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# NOVÝ DOMOV



THE NEW HOMELAND

Pravda vítězí!

CZECH AND SLOVAK BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPER [www.masaryktown.ca](http://www.masaryktown.ca)

## Czech Parliament Backs Medical Marijuana, With a Catch

By Sean Carney

The Czech Senate Wednesday approved a bill allowing for the legal sale of cannabis for medical purposes, affirming a decision of the country's lower house of parliament. The proposal, which enjoys very strong support from all political parties in both houses of parliament, should become law later this year, pending an expected presidential

more expensive, it'll bolster the black market and the mafia."

The simplest solution, said Alena Gajduskova, the first-deputy Chairwoman of the Senate who voted in favor of the bill despite reservations, would be to allow the country's many "grandmother growers" who already have cannabis plants in pots on their balconies and in their herb gardens

personal use isn't criminalized, so if we're able to tolerate that, I don't see why we couldn't tolerate the senior 'grandmother growers' [for medical use]. And from the position of the Union of Patients of the Czech Republic, we'll work towards that goal," she said.

Still, the consensus among lawmakers is that while the bill may be imperfect, it's a starting point.

While cannabis is technically illegal in the Czech Republic, the country's lawmakers in criminal 2010 removed all penalties for cultivation of up to five plants for personal use or for possession of up to 15 grams of dried herb. That law doesn't explicitly mention medical use of cannabis, which makes otherwise law-abiding "grandmother growers" nervous.

In 2011 the Czech government approved sale of medications using cannabis derivatives.

Mr. Dvorak, who along with some of the Czech Republic's top cannabis researchers and physicians featured prominently in the 2012 documentary film Rok Konopi, or The Year of Cannabis, agreed with Ms. Gajduskova. He said lawmakers should simply allow medical users of cannabis to grow their own herbs at virtually no expense to themselves or to insurers, who are wary of any funding of medical marijuana.

VZP, the nation's state-run health insurer, is holding off from saying whether it will cover patient costs for medical cannabis. First the president must sign the bill into law, the insurer's press office said. Only after the bill is law and the health ministry modifies its list of drugs on which the purchase price is partially or fully covered by health insurers will VZP offer additional comment.

The only EU countries with more liberal approaches to cannabis are the Netherlands, where the plant is illegal but the government has an official policy of tolerance, and Portugal, where controlled substances were decriminalized in 2001.

Besides concerns over high prices for regular

After decades of declining worth, the Canadian penny has finally been polished off.

The venerable 1-cent coin officially dies Monday, when the Royal Canadian Mint will stop circulating it.

It was 137.

Costly to produce, and an annoyance to many, the penny had been in fading health for years. Millions of Canadians kept it stashed away, out of sight and out of mind, in jars, boxes and drawers.

In last year's federal budget, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty decided to pull the plug on the coin.

The Royal Canadian Mint stopped making new pennies last year.

The inspiration for countless expressions, the penny is survived in Canada by its older-currency siblings the nickel, dime and quarter, and a generation of loonies and toonies. It was pre-deceased by similar small-currency cousins in other countries.

Eventually, all the pennies -- Canada has produced 35 billion of them since 1908 -- will be gathered up and melted down.

Though gone, the penny will not easily be forgotten: It can still legally be used and banks will take them, but insist they be rolled up.

Its legacy will also endure at the cash register, since starting Monday the government is "encouraging" merchants to round off all cash transactions to the



## THE PENNY: 1876 - 2013

By Hank Daniszewski  
The London Free Press

nearest nickel from now on "in a fair and transparent manner."

WHY THE PENNY HAD TO DIE

It came down to dollar and cents. It costs 1.6 cents to make each penny. Killing it will save Ottawa \$11 million a year.

ROUNDING OUT

The penny remains legal tender indefinitely. How the new approach will work: -- Non-cash transactions, such as on debit and credit cards, will still be calculated to the cent.

-- Cash-only transactions -- 22% of all purchases -- will be "rounded out" to the nearest nickel if merchants follow federal advice.

-- Examples: A purchase costing \$1.01 or \$1.02 becomes \$1. One costing \$1.03 or \$1.04 becomes \$1.05

THE PENNY PROSECUTOR

Pulling the plug on the penny can't come soon enough for John Palmer, a retired economics professor in London who's long been one of the nation's leading proponents for abolishing the penny. He even appeared before a Senate committee studying the issue.

Besides its high production cost, Palmer argues pennies have long been useless as currency and are a nuisance for retailers and consumers.

"I'm surprised merchants have not been making more changes in anticipation. I see more 'penny cups,' but merchants have not started rounding out prices," said Palmer.

He said Canada should soon take the next step and eliminate the five-cent coin.

"Some people will feel nostalgic, but I don't think most of us will miss the penny much," said Palmer.

RETAIL REACTION



signature.

But there's a catch: the text of the bill says that only imported cannabis will be allowed for sale in the first year "to ensure standards." After that, sales may expand to include registered, domestic production that is strictly monitored.

This is a one-two punch that advocates of medical marijuana say will simply make cannabis prohibitively expensive, putting the herb out of reach of most patients while enriching the black market and a few select firms that will be official traders in the goods.

"It's legal, pharmaceutical and economic corruption," said Dusan Dvorak, a medical-cannabis activist who leads the nonprofit organization Konopi je Lek, or Marijuana is Medicine. "The result of the law should be access to cannabis for research and medical uses. But the real result is that it won't be made available, it'll be

to legally grow their own cannabis, or to at least remove all threats of criminal prosecution.

"These medicines are proven; they're very efficient but shouldn't be a luxury good. That is completely unacceptable," Ms. Gajduskova said after the Senate approved the bill with 67 votes for and only two against. "For a long time I've supported enabling the medical use of cannabis... but I have to say that I'm very disappointed by what we've got on the table today," she said.

The legislation—which will make the Czech Republic one of the only European Union countries to legally condone the sale of cannabis for medical purposes—has been crafted to the benefit of "big business," Ms. Gajduskova said. The bill fails the country's seniors as growing a plant on one's balcony to make tea or ointments will still be technically illegal, she said.

"A small amount of [marijuana] for





Karlštejn Castle



Křivoklát Castle



Kutná Hora Church St. Barbara

## ONE DAY OUT OF PRAGUE

According to many people, Prague is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. But its Gothic towers, Baroque palaces or Art Nouveau halls are not the only things worth visiting in the Czech Republic. Throughout the whole of the country, you can admire over two hundred castles and chateaux which are open to the public, beautiful centers of historical towns, wonderfully maintained gardens or mysterious medieval ruins which remember times long past. Set out to get to know some of the beautiful places which are located only a few hours' drive from the capital. You most certainly won't regret it. So are you ready to take a trip?

The first of your destinations could for example be the most beautiful of Czech castles Karlštejn. The journey there takes just under an hour by train and the view of its majestic silhouette in the middle of the woody hills will be worth every minute you spend getting there. During your daytrip, you can also set out for Chateau Konopiště, which took its place in history as the summer residence of Franz Ferdinand, the successor to the Austrian throne who was assassinated in Sarajevo. You can get here easily by train in roughly an hour and a quarter. Do you like mysterious medieval residences shrouded in legend? Then hop on a train and within an hour and a half you can be walking through the courtyard of the romantic Křivoklát Castle, one of the most beautiful in the whole of the Czech Republic or Church in Kutná Hora. Source: <http://www.czechtourism.com/a/one-day-out-of-prague#photoMedia100>

## Archaeological Conservation in Israel: My Internship at the University of Jerusalem

By Ida Pohoriljakova, Brampton

I am an art conservator, who specializes in conserving three-dimensional objects. Art conservators care for cultural, historical, and artistic objects with the goal of preserving them to the best of their abilities for generations to come.

This past summer 2012, I had the opportunity to travel to Israel and intern in the conservation lab of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. For five weeks, I had the great pleasure to work with the Institute's archaeological conservator, Mimi Lavi. I had the chance to learn more about and assist with treating freshly excavated archaeological objects. This is a category of objects with which I particularly enjoy working.

I find archaeological objects interesting for many reasons. I regard the connection that excavated objects bring to us to be almost magical. It is fascinating when one considers that someone had made and used an unearthed object many - sometimes thousands - years ago. Conserving objects that had been exposed to the earth's elements is also challenging. During burial in the ground or under water, objects are exposed to various environmental conditions that have both a physical and chemical impact on the materials that make up the objects. These conditions are responsible for promoting both the preservation and deterioration of materials.

Not all excavated objects get a conservator's attention. Actually, out of the huge amounts of fragments - which are often not particularly sightly or interesting - only certain objects are brought into the conservation lab. Objects that are chosen for conservation

treatment are those that will undergo extensive study by archaeologists and other researchers with the aim of better understanding the objects, the site of their excavation, the culture that created them, or the time-period of their use. Coins, for example, are important artifacts on archaeological excavations, because they can be used to date an archaeological site.

One of the projects that I was able to partake in at the Hebrew University was the conservation treatment of copper alloy coins. This was an especially valuable experience for me, because I learned about treatment methods that I had previously never used. Our task in treating the coins was to reveal the preserved numismatic information under the corrosion products on the coins' surfaces. Unfortunately, the group of coins that I assisted with treating had been buried in a region of Israel that has very salty soil. This caused the coins to degrade very badly and, in many cases, lose some or all of the information on the surfaces. Nevertheless, we persevered and did our best to reduce or completely remove the corrosion that had formed on the coins' surfaces and reveal what was left of the surviving texts and images. We achieved this with the aid of delicate tools (conservators use medical tools, such as scalpels), chemicals, and specialized equipment (magnification in the form of a binocular stereomicroscope is a must for such detailed work). Even though the degraded state of the coins was challenging and, at times, very frustrating, we were able to uncover information that had up until then been hidden and provide opportunity for further study.

An especially nice example of an excavated coin, pictured here,

that had received conservation attention by Mimi is a beautiful and well-preserved silver coin depicting Alexander the Great on the obverse side. The details that Mimi was able to expose are stunning.

I had the chance to be involved in other projects as well. These included removing soil and reducing the corrosion products from copper alloy and iron objects to reveal the original shape of the objects, removing soil from ceramic ostraka sherds to uncover handwritten letters and symbols on the sherds' surfaces, and creating mounts and boxes for safe transportation and storage of treated objects. The conservation treatment for the fragmented iron sickle that is pictured here consisted of reducing the corrosion products, reassembling the fragments where possible, and creating a mount. In addition to conserving ancient archaeological objects, I also assisted Mimi with removing dust, reducing grime, and restoring small losses on a few modern stone and plaster indoor sculptures on the University campus.

My internship was an extremely enriching experience. It gave me the opportunity to build working relationships and friendships with new colleagues, broaden my knowledge and skills, gain an understanding of different approaches to solving problems, and work in a culturally and historically rich and fascinating environment. I am most grateful to my friend and colleague, Hadas Seri, for introducing me to Mimi; and to Mimi for having shared her wisdom with me and patiently allowing me to train under her supervision.

Photo taken  
by Ida Pohoriljakova, 2012





"Some people would like to say that celebrating this birthday means that I am not available for further work at MMI," Ernie commented. But not so. Talking to him, I am amazed by his energy and clear vision of the future for our organization. He does not plan to sit at home and rest. Ernie was the prime moving force behind a plan to build a new community hall at Masaryktown. This could have served the restaurant for big events and provided adequate room for us to transfer activities from outside in inclement weather. Other organizations would have found a home there as well. His vision was clear, but things are changing in the community: we are shrinking in size and there are fewer Czech businesses and, therefore, fewer financial resources. This plan had to be abandoned.

His newest project, in which he would gladly participate, is a Czechoslovak museum of history and culture in Toronto. The nearby Cedar Ridge Creative Centre, 225 Confederation Drive, might provide a room for setting up the initial artifacts. It is up to the MMI Board of Directors to sanction this new enterprise, says Ernie.

Ernie has never lost his interest in air planes and pilots. This dates back to World War II, when Czechoslovak flyers contributed in a big way to the war effort. In 1940, when France was occupied by German forces, a meeting of 900 former Czechoslovak flyers took place in London. Subsequently, Jan Masaryk (then the foreign minister in exile) signed an agreement with British foreign minister Lord Halifax, to form a unit of Czechoslovak armed forces in Britain. This group became an integral part of the Royal Air Force (RAF). They were regular RAF uniforms with shoulder name designations Czechoslovakia. They were a tough group of men, highly skilled in the flying business. Ernie's cousin John Gellner was a prominent member - the diary he kept and his biography is documented in an interesting book published in the Czech Republic „Letec po hvězdách". The book stresses the predominant view of the Czechoslovak military, that the country should have gone to war with Germany instead of capitulating to the Munich decisions. At the time the country had a strong air force, strategic border fortifications manned by well-trained defenders and a determined will to fight. Another cousin John Lenhoff also served with Ernie in the RAF.

Ernie was born on February 4, 1923 in Vienna. He was two-and-a-half years when his father Evžen, who spoke Czech, was transferred to Prague by the Anglobank, one of a group of new banks active in the country after it was established in

1918. One of these banks' key functions was to administer management of companies newly taken over from

And we have another name: František Gellner, another relative from his mother's side. He was

## Ernie Zucker celebrates his birthday

By Vera Kohout, Toronto

Austrian owners.

The family lived on Pařížská (now one of the fanciest streets in the Czech capital) across the famed old/new synagogue. A series of small shops lined the east side of the street. „Maminka"

fetches the daily requirement of milk from the grocer (there was no refrigeration those days). She also shopped for groceries. Since there was a full-time cook on duty, she had time to visit regular fashion and art shows, and meet her friends downtown. Governesses looked after Ernie and his sister Emmy. Next to the grocer was the Italian ice-cream parlor. To this day, Ernie savors the taste of their lemon ice-cream cone.

So there was a serene atmosphere to his childhood and that of his sister. At the outset of the 1930 recession, following father Evžen's layoff from the bank, he went into real-estate with enough income to keep the family's standard of living.

The „birthday-boy's" forbears founded a strong base for the family, with a healthy world outlook. For example: the founder of the present-day large ladies' hat manufacturing complex in Strakonice was Ernie's great-grandfather Matyáš Zucker. He started by manufacturing fezzes in the nineteenth century, mainly exported to Turkey, before their president Kemal Attaturk forbade their wearing. Matyáš made the fezzes initially in his house - he came to Strakonice from the village of Čkyně near Prachatic after the year 1848, when emperor Josef II permitted Jews to move from the country to towns and cities. The Fezko factory is still thriving with the business of ladies hats and textiles for lining car interiors. Nowadays it has 3000 employees and is part of the 240 plants in the Johnson Controls Automotive Experience complex.

Born in Čkyně, one of eight Matyáš' children, was Alois Zucker. He became a distinguished professor and dean of law at Charles University. His original legal work brought him international recognition, including a honorary doctorate from the University of Lyon. Alois was a close collaborator of Tomáš Masaryk (both served in the Austrian parliament). Eventually, they parted company when Masaryk founded a new party (Mladočeši).

reported missing in action by the Austrian army on the Eastern front in 1914, a young thirty-year old. He was one of the best-known Czech agitators of his time against the Austrian regime. A distinguished writer and poet, he was also well-known as an artist and his cartoons were published in several newspapers. He is still listed as a leading anarchist agitator of his time.

Mother Zucker's remarkable toughness came to the fore after her transformation from society woman. She organized Emmy's departure to England with the last Nicholas Winton train in Spring of 1939. Winton is credited with saving 600 Czech Jewish children from perishing in the Holocaust. Then she started to work on her own escape plan. Fortunately, there was a considerable amount of cash in the bank, available for bribing Gestapo officials and others where needed. Her contacts were her brother and her brother-in-law in the U.S. One was a lawyer in New York, and the other a professor of law at the University of Buffalo. Having her children out of the country was a powerful incentive, but the plan became complicated with the outbreak of war in August 1939.

Mother Zucker knew that to escape from Prague during war time, meant traveling through Germany, then through Spain to Portugal from where one could catch a boat to the Americas. She obtained a Mexican immigration visa. This was predicated on being a Roman Catholic. A priest in Prague arranged the conversion for a fixed sum of money. The complicated arrangements took till August 1941 before she could start her journey via Berlin. Here she tried to obtain immigration papers from the Americans with no success. She said that she was treated worse by the U.S. officials than by the Gestapo. For a bribe of \$500.00 she obtained a six-week visa to travel through the U.S. to Mexico. She also needed a German exit visa. The official at the Gestapo office not only issued the difficult-to-obtain permit, but smilingly wished her a safe journey. She lived in Mexico for six years before coming to Canada.

In May 1945, Ernie returned to Prague and left the air force to study under a military scholarship. „They were good years," he says „I was twenty-two, wearing a uniform, and the girls loved me." He continued to study electrical engineering, but the communist take-over ended univer-

sity studies for many a student. With Klement Gottwald's government in power, he saw no future in his home country and decided to emigrate once more. Although having been in the RAF, the English would not have him, saying that he opted to leave after the war which closed the door on getting British papers. He knew the U.S. would not have him. So, having cousin John Gellner in Canada, he opted to go there. With his provisional Canadian papers he traveled via England to Canada. The cheapest way was to book passage was on a coal boat from Newcastle - the journey taking three weeks to arrive at a small port on the Nova Scotia coast. There they dumped him and said you are on your own.

John had stayed in the RCAF and was stationed in Trenton, the large air base, and current home of the Canadian Air Force Museum. Trenton is near Batawa where, at the time, lived many Czechoslovaks, making it easier for Ernie to integrate in the new country. There he worked as an electrician with a large contractor for a few months.

Then came the move to Toronto. Ernie laughingly relates about his

Later, he worked for the Steel Company (Stelco) in Hamilton until his retirement.

He met his wife Marion in Toronto (after their wedding, they moved to Hamilton where their three children were born). The initial courtship took them to Maple Leafs Gardens, where in those days New York's Metropolitan Opera was performing. The Canadian Opera Company (COC) did not exist at the time. Our own opera has to thank Nicolas Goldschmidt and Herman Geiger-Toler for its existence, founded in 1950, and moving into its own home on University Avenue six years later. Marion and Ernie have been married 56 years. They have two sons, a daughter and seven grand-children.

At ninety, Ernie shows no signs of slowing down - his willingness to participate in the work of establishing a museum of Czech history and culture, should encourage all of us to carry on community work into our old age. This requires physical and mental fitness. „I exercise regularly, read and write a lot and I use other languages than English." According to experts at the Toronto Baycrest



Ernie and his wife Marion

PHOTO Věra Kohout



career choice: he walked down King Street - on one side of the street was electrical manufacturer Westinghouse, on the other General Electric. Fate had him on the Westinghouse street side, he entered and was hired for their wire reel stock room where needed someone young and strong to do lifting. He spent 27 years working for this company. „I could have worked for the larger company, I guess, but I was on the wrong side of the street," chuckles Ernie. He qualified as Professional engineer by part-time study, specializing in mine hoisting systems. His career took him to major mining projects throughout the country, a good way to learn the geography. He received many engineering excellence awards, among them Fellow of Engineers Canada.

Memory Clinic (one of the leading world sources for retaining aging memory) the use of second or more languages is helpful in this regard. I asked him if, if he would to do something differently, if he had the chance. He replied: „Much of what happened to me was determined by outside influences. For example, I would have preferred to study the humanities instead of engineering, a field which is predominant in our family. Being in the technical world is more practical when one is an emigrant..."

We thank our celebrant for the many years of dedicated work for the Czech community. For his birthday, we wish him the best of health and a happy family life.

## Czech Parliament

medical use, which  
 > ze str. 7 cannabis proponents say can easily exceed 10,000 koruna (about \$526) a month when bought at pharmacies compared with virtually no cost if widespread home-growing is legalized, the country's farmers could also get a boost from legalization, said senator Jan Veleba. Local authorities should swiftly allow domestic cultivation of cannabis, said Mr. Veleba, who is also the president of the Agricultural Chamber of the Czech Republic. He voted in favor of the bill. "Each new commodity that farmers can produce and include in their [portfolio of goods] is something good for our agricultural sector," he said.

"In agriculture, there is a terribly large number of buildings, where at one time there was livestock, where there was other technology for processing, but now they stand empty. Farmers would most definitely swoop in on this possibility," Mr. Veleba said.

In addition to being the world's largest consumers of beer per capita, Czechs are the biggest users of cannabis in Europe. Some 15.2% of adults in the Czech Republic use cannabis annually, compared with an average of 7.1% in west and central Europe, according to the United Nations' 2011 World Drug Report. Among young Czechs, the figure is even higher; 42% of Czech students said they had used cannabis, compared with a European average of 17%, according to the May 2012 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

Over the past several decades, the country has produced much research into cannabis's therapeutic uses.

Mr. Dvorak said that in 1954, professor Jan Kabelik created the world's first cannabis-study laboratory and led the first international conference on the topic, called Marijuana is Medicine. In addition, Zdenek Krejci with Frantisek Santavy were the first in the world to isolate cannabinoids, while Lubomir Hanus in 1992 was the first to describe in detail the structure of anandamide, an endogenous cannabinoid neurotransmitter. Source: <http://blogs.wsj.com/emerging-europe/2013/01/30/czech-parliament-backs-medical-marijuana-with-a-catch/>



## PRAGUE'S MENU IS STURDY, BUT WHERE'S THE POLKA MUSIC?

By Chris Nuttall-Smith, The Globe and Mail

Though the heart of a restaurant should always lie in its kitchen, the service and atmosphere are also vital organs. That applies doubly to places where the food is sturdy but unexciting, by which

accounts fully operational, has been moved to the back room, out of sight, like an unwashed elder uncle. The only immediate sign of where you're at is an antique butcher's scale set inside the en-

to become a late-night classic; there's a bit of heat, a whack of sour cream, satisfying bacon nubs served with them. His cabbage roll also toys ever so slightly with tradition: The cabbage is

*Members of the Czech and Slovak community were sad to learn recently that the shop/restaurant of the former Prague Deli, an establishment which has survived the trials and tribulations of half a century and three generations of owners, was no longer there to serve them.*

*Just how the face of the deli and the services has changed, is described in the well-informed article in the Globe and Mail, reprinted here.*

*Unfortunately, the promises of the new owner did not even last till the Christmas holidays. Nothing of what he planned came to be. The explanation: The Czech community wasn't meeting him half-way. What can we say? Many have turned to their neighbourhood Polish food stores. But hope springs eternal: Maybe a new "grandpa Pichlik" will appear and together with his wife and family members of the calibre of Maruska, Kveta and Vladimír Král, they will show us how to do business in keeping with our tradition.*

I mean Eastern European places. You can only get so far with sausage, tripe soup and dumplings, standard fare in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. If Czech food were exciting, no one would have invented frilly blouses, or polka, or pilsner beer.

The Prague Deli has stood on Queen Street West near Palmerston Avenue in one form or another since 1968, and for nearly

trance, with a sack of flour and some wood chips and a prewar leather suitcase on it. It looks like the set dressing from a straight-to-video art film about the love between a lonely but well-intentioned street mime and a český terrier with a thirst for blood. Even Restaurant Makeover couldn't have made the room sadder.

The food is sturdy: There are

juicy and fresh-tasting, the rice and meat inside are loose instead of doughy, and his sauce tastes like fresh tomatoes, much more Naples than Vaclavské Namesti. Nice touch.

Those Edam cheese poppers look and play much like zoo sticks. I like them: A cheap trick's not a bad trick if it's good. He plays it straight with his cold smoked fish plate, piling good fish alongside pickled beets, sour cream and mediocre potato pancakes; they taste like they were reheated from a ready-made stack.

The seared rainbow trout, served with fingerling potatoes and sliced, hard-cooked egg, failed long before it reached Mr. Paradis's kitchen. The fish tasted muddy, like cheap tilapia or pond-raised carp. There's superb farmed trout available in Ontario; Mr. Paradis should avail himself of some.

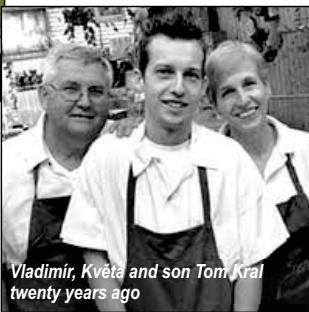


two decades before that, the space was a Czechoslovakian ham shop. A place like that comes with an awful lot of history, and through the years, as its audience changed and the deli modernized (albeit slightly), the Prague has managed to maintain its character and dignity. The place stayed busy with a mixed crowd of Queen Street locals and far-flung regulars. Which is why it's so mystifying what Dejan Lazic, the restaurateur who bought the deli's lease last May, has done with the place.

Where once there was a lively charcuterie counter inside the front door, and a front-and-centre grocery display with jars of imported jam and sausages and Czech Smarties and sugary oddments wrapped in cellophane, now the room, remade as Prague European Kitchen, is stripped down and modernish – or, as the less diplomatic might call it, bleak. The deli counter, which remains well-stocked and, by all

sundry pork products, rabbit and dumplings, dill, beets, paprika, and even very good tripe. Mr. Lazic has hired Jake Paradis, a 24-year-old chef who worked most recently as a chef de partie at Jump, in the financial district, to run the menu. Mr. Paradis spent a good deal of time as a boy in his Slovenian grandmother's kitchen, according to a bio provided by the restaurant. He's broadened the offerings out beyond Czech food, to Hungarian goulash, deep-fried Edam cheese sticks and a pork, lamb and beef burger called "The Balkan Threesome." These items achieve much of what you can ever really hope for Eastern European food: They fill you up, stick to your ribs, go well with beer, etc. Occasionally Mr. Paradis's cooking even accomplishes slightly more than that.

The chef stuffs perogies with pork and hot banana peppers, for instance, in what fully deserves



Vladimír, Květa and son Tomáš twenty years ago

Almost anybody could love his tripe soup, though: The broth is comforting, dark and serious, soft organ jazz with a hot pepper downbeat; the tripe is mild and tender and cut so that it doesn't look or taste on your tongue like stomach lining.

Lovers of braised beef are likely to lust for Mr. Paradis's short-rib sauerbraten, though: The meat is moist and jiggly and is served with sliced dill pickles and a bed of light, deep-fried dumpling noodles called halusky. I'd also order the suckling pig palacinky – milky roast young pork wrapped in crepes, and served with apple-

sauce.

Even the Balkan Threesome, a classic Mom burger seared in a pan and set on a way-too-big bun, is tasty (and fun to order, depending on your fondness for double-entendre).

Dessert is less so, particularly the "bread pudding" that's made from doughy white dumpling slices and appears to be modelled after French toast.

The night I had it, the batter hadn't soaked more than a millimetre into the thick slices, so they were fine-tasting on first impact, but dry and pasty and rib-sticking for all the wrong reasons once you got fully into the bite.

Afterward, one of my tablemates walked through the empty deli section in the back room and discovered an array of more traditional desserts – ones that hadn't made the dinner menu. He brought back a sandwich made from meringue and slathered with a paste of one sort or another. One of the ladies who's been baking for the Prague for years had made it, a staffer told him.

It tasted light and luxurious, gloriously sweet and old-fashioned, as though it had somehow absorbed the old soul of the place. We each took a bite and marvelled.

To serve that brutal bread pudding while burying these in the back made no sense at all.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/food-and-wine/restaurant-reviews/pragues-menu-is-sturdy-but-where-s-the-polka-music/article4610105/comments/>, Alec Robertson, October 15, 2012

Good luck to the new owners CNS - give the rest a break, it's not meant to be the next trendy cuisine. Snide remarks about polka music / stereotyping cast your review to the garbage can. At least they've been around way longer than your fan boy worship at the altar of Ossington / Dundas W newbie's.

The trouble is, they are trying to tweak the cuisine... to modernize it, I suppose, to make it more 'trendy'. But in the process are destroying its tradition. And "they" haven't been around way longer, only since last May. Previously, three generations were involved and strove to maintain tradition and quality. Good luck to the new owner indeed! He will need it. It really is bleak and the loud music drowns all attempts at conversation.

Name Prague European Kitchen, Location 638 Queen St. West, Toronto

Atmosphere Casual: Track lighting, blonde wood, red highlights. Like the Ikea ball room without the balls. Friendly service. Drinks on Offer Beer in Bottles, Wine List, Great beers from around Eastern Europe; interesting (and not always in a good way) Eastern European wines. Slivovitz, too, of course. Additional Info Best Bets: Perogies, tripe soup, cabbage rolls, short rib, suckling pig, and a detour to the back for dessert.