



Pravda vítězí!

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Czech Easter - Velikonoce

By Dana Shanberg

When I was growing up in Czechoslovakia in the years before 1989, the meaning of Easter (Velikonoce - from Veliké noci or Great Nights) was limited to the welcoming of spring. The religious connotations of Easter were suppressed under the communist regime. Nowadays, Czechs are again aware of the strong Christian background of Easter, but Easter has not become a serious religious holiday. Easter in the Czech Re-public is a fun time. Many traditions are still observed and practiced, especially in villages, and different regions may have their own Easter traditions and customs.

Czech Republic Easter Symbols

Many Czech Easter symbols are related to spring and the beginning of new life. Some of the best known are:

Easter Eggs and kraslice- The hand-painted or otherwise decorated egg (kraslice) is the



most recognizable symbol of Czech Easter. Girls decorate Easter eggs to give them to boys on Easter Monday. There are many Easter egg decorating techniques and the more elaborate ones require a certain level of skill. Different materials

can be used, such as bee's wax, straw, watercolours, onion peels, picture stickers. There are no limitations to creating pretty, colourful eggs. A nationwide Easter egg contest is held in Prague and other Czech cities around Easter time.

- Puss willow and pomlázka - Young, live puss willow twigs are thought to bring health and youth to anyone who is whipped with them. An Easter pomlázka (from pomladit or "make younger") is a braided whip made from puss willow twigs.

It has been used for centuries by boys who go corolling on Easter Monday and symbolically whip girls on the legs. In the past, pomlázka was also used by the farmer's wife to whip the livestock and everyone in the household, including men and children. There would be no Czech Easter without the pomlázka. Boys used to make their own pomlázkas in the past (the more twigs, the more difficult it was to braid one), but this tradition and skill is long gone and pomlázkas can be bought in stores and street stands. Some men don't even bother and use a single twig or even a wooden spoon!

- Baby Animals - Lamb, Bunny Rabbit, Chicken - one Easter tradition is to bake a lamb. In the Czech Republic, real lamb is usually replaced with one made from gingerbread
- Dousing - dousing a girl with water has a similar symbolic meaning as the pomlázka ↪ pg.8

70 Years Ago Nazi Germany Occupied Czechoslovakia "I was there ..."

By Barbara Kutheil Kroulik

On March 15, 1938 Prague was alarmed by the news of the „Anschluss“: Nazi Germany occupied Austria. This development came as a surprise and shock to many. I was 17.

I was no longer a child, and not quite an adult. Political events did not interest me. For me the world was a beautiful place and political debate was only background noise. But this was different. Somehow I realized that the world was not as peaceful and idyllic as I thought. Everyone talked about the annexation of Austria; people were voicing different opinions. But on the surface nothing was happening in Czechoslovakia and the first excitement gradually died down. Life was returning to normal. Nonetheless, we sensed that a dark cloud appeared on the horizon. As for me, I started

to think independently about what was happening around us, and began to feel fear and uncertainty about the future. My father was especially worried by the occupation of Austria. As we discussed the events at home he said that Hitler would not be content and that he would march on. I could not even imagine that and asked whether this might even lead to war. I hoped that dad would say that there would be no more war. After all, he told me about the horrors of war and about the suffering it brought. He knew it all too well having spent over four years on the front during W.W. I. But to my surprise he said that everything was indeed pointing to it. He said that European nations let Hitler expand and raise arms before their very eyes and it was too late to do anything about it.

I argued that surely the people would not want another war after the horrible one Europe had just been through. That's when dad said something I never forgot: „Those who plan wars never fight them. They never suffer or go without. It is the ordinary, unimportant people who go to battle. That's how it has always been. Wars will be waged as long as people inhabit this planet. There are always enough reasons to justify them. Once it is for the country, next time it is for religion, another time it is for freedom. A cause and rallying cry will always be found. But the real reasons do not make headlines: Power, territory and wealth. Wars are good business. Therefore they will never stop. We will only have newer, more horrible weapons. The days when kings rode into battle on



horseback, leading their troops, and settling their scores with a sword, are a thing of the past." Now I was scared. But deep down I hoped that dad was

wrong. Unfortunately, he was right, and my own rosy glasses fell off, and I grew up. I started paying attention to political events and was able to see ↪ pg.10

Working it Out

"Hey O'Hara, ain't you done with that dumbbell yet? There are other people in the gym too, ya know."

I try to ignore the obnoxious voice buzzing close at hand, attempting to concentrate on finishing my set.

"Yo, Numbnuts, I'm talkin' to you!"

I sigh, put the weight down, and turn to face combative owner of the voice. It seems he won't go away unless I acknowledge him.

"Loosen your tank-top, Bruno. I'm almost done. Just a couple more reps and it's all yours. Oh, and by the way, thanks for wrecking my concentration. That really helps."

"Screw you, as swipe."

"Sticks and stones my friend, sticks and stones."

"Your mama."

"Yes, well, please try to keep my relatives out of your enlightened insults."

"Look, are you gonna gimme the damn weight or not?"

"Al...most...done...there. Happy?"

"Christ! Took ya long enough! Geez!"

"Relax, Bruno. The Mr. Olympia Weekend isn't for another couple of months. You still have plenty of time."

"Yeah, well, I wanna get in all the training I can before then, and I don't wanna have to waste time like this talking to dickheads like you."

I sigh again and hand the weight, a bit slick from my efforts, to the impatient hulk, not cowed at all by his verbal taunts. It's okay anyway. Today is my cross-training day, and I need to go work on my lats and not just focus on my biceps. The reassuring sounds of weights being dropped or sliding onto bars, the stretch of the pulleys on the three universals, all greet my ears. This is the life. I allow myself a slight grin as I hear Bruno roar with disgust.

"Hey! You coulda at least wiped it off a bit, ya know!"

"I'm so sorry, Bruno. You seemed to be in such a hurry to get it, I didn't want to keep you waiting. Besides, what was I supposed to wipe it with? My own t-shirt? It's a bit wet too, if you hadn't noticed."

"There's a spray and paper towel thingies over there in the corner, butt munch. Use 'em."

"Ah, so there are. Thank you for pointing them out. I will do so immediately."

I pass the bad-tempered giant, hearing him grumble under his breath. At least he's satisfied, for now.



Hi. My name is Robert "Bobby" O'Hara, and I'm a professional bodybuilder. It's a career that bothers my work-at-home mother, who frets over me constantly, unlike my semi-retired sports agent father, who knows I

By Paul Fabry

can take care of myself and leaves me to my own devices. My mother worries that I may fall in with the wrong crowd at the gym, or that I may overdose on anabolic steroids, or some other type of body-enhancing drugs. She doesn't think I can take care of myself and is frequently calling me on my cell phone to make sure I'm all right. While I appreciate her concern for my well-being, her stifling behaviour is really starting to get on my nerves. I'll have to have a chat with her, and soon.

Bzzzzz! Well, what do you know, that must be her now, calling in with her regular check-up. Oh, I usually have my cell phone on vibration mode, since I don't like the piercing sound of the regular ring, especially if I'm in some sort of awkward situation where the old adage of 'silence is golden' holds true, i.e. with a 'special someone' and I don't feel like taking a call from my mother, or in a place like a library or theatre, where making the slightest sound is akin to committing a crime.

Anyhow, let's get this over with. Sitting on the smooth plank of a bench in the gym's locker room, I heave another sigh and flip open my black cell phone. I receive a double surprise. Not only did I not expect to get a signal in here (I take my phone with me everywhere, and didn't realize I had it with me here), the voice at the other end is one I've never heard before. &

their rattles vigorously, so the noise can be heard from afar. The meaning of the rattling is to chase away Judas. The same procedure repeats on Good Friday (Velký pátek) and one more time on White Saturday (Bílá sobota) when the boys don't only walk through the village but stop at every house in the morning and rattle until they're given money, which they then split between themselves.

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday (Neděle velikonoční) is a day of preparations for Easter Monday. Girls paint, color and decorate eggs if they haven't done so already, and boys prepare their pomlázkas! In my family, decorating Easter eggs is a simple affair: dip some hardboiled eggs in water filled with boiled onion peels and then place store-bought Easter stickers on the eggs.

Easter Monday

Easter Monday (Pondělí velikonoční) is a day off, the day of the pomlázka. The origin of the pomlázka tradition (pomlázka meaning both the whip and the tradition itself) dates back to pagan times. Its original purpose and symbolic meaning is to chase away illness and bad spirits and to bring health and youth for the rest of the year to

everyone who is whipped with the young puss willow twigs. Boys would whip girls lightly on the legs and possibly douse them with water, which had a similar symbolic meaning. The boy while whipping would recite an Easter carol, usually asking for an egg or two. The girl would then reward the boy with a painted egg or candy and tie a ribbon around his pomlázka. As the boys progressed through the village, their bags filled up with eggs and their pomlázkas were adorned with more and more colourful ribbons. This tradition is still largely upheld, especially in villages and small towns, although it may have lost its symbolism and romance and is now performed mainly for fun. Some boys and men seem to have forgotten that the whipping is supposed to be only symbolic and girls don't always like that. The reward has also changed - money and shots of plum brandy (slivovice) are often given instead of or in addition to painted eggs and candy. So by early afternoon, groups of happy men can be seen staggering along the roads... All that aside, Easter remains one of the most joyful holidays on the Czech calendar. Happy Easter! Veselé Velikonoce!

(You can read about Prague Easter celebrations also on: www.myczechrepublic.com)&



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Tom's Recipes

EASTER LEG OF LAMB

Here is one of my favorite Easter recipes which I make for my family during our Easter Holidays. The reason I choose this recipe is the use of spring ingredients. Easter is a great time to celebrate the birth of spring, with herbs sprouting, vegetables starting to grow, and animals coming out of hibernation.



Ingredients:

1	6lb.	Leg of Lamb with the Bone
1/2	Bunch	Fresh Tyme
1/2	Bunch	Fresh Rosemary
1/2	Bunch	Fresh Mint
1/4	Cup	Kremska Mustard
1	Tablespoon	Cracked Black Pepper
2	Tablespoon	Sea Salt
1	Head	Fresh Garlic Cloves, peeled & crushed
6	Piece	Peeled Whole Shallots
1/2	Cup	Olive Oil
1/2	Cup	Hrouba Mouka
1	Bottle	Merlot Red Wine
1	Cup	Balsamic Vinegar
1	Liter	Beef Stock or Water will do too

Instructions:

ROAST

- Make several small cuts into the leg of lamb
- Chop all the fresh herbs, reserve some for later as garnish
- In a mortar pestle place all ingredients and crush until it makes a paste
- Rub the leg with the paste making sure to get it into the small cuts
- Place the shallots around the leg
- Roast at 375 for 1 1/2hr or to your liking.
- This should give you a medium degree of meat
- Remove leg from the roasting dish
- Let the meat rest for 20min before carving

SAUCE

- Pour out any grease from the pan but leave the shallots
- Place the roasting pan on a high heat stove top
- Once the pan is hot add the bottle of red wine. Careful when doing this it may cause the wine to flame, your guests will love this
- Reduce the heat to medium high
- Let wine reduce
- Add balsamic vinegar
- Let reduce to almost a syrup
- Add water and bring to a simmer
- Sprinkle the flour while stirring
- Simmer for at least 10min
- Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper
- Strain the sauce



FINISH

- Carve the meat of the leg of lamb into slices
- Place the meat in a nice deep platter
- Pour the finished sauce over the lamb slices
- Sprinkle with the chopped fresh herbs

SUGGESTIONS

I like to serve this with spring asparagus and creamy scalloped potatoes

Serves: 6-8
Prep Time: 30min
Cook Time: 2 hours
Total Time: 2 1/2 hours

EASTER - from page 7

• **The Colour Red** - red and other bright colours symbolize health, joy, happiness and new life that comes with the spring.

The Days Before Easter Sunday

The following is based on my experience of Easter in the Northern Moravia region. Children finish school on Ugly



Everybody likes traditional easter eggs of Anna Janousova

Wednesday (Škaredá středa), which is a good idea because they need to spend some serious time on making Easter what it should be. In the evening of Green Thursday (Zelený čtvrtek), every boy in the village equips himself with a wooden rattle (řehtačka), which is specially made for the purpose, the boys form a group and walk through the village, rattling

Award of Righteous Among Nations for Czech woman

Anna Pospichalova is not an ordinary woman. As you may have recently heard on news, she just received the award of Righteous Among Nations. Why did she receive this prestigious prize that so far only 22,000 people from around the world have received? She just wanted to save the lives of three Jews during World War Two, while

two years ago in Zubrohlav u Namestova in Slovakia. She was just a teenager when the war began and when she was working for the Grossmann family as a helper. Mr. Grossmann was a lawyer of a Jewish origin. He had two sons, Harry and Tony, and he also took care of his niece Katarina. Her mother lived in Piestany,

Tony returned to their house, the Slovakian Hlinka's Guard and SS, came to Grossmann's house. When Anna saw them approaching the house she screamed as loud as she could to warn Harry and Tony and they were able to escape from the house through the bathroom window. After this incident Katarina lived in Anna's house for a while. Anna's father was able to get false permits for both of the girls to travel to Piestany, where Katarina's mother lived. After the war, both Katarina and her mother also moved to the USA, where Katarina, now Kathryn Winter, still lives today.

Kathy and Anna stayed in touch the whole time after the war. Recently, Kathy nominated Anna for the prestigious award called the Righteous Among Nations (RAN) that is given to people that helped save Jews during World War Two. So far, only about 600 Czechs and Slovaks received this award and their names, along with the names of another 22,000 heroes, are engraved into the Wall of Honor in Jerusalem. Anna also received a medal for her bravery from the former Slovak president Rudolf Schuster in 2004. As Kathy said, "This is the least I could do for her to nominate her for this award." Anna said that she was honored to receive the RAN recognition but she just did what all polite people would do during wartime. *České noviny*



Foto ČTK Anna Pospichalová

risking imprisonment, torture, or even death. This Slovak-born lady, now living in the Czech Republic, already received one award for her good deed about five years ago, thus, she was very surprised when she found out she had won this award as well.

Anna was born eighty-

Slovakia, and her father just recently immigrated to the USA; just before the Germans invaded the country. When the Germans invaded Slovakia, Grossmann's family had to go into hiding in a village called Klin. They would only return to their home to get some clothes and linens.

One day when Harry and

Two Events worth Mentioning



Originally we thought we would introduce two cultural events to you; one from the Czech Republic and one from the USA. The event in the Czech Republic, called Angel 2008, was a music award event. The other one would have been an international festival in Los Angeles, California, that was opened by a Czech movie selected out of 124 films from countries around the world. They both caught our attention for their impact on the Czech entertainment world but also because they shared one common word.

Los Angeles - a Spanish word that means "The Angels" in English. How coincidental? Unfortunately, Czech Television made a mistake in their video since the festival is actually happening in Tiburon, located in the San Francisco Bay, but it is unexpectedly related to angels as well. How? Find out at the end of the article.

The music award night, Angel 2008, took place in Prague on Saturday, March 21st, 2009.

The prizes were awarded by the Czech Academy of Popular Music to the new talent discovery of the year, the best male and female singer, and the band, song, album, DVD, and a video clip of the year.

One more category was added to the nominations, the best foreign band. A new member of the hall of fame was also revealed. At the end of the article you can find the nominations and winners in each category highlighted in bold. The interesting fact, worth mentioning, is that this show did not use playback, as is common in most Czech performances.

The Tiburon International Film Festival (TIFF) is an annual event that introduces the top quality films from around the world. Its goal is to enhance tolerance between all people and its motto is "Understanding the World through Film." This year was very special to Czech cinematography, since the opening film was a well-known film Guard No. 47 that won three Czech Lion awards for the best male actor, male supporting role and movie editor. This is a great accomplishment for Filip Renc, the movie director that attended the festival along with Lucia Siposova (actress) and Karel Fairaisl (Director of Photography). As we already mentioned, the festival is taking place in a town

called Tiburon. The town was named after a location on maps from the Spaniards named Punta de Tiburon (Point of Sharks). It is the nearest mainland point to Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay connecting it to the land through a ferry.

We are not sure whether Angel 2008 was the first show with live musical performances but we definitely hope that Czech playback shows will soon become obsolete. It is also great news that the film Guard No. 47 was honoured to commence the festival taking into account it was not nominated for the Oscars or the best movie in the Czech Lion Awards.

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"I was there ..." - from page 7

that unpleasant things were in store for all of us. Europe would soon experience what my dad foretold. The excitement over Germany's annexation of Austria died down, because people had their own everyday worries. Hitler swallowed Austria and nothing much happened. After all, it only concerned the Austrians. Life went on and most people thought that Hitler would be appeased. Ordinary people generally do not worry about political developments as long as bombs aren't falling on them and they are not being chased from their homes. That is understandable. What is not understandable, however, is that the situation was not worrying political leaders from whom we have the right to expect more foresight and responsibility. Our allies France and England did not appear to be watching the developments in Germany, even though Hitler was arming feverishly and announcing his plans to masses of humanity who cheered him on. What was Germany arming for? There was not aggressor about.

Hitler got away with occupying Austria. No superpower presented any serious resistance. And so he made further demands. In September of 1938 Czechoslovakia was forced to cede her border regions, the so-called Sudetenland. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and French Prime Minister Edouard Daladier sacrificed Czechoslovakia to Hitler's expansionism because they thought that this would save peace. Joyful and confident, they made the announcement to the world. Czechoslovakia, abandoned by her allies, was helpless even with a very well equipped and well-trained army. Czechs living in the border regions had to leave and were chased out of their homes and businesses. The German army occupied the territory and Germans moved in. By now the whole nation knew that things were very serious. President Edvard Beneš with much of the government fled to England. This

was a great disappointment for many Czechs. Dr. Emil Hácha - against his will - became the new president of Czechoslovakia, which was betrayed, abandoned, reduced and rendered unable to defend herself.

These were the events leading up to March 14, 1939, a fated day that would change the history of our nations and of Europe. Hácha was summoned to Berlin where he was subjected to pressure and threats, so that he would sign a proclamation that he agreed with the Nazi invasion. He was undoubtedly a decent man, but he was old and frail and no match for the Hitler's aggressive tactics. But even if he were to resist, it would have been of no use. Nobody was on our side! And so Czechoslovakia was split up into the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and an "independent" Slovak state. Hitler was granted unlimited power over our country and our nation. He was also handed on a silver platter the state-of-the-art equipment of the Czechoslovak army - valued in billions, which was useful for his further exploits in Poland and France. The bunkers in Czechoslovakia's border regions are almost indestructible and stand there, undamaged, to this day. March 15, 1939. A day I will never forget. It was early spring; it was a cold day; large wet snowflakes were falling. A cloudy, dark, dismal day, a fated day, an unhappy day. Very fitting for the events it brought us. The German occupation army was rolling through the streets of Prague. I was standing on the Národní třída across from the former "Aso" department store, in a large crowd of other Prague citizens who were witnessing the tragic historic event. We all watched as German soldiers on motorcycles with sidecars drove through our city in an endless stream. They were wearing ugly gray capes and reminded me of a huge swarm of gray insects. They were looking at us with disdain and disinterest. The people on the sidewalks were crying and shouting, manifesting

their outrage and this invasion of Prague. But the soldiers ignored us, confident of their position of superiority.

Until now I did not know hatred. It is not that I was noble or gracious. It was quite simple, really. I had grown up in a kind and loving family environment and my life had been without traumas and upheavals. I had never had a reason to hate anyone or anything. Suddenly I was witnessing how soldiers of a foreign and for much of our one thousand year history hostile neighboring power, were taking over our Prague. I was choking on tears and on helpless anger over this injustice, and felt hatred I did not know I was capable of. This is when I understood that someone who is weak and helpless might hate his adversary to death. When the wronged party is given a chance at revenge things can get very bad. Who then, is the truly guilty party? But it was not only hatred I felt. Suddenly I realized how much I loved this city, Prague, my Prague, our Prague, a city which since time immemorial was ours and ours alone, this city of Prague, which was home to great men and women of the Czech nation.

Hitler was at the Prague Castle before the tired and broken Dr. Háchka could make it back from Berlin. A dark cloud with a swastika emblem spread over our city and over the whole country. It was a dark and heavy cloud with would hang there for the next six years.

Today I am an old woman and several decades have elapsed but I cannot think of the past and of the betrayal by the allies without anger and bitterness. Those who have the power to decide the fates of entire nations were stupid and indifferent, and from what I have seen in the decades since then, this has not changed. We have a lot to look forward to. Germans made themselves at home in Bohemia and thought it would be forever. Prague was full of Germans who behaved as confident colonizers. Czechs on the other hand were intimidated at every step.

Hitler did not leave us in any doubt about his true intentions. His long-term plan was to cleanse the country of ethnic Czechs. He started with the intelligentsia. In November 1939 all colleges and universities in Bohemia were closed. He had plans for the rest of us, too, as we would learn soon enough. More about that next time. (Private collection of writings Mom's Memories", 1999, translated by Barbara (Kroulik) Sherriff. Barbara Kroulik came to Canada in 1969 with her family, which became active in the Czech community. Her husband Bretislav Kroulik worked as editor of Novy domov in the 1970s.)



Masaryk Memorial Institute

Masaryk Memorial Institute (MMI) is a charitable organization founded by immigrants from former Czechoslovakia. Its goal is not only to preserve these immigrants' heritage by hosting Czech and Slovak educational and cultural events, but also to share the beauty of these two countries and their peoples with all Canadians. Named in honor of T. G. Masaryk, the founder of Czechoslovakia in 1918 and father of modern Czech and Slovak society, the charity continues to be true to his vision of improving lives of everyone through assistance, education, cooperation and tolerance. Information and contacts can be found at www.masaryktown.org

Masaryk Memorial Institute (MMI) je charitativní organizace, kterou založili imigranti přicházející z bývalého Československa. Cílem této organizace je nejen udržovat české a slovenské tradice, ale také obohatit kanadskou společnost o informace o krásách a historii české a slovenské země. Organizace je pojmenována po prof. Tomáši Garrigouvi Masarykovi, prvním prezidentovi samostatného Československa, které vzniklo v roce 1918. MMI zůstává věrný jeho odkazu a nadále se věnuje aktivitám, které obohacují život lidí v naší nové domovině, a propaguje pomoc, vzdělání, spolupráci a toleranci. Informace najdete na www.masaryktown.org

Office: Iva Ječmen
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E-mail: novydomov@masaryktown.org
Web: www.novydomov.com nebo blog.novydomov.com
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