



December 2007

U.S. Embassy Human Rights Award Given to *Respekt* Magazine

On the occasion of the 59th anniversary of International Human Rights Day, Ambassador Richard Graber presented the Alice Garrigue Masaryk Award to *Respekt* magazine for its commitment to objective analysis and exceptional reporting on issues of human rights and democracy since 1990. "What distinguishes *Respekt's* coverage from many others' is its diligence and insightfulness. We in the United States regularly honor the media for their investigative reports uncovering abuses of civil and human rights. Without the spotlight, many of humanity's most serious crimes and needs would go unnoticed," the Ambassador said. The U.S. Embassy in Prague established the award in 2004. It is named in honor of Alice Garrigue Masaryk, the pre-eminent Czech-American and founder of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, as a tribute to her devotion in combating social injustice. Previous award winners include jurist Jiri Kopal; community development leader Kumar Sri Vishwanthan; and dedicated civil servant Lucie Sladkova.



Respekt owners and editors with Ambassador Graber on December 10.

New School Building Opened at the F.D. Roosevelt High School for Handicapped Students in Brno

Ambassador Graber celebrated the official opening of a new school building at the F.D. Roosevelt High School for Handicapped Students in Brno. The school is named after Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the American president who was paralyzed from the waist down and led the nation through economic crisis and world war (1933-1945). The F.D. Roosevelt High School provides general, technical and specialized education to ensure each student meets his full potential. The innovative design of the facility not only promotes mobility and learning, but also incorporates new environmentally-sensitive technologies (see <http://www.sstpm.qmail.cz/>). In Brno, the Ambassador also met representatives of the non-profit organization Environmental Law Service to discuss their new GARDE

Program (Global Alliance for Responsibility, Democracy and Equity) and the responsible behavior of multinational corporations.



The new FDR High School building in Brno opened November 16.

U.S. Ambassador Visits AIDS Shelter

On the occasion of World AIDS Day (December 1), Ambassador Graber and his wife Alexandria visited the Lighthouse (Dům světla) convalescent home run by the Czech AIDS Help Society (CSAP). He praised their work as "an excellent example of NGO-sector leadership" in providing a whole range of critical HIV/AIDS-related services – from information on preventing the spread of HIV to providing compassionate care.

Charity Bazaar Raises 100,000 CZK

Thank you to the many members of the American community who raised money and created smiles at International Christmas Bazaar on December 2! The bazaar, sponsored by the Diplomatic Ladies Association, raised nearly 100,000 CZK for charity this year.



Mrs. Graber greeting Mrs. Klaus at the bazaar.

Embassy Practices Culinary Diplomacy

As part of the Embassy's Speakers Bureau Program, public affairs officer Alexandra McKnight prepared a traditional American meal on November 20 with students studying to

be chefs at Kladno's Secondary Vocational and Apprentice School. In the morning, students learned about the work of the Embassy and the U.S. diplomatic service and had a chance to ask questions about all aspects of life and society in the United States. Later, while preparing meat loaf, mashed potatoes, green beans, salad and lemon bars, the students learned about traditional American food and customs. They also practiced their math skills while converting American recipes: pounds to grams and Fahrenheit to Celsius. The students' talent, knife skills and hard work were evident in the delicious and authentic meal they prepared. As a follow-on to the lesson, the school is planning a group trip to the American Center in Prague.



Embassy Officer Alex McKnight with students.

Change of U.S. Visa Application Fee

Effective January 1, 2008, the worldwide application fee for a U.S. nonimmigrant visa will increase from \$100 to \$131. At the current Embassy exchange, the visa application fee for those paying in Czech crowns will be 2358 CZK. The last increase in processing fees dates back to 2002. Since that time, there have been many security enhancements and service improvement to the visa process which have added to the cost of ensuring the safety of the over 50 million travelers to the United States.

Native American Writer Speaks about the Power of Words



Simon Ortiz, one of the key figures of what has been called the Native American Renaissance, completed a week-long program at universities in Olomouc, Ostrava, Zlín, Brno and Prague. His program was the first part of the project On the Wings of Words, a series of American Indian writers' and artists' presentations in the Czech Republic. Professor Ortiz talked about the struggle to preserve and continue traditional forms and themes in Native American culture.

MD Negotiations Continue

Acting Under Secretary John C. Rood reported substantial progress in missile defense negotiations held at the Czech Foreign Ministry December 14. "We have resolved about half of the issues that were outstanding prior to the beginning of today's discussions," he said at a press

conference hosted by Deputy Foreign Minister Tomas Pojar. The two negotiating teams focused on how the



U/S Rood speaking at the Dec. 14 Prague press conference.

missile defense radar would operate and the modalities of establishing the facility on sovereign Czech territory. U.S. Ambassador Jackson McDonald, who was in Prague earlier in the week for negotiations at the Ministry of Defense on a related status of forces agreement, participated also in this round of discussions. Another round of negotiations is expected in January.

Uncertain States of America

The Rudolfinum Gallery in Prague is hosting "Uncertain States of America," an acclaimed contemporary American art exhibition that features 42 young artists from across the United States. Ambassador Graber opened the exhibition together with its European curator at a festive evening. The exhibition, which received support from the U.S. Embassy, will be accompanied by programs such as guided tours by its curators and art historians, film screenings and concerts. The exhibition will be open until February 24.



Enjoy the Holidays and Happy New Year 2008!

Upcoming Events

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| Jan. 01 | Live Transmission of Opera Hansel and Gretel from MET New York. Cinema Aero, 7:00 p.m. |
| Jan. 10 | Workshop – Open School with Fulbright Commission and AISIS. American Center., 5-7 p.m. |