredited museum would, from the implementation of the disaster plan, the immediate aftermath of disaster recovery, financial planning and fund raising, to planning for full recovery. "Every museum is at risk for disaster from many

sources. It is how it prepares and responds to a disaster that tells the tale of its strength and quality," she said. At its November meeting, the AAM granted a full ten-year accreditation.

AAM accreditation is the museum field's primary vehicle for quality assurance, self-regulation, and public accountability, and earns national recognition for a museum for its commitment to excellence in all that it does: governance, collections stewardship, public programs, financial stability, high professional standards, and continued institutional improvement.

Of the nation's estimated 17,500 museums, less than 5% are currently accredited.

The NCSML is one of only nineteen museums accredited in Iowa.

Senator Tom Harkin recently acknowledged the achievement in a letter calling the NCSML "a true jewel in the crown among Iowa's cultural attractions." He also praised the award as "one more measure of the City of Cedar Rapids' resilience and determination to bounce back, and it is a sterling testimony to the hard work and high standards of the entire National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library family."



## Houby Days and the Folk Dance Festival Weren't Washed Away—Join Us May 15 – 17!

**A**fter mucking, rebuilding, and struggling to re-open, the Czech Village and New Bohemia merchants are eager to welcome you for a fun weekend in Czech Village and New Bohemia. Set your toes to tapping while folk dancers perform at the National Bohemian, Moravian & Slovak Folk Dance Festival, graciously sponsored again this year by WFLA. Dance to Barefoot Becky's lively Polka band (and, yes, she does play the accordion barefooted), discover local artistic talents, and eat your way through this popular Czech festival that celebrates one of the first signs of spring—the mushroom!

The weekend festivities begin with The Taste of Czech & Slovak, on Friday, May 15th from 5 – 7p.m., where you can sample over two dozen savory and sweet treats from Sauerkraut Soup to Poppy Seed Cake. In addition to the folk dance festival, Saturday's events at NCSML include the traditional Maypole Dance, Miss Czech & Slovak Iowa talent contest and more. Visit [www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org) for schedule updates.





## Save the Date for *BrewNost!* October 16th

**A**s the Czech proverb instructs, “A fine beer may be judged with only one sip, but it’s better to be thoroughly sure.” We couldn’t agree more, which is why the beer-happy organizers of *BrewNost!* are gearing up for yet another smashing event. Co-chairs this year are Hilery Livengood and Tom DeBoom. *BrewNost!* is a seriously trendy celebration of the fermented grain, held every fall to benefit the NCSML. In partnership with Doug Alberhasky and John’s Grocery, guests will lightly imbibe a plethora of premium international beers, expertly matched with savory hors d’oeuvres created by talented Cedar Rapids and Iowa City chefs. Live jazz performances will set the mood. For those who prefer grapes to barley, don’t despair! We have a well-rounded wine selection to please the most discriminating sipper. The evening rounds out with a chance to purchase some rare finds at our Silent Auction Market and *someone* will win the raffle drawing for our Golden Prague Getaway—will it be you?

Do it now! Call your friends and reserve Friday, October 16 for an evening we hope you remember!



## AND... Earn Your Medal

Put up a little extra cash for a good cause and we’ll bedeck you with a coveted *BrewNost!* medallion. You’ll also receive an invitation to our exclusive tasting party two weeks before the big event and a lot of special recognition.

Become a **Table Sponsor** by making a \$550 donation. You’ll receive 2 free tickets.

**Brew Masters** make a contribution of \$125 per person and receive a free ticket. You also get to pour beer at the event! Join the party as a **Patron**, by contributing \$75 per person. You’ll receive a complimentary ticket.

You know you want a medal of your very own! Call Kelly Otto and become a proud supporter of the NCSML today. 319-447-5533.

## Special Thanks...

### Valentine’s Day Gala

**A** heartfelt Valentine’s Day Gala fundraiser was hosted by Bob Petrik and Cecelia Rokusek at their home in Davie, Florida. Authentic Slovak food, including *bryndzové halušky* and *kolače*, Moravian wines, and silent auction made for a fun and generous evening. Slovak ambassador Peter Burian was an honored guest and spoke about the Slovak government’s concern for the recovery of the museum. NCSML board member Marvin Smejkal attended, along with Gail and her husband Denny. *Na zdravie* Bob and Cecelia!

### Prague Spring Evening

Special thanks go to Robert F. and Janis L. Kazimour and Bradley & Riley, PC for sponsor-

ing and to Sara Vancura and Mary Hogenson for co-chairing the *Prague Spring Evening* fundraiser on April 30. Particular thanks go to President and Mrs. Christopher Blake and Mount Mercy College, for hosting the event. Jazz great Emil Viklický, the featured artist, is in Cedar Rapids for the U.S. premier of his composition, *Moravian Triptych*, with the Cedar Rapids Symphony on May 2 and 3. Many fondly remember Emil’s performance in Hruska Grand Hall in May 2008—he was the last pianist to coax rich melodies from our restored Weber baby grand before the flood completely destroyed the instrument. A CD of that concert has been produced and is available for purchase in the Museum Store at NCSML at Lindale.

## A Flood of Generosity

by vice president for development, Jason Wright

2008 was supposed to be the “Year of the River” in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. It ended up being the “Year of the Flood.” The NCSML was inundated and it changed our entire existence. We were also inundated with the generosity of thousands of people.

This issue of *MOST* would usually acknowledge all donors who gave in the previous year. Due to your overwhelming support, we didn’t have

enough space in this publication to adequately thank everyone. To do so would be extremely expensive, and we thought that our donors would rather have us use the money for something other than printing additional pages in this periodical. So, we joined the 21st century, and posted this giving report online. It is available for download at [www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org).

We have worked hard to make sure this list is correct. However, if we have made an error or omission, please accept our apologies and please contact Kelly Otto at 319-447-5533 to let us know. Thank you again.

## Are you a Time Traveler?

by director of member services and special events, Kelly Otto

Did you know that your NCSML membership allows you to enjoy discounts at over 250 individual museums and historical societies in 43 states across the country? These institutions have partnered with us through the *Time Travelers* network and it is a great way to get the most from your NCSML membership.

Check out our website to learn more: [www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org)

## She Can Even Drive a Bobcat!

by volunteer coordinator, Patricia Hikiji

Volunteer Cindy Monroe has a “can do” mentality. Since she joined the NCSML in 2003, she has busied herself with an array of projects, from helping with school tours to giving craft demonstrations. And after being recently certified as a Master Gardener, she turned her attention to the landscaping around the museum.

As chair of the Museum Guild’s Garden Committee, she began the task of organizing seasonal “clean-up” days to keep the flower beds blooming and the shrubbery in shape. Then came the June 2008 Flood which, along with the water, dumped loads of sand and debris on the grass and flowers. Not one to be deterred, Cindy was on the scene, with her camera, documenting the events and making new plans. There were



trees and shrubs to replace, a lawn to revitalize and flower beds to replenish. But standing in her way were mounds of sand and flood debris covering the entire garden. No matter, Cindy found the answer—she learned to drive a Bobcat!!

**Come help with garden clean-up  
Saturday, May 2 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

There is still a lot of work to do to beautify the landscaping around our red-roofed building. Bring your shovels, pails and gardening gear. Call Cindy: 319-981-8356.



# Send us your news

by library director, Dave Muhlena

Did you know the NCSML receives newsletters from more than 100 Czech- and Slovak-American organizations? The NCSML archives these newsletters in fulfillment of its mission to preserve the history of the Czech and Slovak community in the United States. These publications are maintained permanently in our archives and are available to the general public for research purposes. Please share your organization's news with us!



Mailing address:

National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library  
4444 First Ave. N.E., Suite 18  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

E-newsletters:

[dmuhlena@ncsml.org](mailto:dmuhlena@ncsml.org)

## DO & SEE: CULTURAL FESTIVALS

Take a break and schedule a weekend of authentic Czech and Slovak food, lively polka music, crafts, parades, demonstrations and more. There are dozens of festivals across the U.S. This will get you started:

### **Tabor Czech Days**

Tabor, SD • June 18 – 20  
[www.taborczechdays.com](http://www.taborczechdays.com)

### **Kolacky Days**

St. Paul, MN • July 24 – 26  
[www.montgomerymn.org](http://www.montgomerymn.org)

### **Wilber Czech Festival**

Wilber, NE • July 31 – August 2  
[www.ci.wilber.ne.us/festival.asp](http://www.ci.wilber.ne.us/festival.asp)

### **Westfest Polka Festival**

West, TX • September 4 – 6  
[www.westfest.com](http://www.westfest.com)

### **Moravian Day**

Chicago, IL • September 12 – 13  
[www.unitedmoraviansocieties.org](http://www.unitedmoraviansocieties.org)

### **Oklahoma Czech Festival**

Yukon, OK • October 3  
[www.oklahomaczechfestival.com](http://www.oklahomaczechfestival.com)

*Christy Kessler, Miss Czech Slovak Oklahoma performs at the 2008 Wilber Czech Festival.*



*Samantha Hubler, 2008 Miss Czech Slovak Iowa.*

### **Got a favorite Czech or Slovak Festival?**

Tell us about it and send photos, too. We're creating an online calendar for Czech and Slovak festivals in the U.S. and we don't want to leave one out. Email Leah: [lwilson@ncsml.org](mailto:lwilson@ncsml.org).

## Rising Above: The Story of a People and the Flood

by curator, Stefanie Kohn

Even as the flood waters were receding last June, we recognized the significance of the Flood of 2008 and its impact on the Czech neighborhoods of Cedar Rapids. Our idea was to record history as it unfolded for two important and distinct purposes: to document the epic events for the very sake of history before the story was lost, and to use the data in a major exhibition about the neighborhood and the flood.

To these ends, we hired a photographer to capture images of the clean up. We also planned a major oral history project. Volunteers were trained to interview residents and business owners in the Czech neighborhoods about their pre and post flood experiences. MVP Visual Media Solutions digitally records the sessions. These interviews are ongoing, and the plan is to re-interview the same people over time to keep track of their stories as we move farther away from June 2008. The photographs and the oral histories will be a major component of our new exhi-

bition, *Rising Above: The Story of a People and the Flood*.

*Rising Above* addresses the history of the Czechs in Cedar Rapids. Topics include why the earliest settlers came to Cedar Rapids in the middle of the 19th century, where they lived and worked, and how they retained their cultural traditions while embracing American life and customs. The exhibit explores these themes up to the present day and includes the story of the NCSML. Then, the story moves from a time frame of decades to a day-by-day account of the flood of 2008.

Visitors will use an interactive model of the city to see the paths of previous floods. Video screens will play news footage taken as events unfolded, and will show the oral histories we have been gathering, giving visitors first person accounts of how residents and business owners responded to the disaster. A flood effected house will be built inside the gallery to allow visitors to experience what it was like to enter a home's living room after the flood, to see the ruined pictures, upended furniture, and the filth that covered everything.

An important section of the exhibit will discuss how

the NCSML acted to recover damaged items and show the painstaking process of restoring artifacts. Finally, the exhibit will chart the progress we as a city and a neighborhood have achieved, and offer visitors interactive computer terminals to record their memories, thoughts and impressions.

One challenge I experienced as I worked on this exhibit was in choosing photographs and video footage. There are so many poignant, wonderful images taken by *The Gazette*, professional photographers, and NCSML staff. Space is limited, so it was important to select high impact images—whether it was a volunteer triumphantly holding a beautiful communion vessel she helped rescue at the NCSML or a close up of a homeowner getting a wrist bracelet as she entered a National Guard checkpoint to gain access to her neighborhood. Likewise, there were hours of video footage taken in the days before, during and after the flood. I chose several snippets of video footage that will give visitors an idea of what the flood did to our city.

Look for *Rising Above: The Story of a People and the Flood* to open later this year!



*Rising Above* addresses the history of the Czech neighborhoods in Cedar Rapids, including their recovery from the Flood of 2008.



## Conversation with John Rocarek of Sykora Bakery

by director of marketing and communications, Leah Wilson

*Nestled in the heart of Czech Village in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is a little bakery on a mission. It is defying big-box food outlets, fast-paced living and even an epic flood. And it is defying what James Howard Kuntsler describes as the “Geography of Nowhere”—those places that look and feel like all the other places.*

*I met with Cedar Rapids native and owner of Sykora Bakery, John Rocarek, to talk about how preserving the history of this determined little business might secure its future.*

*Sykora’s sells something personal. For its customers, biting into a simple Czech pastry satisfies a craving for something that can’t be mass-produced—an authentic experience. There’s a lot of history and culture baked into every loaf of rye bread and every koláč.*

**Leah:** Obviously this building has a long and wonderful history. Has it always been used as a bakery?

**John:** This building has a great history. It was built in 1900, and for the first three years of its life it was a saloon and a brewery; Dubuque Beer was brewed in the basement. Then, Charles Kosek started a bakery here. According to the property’s abstract, he bought the building in 1903. He maintained ownership of the building, but sold the bakery business to several different families through the years. The Sykora family bought the building and bakery in 1927, which was in full operation until 1991, when Lester, Josef Sykora’s son, sold both the building and the bakery business—which included equipment, inventory, trade name & recipes—to Don and Sheila Janda. My wife, Susan, and I bought the building and entire business in 2001.



**Leah:** You grew up a few blocks from here. What was it like growing up?

**John:** It was great. Everything you needed was on “the Avenue.” The term Czech Village didn’t really come about until the ‘70s. Me Too grocery store, Ted’s Pharmacy, Johnson’s Shoe store, Tasti-Freeze Ice Cream, United State Bank, Dr. Anderle—the dentist—and Dr. Smrha, MD, were just a few of the businesses located here when I was growing up in the late ‘50s and ‘60s. My Grandmother Rocarek lived nearby and I would stay at her home on Friday night. Then, Saturday morning, we would walk the two blocks to the Kosek Dime and Dollar where a kid could buy a great toy for a quarter. Then we’d buy something from one of the two bakeries. Benda’s Modern Bakery was across the Avenue from Sykora Bakery, where Zindrick’s is now.

**Leah:** How has Czech Village changed over the years?

**John:** It’s changed and yet it’s stayed the same. The merchants live and breathe the Avenue, of course; it’s a big part of their lives. Fifty years ago or longer, many of the merchants lived above their stores, and you don’t see as much of that now. There are a few. Then, there have been cycles on the Avenue where business booms and then slows down. Now, after the flood, we’re in one of our toughest times. But the dedication in Czech Village is unmatched anywhere.

**Leah:** The NCSML receives a lot of questions about Sykora’s. Do you think people have a special connection to your bakery?

**John:** Oh, absolutely. Time marches on, neighborhoods change, businesses come and go. So the fact that the bakery has been here in some form or another for over 100 years means a lot to people. It provides an anchor. Tells them where they are. And not just for people who hail from Cedar Rapids. When you walk into a building that’s soaked up so many years of history, you can feel it. Whether you’ve been there 100 times before or none, you can feel the energy in such a place.

**Leah:** As I understand, the bakery was closed in 2006 for restoration and it was still closed when the flood hit last June, is that right?

**John:** Yes. The building had been tired for a long time and we just had to close for a total makeover. We wanted to return it to its former glory. It took longer than we hoped, but we spent a lot of time working with Amish craftsmen and others to get the historical details in our design plan just right. The flood wreaked havoc with our progress, of course, but it also opened up some opportunities.

**Leah:** You’ve put a lot of energy into preserving the authenticity of the building. Why not modernize it?

**John:** I like telling people we have about 5,000 very loyal customers and only about half of them live within 50 miles of here. A good share of our customer base comes and sees us once, maybe twice a year. They’re mostly third, fourth and fifth generation families that have moved to other parts of the U.S., but they

(continued on page 12)

## Mushrooming is an Important Tradition for Czechs and Slovaks

by director of operations and education, Jan Staffer

It is well-known that the Czech and Slovak people have a strong appreciation for the outdoors. They cherish their forests, and seem to crave outdoor activities...and good food. Given that, mushroom hunting is a time-honored tradition for the Czechs and Slovaks, and their descendants here in the United States.

According to Radio Praha, approximately 57 million pounds of mushrooms are picked by Czechs annually. An average Czech family would have collected about 18 pounds of mushrooms. While available all year, mushroom-hunting typically takes place from May or June through October. Eager hunters, armed

with walking sticks and wicker baskets, head out to their favorite hunting ground early in the morning, intent on getting a jump on other eager mushroom seekers. Using a small blade or pen knife, the mushroom stem is cut, with a bit remaining to push back into the ground. Due to the variety of mushrooms found throughout the Czech Republic and Slovakia, it is recommended that amateur hunters partner with more experienced ones who can tell the difference between the edible and the poisonous. Here in the U.S. mushroom hunters often gather spring morels, which are easier to recognize.

There are numerous ways in which to prepare mushrooms, and it is not surprising that many Czech and Slovak recipes include them in some way. The meatless Slovak sour mushroom soup can be enjoyed throughout the year, but, it is commonly served on fasting days, including Christmas Eve or during Advent and Lent.

## HOW TO: Make Slovak Mushroom Machanka

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes + overnight if using dried mushrooms

Cook Time: 2 hours

2 ounces dried porcini mushrooms (or your seasonal favorite)

2 cups plus 4 cups water

1 whole medium onion, peeled, plus 1 large onion, thinly sliced

Salt and black pepper to taste

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup sauerkraut juice or to taste

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup plus 1-2 tablespoons canola oil (or butter if not fasting)

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup all-purpose flour mixed with 1 cup water

In a medium bowl, place mushrooms and 2 cups warm water. Cover with plastic and let soak overnight. The next day, remove the mushrooms from the soaking liquid without disturbing the sediment at the bottom and chop them into small pieces.

In large pot, carefully pour in soaking liquid without disturbing the sediment at the bottom, the chopped mushrooms, 4 cups water, whole onion and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 hours or until mushrooms are tender. Remove onion and add sauerkraut juice.

In a small skillet, brown  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup oil until dark brown and add to soup, whisking until smooth. Temper the mixture of  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup flour and 1 cup water by adding a little hot soup into it, whisking until smooth. Pour the tempered mixture through a strainer into the hot soup, stirring constantly.

In a large skillet, add 1-2 tablespoons canola oil and brown sliced onion until dark. Add to soup at serving time. Pour into a heated soup tureen or heated soup bowls.

Source: Eastern European Food section of [www.about.com](http://www.about.com).





## Next Step in Recovery Focuses on Education

Education is central to the NCSML mission and we are working hard to find innovative ways to reach out to future generations. That's why we're so excited about our next step in flood recovery and rebuilding the NCSML museum campus. We are beginning with the renovation of the Kosek building at 87 16th Avenue SW to house a major exhibition and staff offices.

The main floor will house an exhibition titled, *Rising Above: The Story of a People and the Flood*. It reveals the history, challenges and recovery of a people as they and their community rise above adversity, including the flood of 2008. (See related article, page 8)

In conjunction with the exhibition, the NCSML will develop a curriculum that meets national standards and teachers' expressed need for a resource to help them teach their students about the flood of 2008. Days after the flood, 3rd grade teachers were asking for an in-depth tool to help address their students' questions and fears about the flood and what had happened to their city. This will serve as an addition to the existing NCSML curriculum for third graders about the immigrant experience. This curriculum meets



Photo courtesy of Gazette Communications

*Seventh-graders, guided by NCSML educators, view the flood damage in Czech Village as part of their walking tour.*

national social studies standards and is available through the museum's web site [www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org).

*Rising Above* will incorporate the learning needs of elementary and secondary students into one seamless educational experience. Students will go through the exhibition and enjoy walking tours of Czech Village, where we will take students out into the community to stand in the very spot where history unfolded. In the lower level classroom, hands-on activities like science experiments and craft projects will further enrich the learning experience. At the end of their visit, students will have an opportunity to record their own flood stories and reactions to the exhibit. Their contributions will be archived as part of the ongoing oral history project, *My Flood Story*.

While meeting the need for school study tours, the exhibition will engage persons of all ages and programming associated with the exhibition will be ongoing. The design of the Kosek building project also includes administrative offices on the second floor and a classroom and offices on the lower level.

The NCSML Board of Directors has pledged that it will provide every flood protection possible when rebuilding the museum and library campus. The Kosek building will be insured, and architectural and exhibit design will minimize the threat of flood damage to both the structure and its contents.

We are nearing the start of construction and we anticipate completion by the end of 2009. We look forward to welcoming you in our new space!

## Christmas in August

Join us as we unveil the 2009 Czech ornament collection with special guests, Vasek and Nadia Cinadr of the European Trading Company. Be the first to choose from this spectacular assortment of hand-blown glass ornaments imported from the Czech Republic. It's an event! Enjoy festive holiday music, a bake sale, door prizes and a presentation about how Czech glass ornaments are made. Master folk artist Marj Nejdí will be on hand to personalize your purchases. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Saturday, August 15, at NCSML at Lindale. Free.



Saturday,  
August 15

# CONVERSATIONS

(Conversation with John continued from page 9)

come back to Cedar Rapids to visit relatives, friends, or to attend school reunions. They come here for a bit of nostalgia, that and the koláče and rye bread. We want them to relive a bit of the past when they visit, so we are working hard to retain its original character and charm. That's been a challenge after the flood, to make sure that when they come in, it still feels like the same old bakery. But I think our customers will be pleased with our efforts.

**Leah:** Was there a point where the challenges of flood recovery seemed so great that you considered walking away?

**John:** No. And I don't know if that's out of determination or just sheer stupidity, but there was never a question about whether or not we would restore the bakery after the flood. I think a lot of merchants who were hit by the flood feel that way. We've all invested way too much over the years to quit now.

**Leah:** What makes an ethnic bakery like Sykora's different from any other?

**John:** Well, for one thing, stand alone bakeries are hard to find in most communities today, ethnic or not, so we're already unique for that reason. Add to that our koláče, houska, zelniky and other Czech specialties, and well, how many other bakeries feature a line-up like that? We're using the same family recipes and same bakers for the most part. George Sykora, Lester and Lumir's cousin, passed away last year and we'll miss him. George started at the bakery when he was 13 and baked here for over 60 years. One of our featured bakers is Jan Smolik. Jan owned a bakery in Prague for five years, before immigrating to the U.S. He baked with us for three years before the restoration and was eager to return. Jan specializes in old-world light rye that is hand-crafted and fat-free. Beat that!

**Leah:** Sykora's will feature Czech specialties. Are you branching out too?

**John:** Yes, we are. We've got Chocolate Shop Ice Cream coming in from Wisconsin, and it's hand-dipped, really good stuff. Soon we'll have made-from-scratch pizza,

as well. Some of it will be a little different—we're calling it Bohemian Pizza. Some will have poppy seeds or caraway, or other Czech variations. Our deli counter has soup, sandwiches and goulash—and it's all home-made and fresh. We are also adding a garden café in the back where people can sit in the sun with an espresso and pastry, too.

**Leah:** What does this bakery's comeback mean for Czech Village?

**John:** Our neighborhood has taken a terrible hit. The entire city for that matter is looking for some sense of normalcy after the flood. Having a place like Sykora Bakery, where you can have a quiet cup of coffee—with no televisions blaring on the walls—is important. The bakery has always been a gathering place as well. Our customers know they are like family, and we'd like to think that coming to Sykora's is the next best thing to going to Babi's house.

## Sykora Bakery

Opening in stages, please call for hours and menu.  
319-364-5271  
[www.sykorabakery.com](http://www.sykorabakery.com)  
[rocarek@aol.com](mailto:rocarek@aol.com)

## Lindale Mall/NCSML at Lindale

1st Avenue NE & Collins Road NE,  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

## NCSML at Lindale Hours

Mon – Sat: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Sun: Noon – 5 p.m.

## Mailing Address

4444 1st Avenue NE, Suite 18,  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

## Phone/Fax

NCSML at Lindale: 319-294-5354  
Fax: 319-363-2209

## Administrative Offices

319-362-8500  
Fax: 319-447-5540

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