

VIA HERITAGE NEWS

The Newsletter of The Via Foundation Czech Heritage Society

September 2006

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

To kick off our 10th Year Anniversary, Via is pleased to announce that former **Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will be speaking at our December fundraising event** in Pittsburgh, PA!

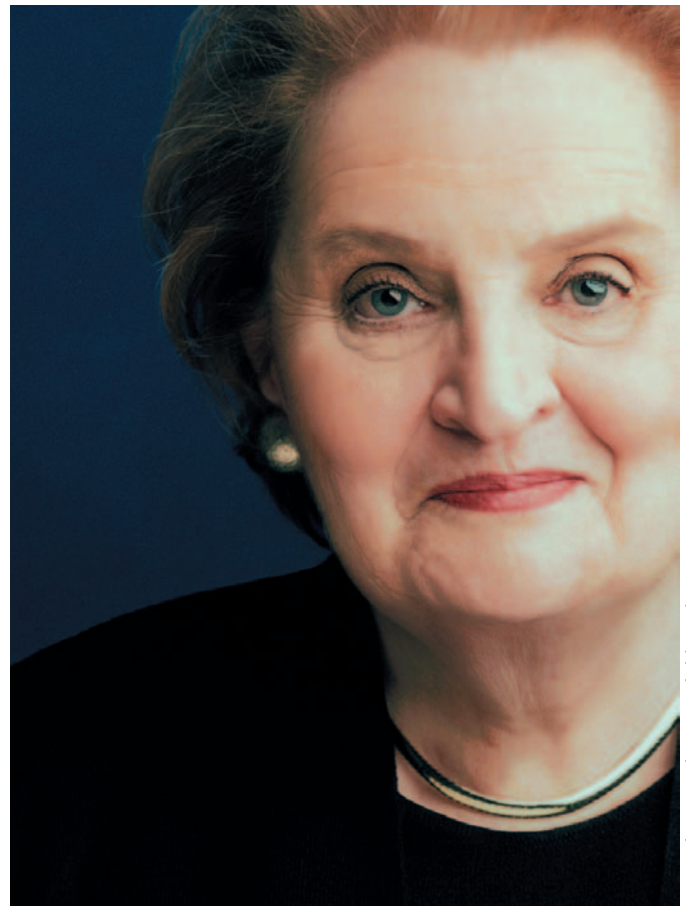
In this special year, Via must meet a challenge issued by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation: if we raise \$140,000 for the Via Permanent Fund for the Czech Republic, C.S. Mott will match that dollar for dollar!

To help meet this challenge, former US Secretary of State and native of Prague Madeleine Albright will speak on Via's behalf on December 12, 2006. Our 10th Year inaugural event will be held in Pittsburgh, PA, the city in which Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk signed the 1918 document declaring the intent of Czechs and Slovaks to create an independent nation (later known as the "Pittsburgh Agreement").

"Just as Masaryk worked to establish a nation built upon the right of self-determination, the Via Foundation invites the public to join its staff and volunteers in building a path of sustainability for Czech nonprofits," said Via's Executive Director, Jiří Bárta.

Secretary Albright was the first female Secretary of State in American history. Prior to this, Albright served as the United States' permanent representative to the United Nations from 1993-1997. She currently heads the Albright Group, LLC, a global strategy firm based in Washington, D.C., and she recently released a book "**The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs**" which examines religion and faith in international politics.

Please mark this date on your calendar to help Via meet this goal and to enjoy a fascinating evening with Secretary Albright!



Portrait by: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

Madeleine Albright to speak at Via's 10th Anniversary Inaugural Event December 12 in Pittsburgh, PA.

What's New?

You may have noticed some new things in the Via Foundation Czech Heritage Society and the Via Heritage News! We're working on keeping you better informed of the success your contributions to Via enable. To do this, we've made some changes, including:

- Friends of Via – Last year, we established a US-based partner non-profit organization for the Via Foundation in Prague.
- Via Mailings – Most mailings from Via will now be sent from Friends of Via in the United States to utilize US non-profit mailing rates.
- E-Heritage – To make it more convenient for you and to keep you up to date with what is new at Via, you may opt to receive Via information electronically. Please send an email to eheritage@nadacevia.cz with the word "subscribe" in the title.

Each of these improvements helps us more efficiently guide your contributions to the Czech communities in need of support. Look forward to more improvements in the future!

Please remember, your ideas and recommendations allow us to serve you better. Please email me at the below address. I look forward to your input!
brad.hoar@nadacevia.cz

Brad Hoar, Development Manager

P.S. Be sure to check out our re-designed English language website in October! www.nadacevia.cz

EXPORTING CZECH EXPERIENCE

Via was selected to receive a grant from the Czech Foreign Ministry to help transfer Czech knowledge and experience to Serbia and newly-independent Montenegro. The aim of this project is to work with the Belgrade-based Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF) to help them more effectively address the needs of communities in Serbia and Montenegro. As an organization that has grown up in a post-totalitarian environment, the Via Foundation has faced many of the same issues challenging a nonprofit struggling to help communities enact positive change in times of transition.

We work in partnership with BCIF to teach through our experience. Similar to Via, BCIF provides small grants to grassroots organizations throughout Serbia and Montenegro to help build vibrant, stable communities. By building cooperation across borders and in communities, BCIF and Via work together to forge a better, more peaceful future in the former Yugoslavia.

By sharing its experiences, Via enhanced our learning in so many aspects - from organizational issues to the philanthropy development. The Via staff's openness, honesty and valuable knowledge coming from working in similar environments were an invaluable contribution to our work. In that respect, close cooperation with VIA Foundation was one of the most important factors in our development, and is deeply appreciated by all people working in BCIF.
- Aleksandra Vesić, Executive Director, Balkan Community Initiatives Fund



Via's Kateřina Bláhová and Jiří Bárta meet with BCIF's Biljana Presnall and Jelena Panić in Prague.

For more information about BCIF, please visit www.bcif.org.

IN MEMORY OF SENATOR JAROSLAVA MOSEROVÁ

Jaroslava Moserová, member of the Via Foundation International Advisory Board, died in March 2006. She was known as senator, presidential candidate, writer, translator of Dick Francis books into Czech, physician and painter. Such is the official biographical statement.

We at the Via Foundation had the privilege to know Jaroslava personally. When we asked her to join our Board in 1997 she replied simply, "I know you and I support your mission. Yes, of course, I will serve on your board with pleasure." She was always helpful, full of energy and ideas. She strongly believed in the principles of a vibrant civil society and was well versed in



Senator Jaroslava Moserová (r) chats with fellow International Advisory Board member, Wendy Luers at the 2001 Via Bona Awards.

matters of everyday life of common people. In all her activities she was courageous, honest and persistent.

She exemplified the very ideal Via works toward: she was an individual who tirelessly worked to improve life for individuals and communities in the Czech Republic. As we cooperated with her to explore new opportunities for Via in the final weeks of her life, she was concerned that she had not yet done enough for her country. Her legacy both in the Czech Republic and abroad disproves this and we are both honored and privileged to have counted her among our strongest supporters. We shall miss her greatly.



In 2005, Marie Horová and her husband Vaclav established a named fund with the Via Foundation to benefit children in Subcarpathia, an area once part of Czechoslovakia that now lies within Ukraine's borders. Mrs. Horová's history unfolds almost like a novel: fleeing her home to escape an arranged marriage; her detention by Soviet secret police; a Czech waiter, recently repatriated from France, proposing marriage after knowing her for a few days to save her from a horrible fate.

Mrs. Horová, tell us something about yourself: how did you end up in Prague?

I come from Subcarpathian Ukraine; the village of Nižný Studený. It is a poor area, where the people always have had to rely upon themselves. Even so, the local people have always been welcoming, hospitable, hard-working, and each bit of land was cultivated.

I left my homeland in 1937; family reasons forced me to leave. My beginning in Prague was difficult, but I was determined to stay here. I began to work, settled in, and adapted to the local conditions. That first summer flew by, but I soon found myself caught in Prague by the German occupation.

When Czechoslovakia was liberated by the Soviets, they immediately started investigating Russian and Ukrainian emigrants. Gradually, the arrests and deportations began. In Prague, it became complete hell: whoever tried to flee across the border met with a bad end. The Soviet secret police picked me up; in vain I tried to tell them that I was not an emigrant, but a citizen of the Czechoslovak Republic. They said to me: "We know where you are from and we know that you are a Soviet citizen. You have no choice: you will go back to Subcarpathia." But I knew that the road back would not take me home, but to Siberia. The secret police released me from custody and ordered me to the collection camp for non-Czech natives on Letna Plain.

A few days before my arrest, I had met a waiter in a café. I had left him a good tip and he had asked me out on a date. After I was released by police, I found myself in the same café and I told that waiter what awaited me. He carefully listened to me and after a few moments, he said, "Pack a few things and I will take you to my mother in Kladno There, they surely will not find you." And that's exactly what I did. I stayed with his mother for about a week, while my husband gathered all the documents needed for our marriage in Prague. He came for me the following Sunday and said: "Everything is taken care of." On Monday, May 6th 1946, we were married in St. Stephen's Church.

What brought you to establish the Fund for the Aid of Sub-Carpathian Children?

Throughout our life together, my husband and I both worked hard, saved bit by bit. After many years, we bought a family house on Bila Hora (White Mountain) in Prague, where we've enjoyed full lives. We recently sold the house with the condition that we can stay there to the end of our lives. And so now, we have money - but what should we do with it?

Both of us are already getting on in years and we are not in good health. We decided to establish, through the Via Foundation, the Mr. And Mrs. Hora Fund to help impoverished children in Subcarpathia Ukraine. Our wish is that the resources from the fund help children in the districts of Volovec and Mižhir. I myself come from this area and I know how the children there live and the difficulties they face. This is why my husband and I decided to give money to this specific cause.

Mr. & Mrs. HORA



Mrs. Horová, what do you wish to improve in Subcarpathia?

That every child would at least have a basic education. That hand crafts such as our beautiful embroidery would be taught in the schools, and in this way, we may renew our old traditions. I would also like there to be jobs for people there, so that they do not have to move away from their homeland and leave their land lying fallow.

I also very much wish that others can discover the treasures sheltered in our beautiful mountains - the people, the fields, salt mines, healing springs...

Marie Horová-Mišanič, June 2006

Mr. & Mrs. Hora recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

For more information on how you can establish a named fund with the Via Foundation, please email fund@nadacevia.cz or call +420 233 113 370.

EXAMPLES OF SUPPORTED PROJECTS

With your support, we are able to restore and preserve the small historical landmarks that enrich the landscape of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. These monuments make up the unique tapestry of Czech cultural history and our common heritage.



The statue of St. Mary Magdalen in Větrov u Frýdlantu

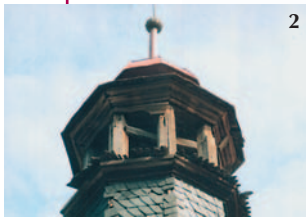
On a quiet forest path near the Polish border, a statue holds its mysteries silent. The origin of the St. Mary Magdalen statue between the villages of Větrov and Frýdlant is unknown: Who created this? Why was it placed there? The Frýdlant Monuments Board and a group of local volunteers work to unravel and preserve its history.



Though the statue is thought to have been erected just over 200 years ago, its base is much older, dating from the mid-1600's. It's clear that both statue and base were sculpted with remarkable artistic feeling and craftsmanship. Time, though, has taken its toll.

Several years ago, a falling tree shattered the St. Mary Magdalen statue.

The Frýdlant Monuments Board refused to forget the memory of those who created this work of art: the statue fragments were retrieved for a time at which it could be repaired. Through a grant of 80,000 Kč from the Czech Heritage Society, the St. Mary Magdalen statue is now undergoing restoration which will be completed by the end of 2006. The restoration process continues, but St. Mary Magdalen has not divulged the secret of her origins. The history witnessed by her eyes may remain hidden, but she will soon stand again as silent tribute in the northern Bohemian forest.



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The Boškov Chapel

Over 700 years ago, German miners founded the town of Potštát on Eastern Moravia's Jeseník lowlands. Tucked beneath the Oderské

Mountains, Potštát grew into a market town drawing Czech, Slovak, and Wallachian immigrants. In 1781, Potštát's residents consecrated a stone and mortar chapel to replace the original wooden church that had served their town for years. This chapel is still in use today.

Under communism, religious landmarks were intentionally left to ruin as religion was "incompatible" with communist ideals. Since the Velvet Revolution, Potštát has been unable to secure necessary funding for vital maintenance. Today, this 225-year-old chapel is in serious disrepair. The parish of Potštát is actively working to restore this chapel. In 2006, they were awarded a Via Foundation Czech Heritage Society grant of 80,000 Kč to repair the steeple, though more is needed to restore the structure of the chapel itself.

Miroslavské Knínice

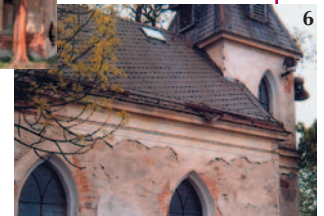
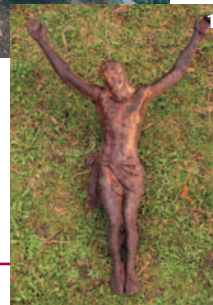
Restoration of sculpted cross



Habartice Village
steeple reconstruction

Vodslví

Preservation of column statue



Town of Bor
Doly Quater chapel restoration



Would you like to contact us?

Did something in our newsletter catch your attention? Do you have a question, or an idea you would like to share with us? If so, please contact us in the Czech Republic or USA:

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