



THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



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Official Bi-Monthly Journal of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately,
an Incorporated Non-Profit Organization
Winner of Numerous Philatelic Literature Awards

A.P.S. Unit 18

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JULY/AUGUST 1998

No. 4, Whole No. 550

President's Corner

It was a pleasure to again be able to report to the membership at the General Meeting of the Society held at NOJEX on Saturday, May 23, that the organization is in fine shape.

Membership remains well over 300 and sufficient to cover the cost of publishing *The Czechoslovak SPECIALIST* from membership dues. Other sources of income can be used for other member benefits.

During this past year those benefits have included distribution of a first ever Membership Directory and Comparison Survey of Catalog Numbers of Czechoslovak Postage Stamps. Both of these publications are "first attempts" and probably will be criticized by some for real or perceived shortcomings. Some members may find their name missing from the Membership Directory, for instance, or their collecting interests not properly reflected. This might be because of an oversight/error on the editor's part, but more likely it is because the members did not return the questionnaire sent out with this year's dues envelopes or did not fill them out fully. Members are included (or should have been) who had paid their Society dues by our production deadline. Hopefully we will be able to rectify any shortcomings in future versions of these publications.

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DONATION OF SPECIALISTS

by Rich Palaschak

The Society donated over twenty-five years of The Czechoslovak SPECIALIST to the Mizuhara Memorial Philatelic Museum in Japan. The Museum recently acknowledged our gift with a very nice letter of thanks. In it they asked me to pass along their thanks to our Society members. The donation was reported to their Board of Directors and recorded in their official publications. They also invited our Society's members to visit their museum. Its location and telephone number are:

Mizuhara Memorial Philatelic Museum
Philately Center Foundation
Mejiro 1-4-23, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 1/1, Japan
Telephone: 81 3 5951 3331

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CZECH OFFICIAL ENVELOPES - A BACK OF THE POFIS CATALOG ITEM by Savoy Horvath

In many countries -- including the United States -- official mail stamps and postal paper is used by federal agencies including the military. Many of our members have seen envelopes from social security offices with a metered official mail stamp. Some countries, e.g., Latvia, use official -- or as they are called elsewhere "SERVICE DES POSTES" -- envelopes for mail order delivery of postage stamps, etc., from their philatelic departments (Fig. 1).

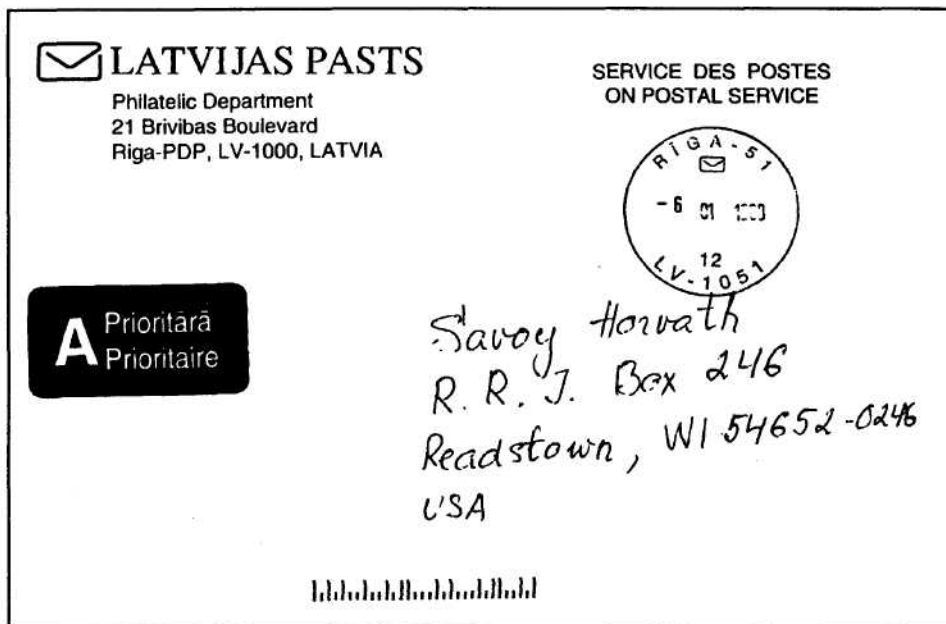


Fig. 1

ČSSR and ČSFR had -- and now the Czech Republic has -- official service envelopes, but with a very limited use. They are not for sale at any post offices or postal agencies. They have an imprinted stamp, but no value is shown. ČSSR and ČSFR had the envelopes cacheted on the lower left side, usually with some postal theme like a mail coach, etc. (Fig. 2).

Since 1982 the envelopes have been issued always in December for the sole purpose of New Years greetings of ministers and their deputies. Their usage is on the international and overseas level as well since the Czech Post minister also sends greetings to world postmasters.

The Czech official envelopes include a New Year greeting card in many languages (the Czech Republic issues have dropped the Russian). The cards have engravings by Czech masters, e.g., Švengsbir. The printing of envelopes varies between 500-1500, and they are free to the users. One can see them occasionally in Filatelie classifieds or at auctions averaging \$100 in mint condition without the greeting card -- used are much higher and seldom available.

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The envelopes are 110 x 220mm with +/- 5mm variance in size. The imprinted stamps are redrawn copies of Czech stamps -- some also have color

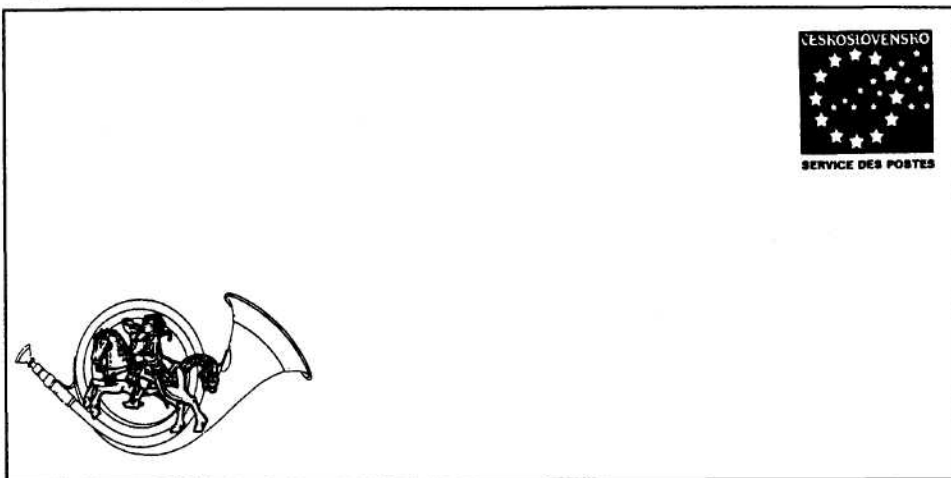


Fig. 2

changes. There is additional printing near the stamps saying "SERVICE DES POSTES".

The Czech Republic originally issued plain stamped envelopes but has now also cacheted them (Fig. 3). This one has an imprinted stamp from the PRAGA 98

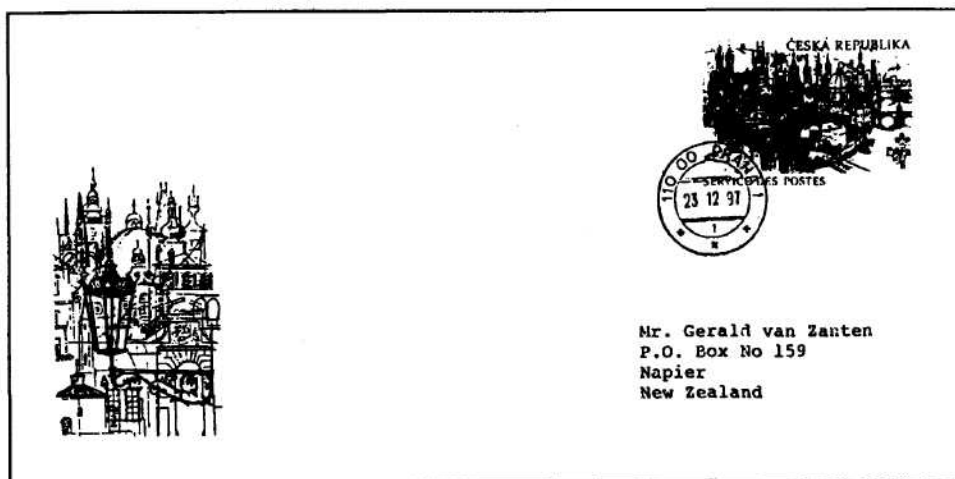


Fig. 3 [Thanks to Gerald van Zanten]

souvenir sheet without value. The cachet shows Prague's towers and an old fashioned gas lamp. Genuinely used envelopes can have -- besides the regular Prague cancel -- a special PRAGA 98 cancellation. These envelopes also differ from the others by being lined with brown tissue paper. The printing of all envelopes is

from flat steel engraved plates. They were issued in the following years only (the date is followed by the POFIS number of the stamp used for the imprint):

1982 (2581) 1983 (2584) 1985 (2689) 1986 (CDV198) 1987 (2794)
 1988 (2874) 1989 (2944) 1990 (2959) 1991 (2974) 1994 (CR 48)
 1997 (CR 101)

Another form of official postal envelope has recently appeared (Fig. 4) that differs from the above. This has a return address pre-printed, has a cellophane

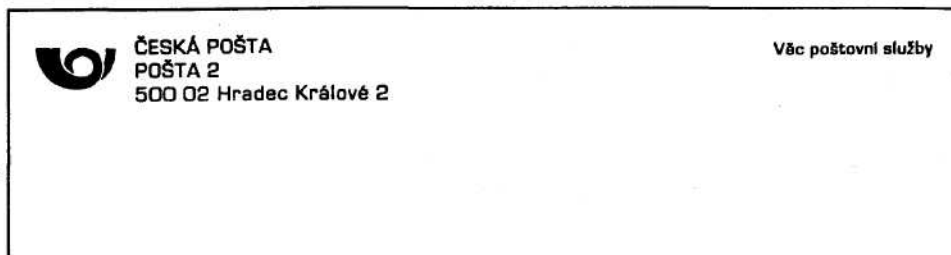


Fig. 4

address window, has no imprinted stamp, but has "Věc poštovní služby" (postal service business) in the place of the imprinted stamp. As we get more information on this version we will pass it on to you.

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CZECH AND SLOVAK EXHIBITS AT ISRAEL'98

by Henry Hahn

The ISRAEL'98 World Stamp Exhibition took place at the Israel Trade Fairs and Convention Center in Tel Aviv from May 13-21, 1998. The exhibit was held under the patronage of His Excellency Ezer Weizman, President of the State of Israel. The show was organized by the Israel Philatelic Federation under the patronage of FIP and the auspices of FEPA. Ing. Pavel Pittermann served as the juror from the Czech Republic while at the same time acting as Commissioner for the Czech Republic. MUDr. Petr Osusky acted as Commissioner for the Slovak Republic.

The exhibits were located in two large halls which also included a large number of dealer booths and country booths. Numerous parties and receptions took place, the highlight being the opening of the Israeli Postal Museum near the exhibition grounds. The Palmares took place at the Hilton Hotel located at Tel Aviv's magnificent sea shore. It was a luxurious affair, with relatively short speeches, a top notch orchestra, a superb floor show and plenty of dancing. Gran Prix, Special Awards, and competitive Large Gold and Gold awards were presented.

The Grand Prix National was won by Joseph Hackmey of Israel for "Holyland - Ottoman Period", The Grand Prix International by Gene Scott of the U.S. for "Uruguay, the Sun Issues, 1856-1862", and the Grand Prix d'Honneur by Edgar Kuphal of Germany for "Carriers and Locals in USA".

The table below lists the results of exhibits in competition relating to Czechoslovakia observed by this writer, who apologizes for any omissions.

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<u>NAME</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>AWARD</u>
Klein, J.L.	Netherlands	Czechoslovakia, 1918-1939	Trad.	Large Gold
Hahn, H.	USA	Czechoslovakia 1st Rep. 1918-39	Trad.	Gold
Brendl, L.	Czech Rep.	Troubled Times in Bohemia	Them.	Lg. Vermeil
Horak, J.	Czech Rep.	The Century of the Motor	Them.	Lg. Vermeil
Pytlíček, L.	Czech Rep.	Air-Mail Czechoslovakia	Air Mail	Lg. Vermeil
PROFIL	Czech Rep.	Mail Service in Terežín	Lit.	Lg. Vermeil
Vaníček, V.	Czech Rep.	Postal History of the Austro-Hungarian Navy	P. Hist.	Vermeil
Osusky, P.	Slov. Rep.	For the Glory of Sport	Them.	Vermeil
Wilhelms, G.	Germany	Die Tschechoslowakische Luft Post	Air Mail	Vermeil
Svatopluk, P.	Czech Rep.	Postlinien in Mähren 1785-1850	P. Hist.	Vermeil
Gata, O.	Slov. Rep.	Prestamp Period on Slovak Territory 1700-1850	P. Hist.	Lg. Silver
POFIS	Czech Rep.	1945-1992	Lit.	Silver
PROFIL	Czech Rep.	FILATELIE	Lit.	Silver
MERKUR R.	Czech Rep.	MERKUR REVUE	Lit.	Silver
Skolek, R.	Czech Rep.	Water Sports	Youth	Bronze

The above exhibitors are to be congratulated -- AND NOW ON TO PRAGA'98!



Otto Homung of Great Britain with Mrs. Homung along with Marilyn and Henry Hahn, all very much enjoying the Palmares. Mr. Homung (a British Czech Society supporter) showed his Ottoman Postal History in the FIP Championship Class.

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Eastern Europe	Zepp & Airposts (stamps/covers?)
Asia (specify country or region)	China (specify which)

We stock a strong Czechoslovakia inventory, including specialized material

We are knowledgeable & aggressive buyers of US/World Wide stamp and postal history collections

Send a long #10, 55¢ self-addressed, stamped envelope for free pricelists (\$1.00 for overseas).

Michael Rogers is a member of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately



MORE POSTAL CARD FORGERIES TO DEFRAUD THE POSTAL SERVICE

by RNDr. Miroslav Vostatek
trans. by Henry Hahn

In the Mar/Apr 1998 issue we reported on the discovery of forgeries in the Czech 4 Kč postal card titled "The Problems of the Blind and Partially Sighted."

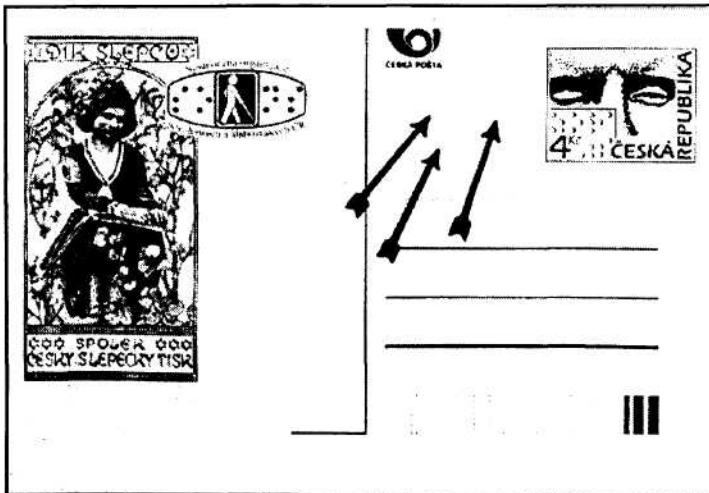
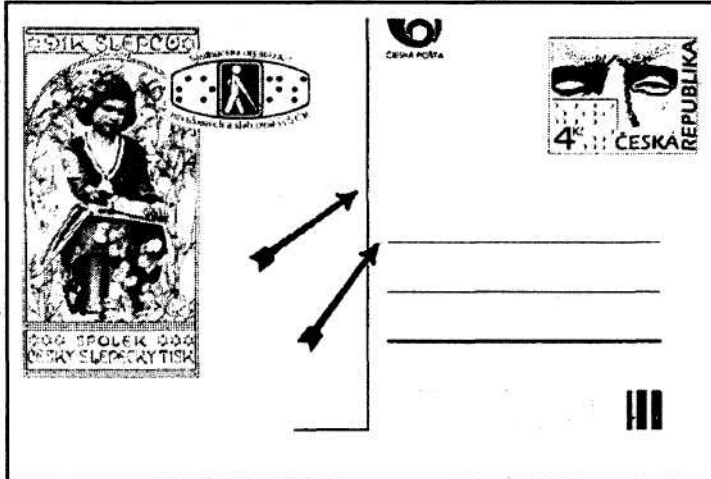
Now, in March, additional forgeries have been found from the areas of Pardubice and Chrudim. The new forgeries differ from those reported previously in that they have microtext in the first address line which is now of better quality than that found on the genuine postal card. However, the printing of the characters in the

line is so thin and weak that in places it appears the periods between the microprinted words and dates are missing, e.g., ... ČESKÁ POŠTA PTC 1997 ČESKÁ ... versus ... ČESKÁ POŠTA • PTC • 1997 • ČESKÁ ...

Meanwhile it seems to me there are three separately printed forgeries because

repeating "dots" appear in three different places. The two examples being reported on here have fine dots - observable under magnification -- located at the arrows in the accompanying figures.

The entire matter demonstrates that microtext in an address line is no defense against forgers.



COVER OF THE MONTH

by Jaroslav Verner

This past new year brought forth a new feature on our Society's World-Wide Web site (<http://www.erols.com/sibpost>). Beginning in January 1998 we began featuring an interesting Czechoslovakia related cover. There has been a new cover each month. There is no particular order to the covers, the sources will vary as will the day of the month they appear (we will try to get it up as close to the first of the month as possible). The covers will be in color and have an accompanying explanatory text.

We invite both members of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately as well as any site visitor to submit candidates for the Cover of the Month feature. Covers can be market "valuable" or not, but they must be interesting. To be considered, we will need a write-up of the cover, the loan of the cover itself (so we can scan it into our system) or an excellent color copy. Before submitting a cover, please contact us so we can work out the details. We hope to be inundated with excellent candidates for this feature.

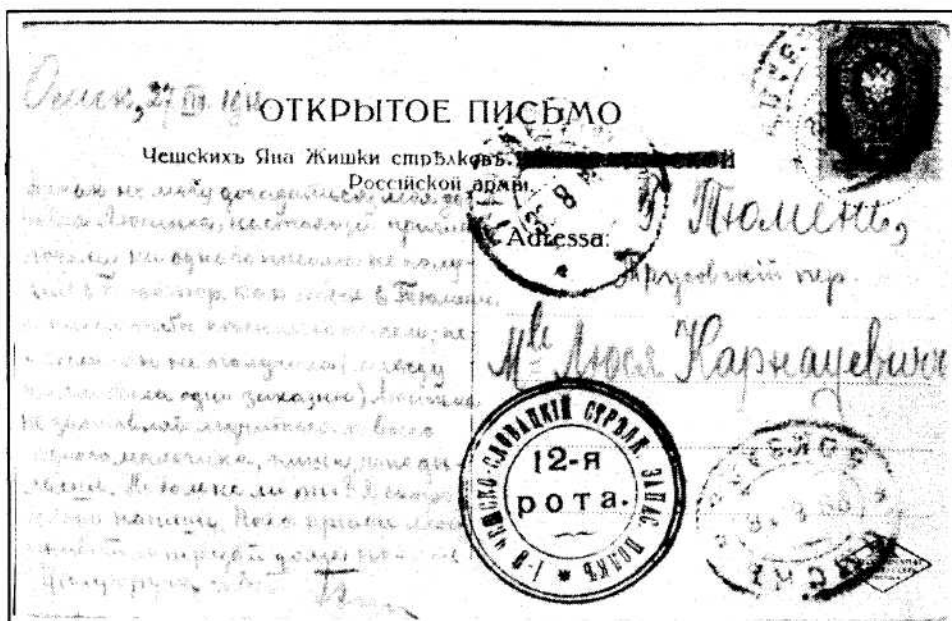


Fig. 1 - Post card prepared for the "Czech Jan Žižka Infantrymen" by the Czech Committee in Moscow. It was used by a Legionnaire to write to his lady friend. This "forerunner" to the Czechoslovak Siberian Field Post was written in Omsk on August 27, 1917, sent from the Omsk railroad station on August 28 to Tyumen, where it was received on August 30. The round, blue, unit cancel of the 12th Company, 1st Czechoslovak Reserve Infantry Regiment indicates censorship by the sender's unit.

The Cover of the Month feature opened with the cover in Figure 1. It was chosen only because I had recently purchased it in a Prague auction and was preparing it for my collection. I consider this a very interesting "forerunner" usage. It is made

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even more interesting by the fact that it is on a post card which was prepared for use by:

Чешскихъ Яна Жишки стрѣлковъ ИМПЕРАТОРСКОЙ
Россійской арміи

(Czech Jan Žižka Infantrymen)
(Imperial Russian Army)

It should be noted that the word "Imperial" is scratched out, because the card was used only after the Russian Empire no longer existed. The obverse of this card shows Žižka on his steed.

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

CZECH POSTS OTHER PRODUCTS by Savoy Horvath

Czechoslovakia and now the Czech and Slovak Republic's post offices have always supplemented their income by the sale of stationery, envelopes, greeting cards, and their locale's picture post cards.

In the summer of 1997 the Czech Post added to their mix of products picture post cards showing a group of already issued stamps superimposed on a nature scene



Fig. 1

Fig. 3

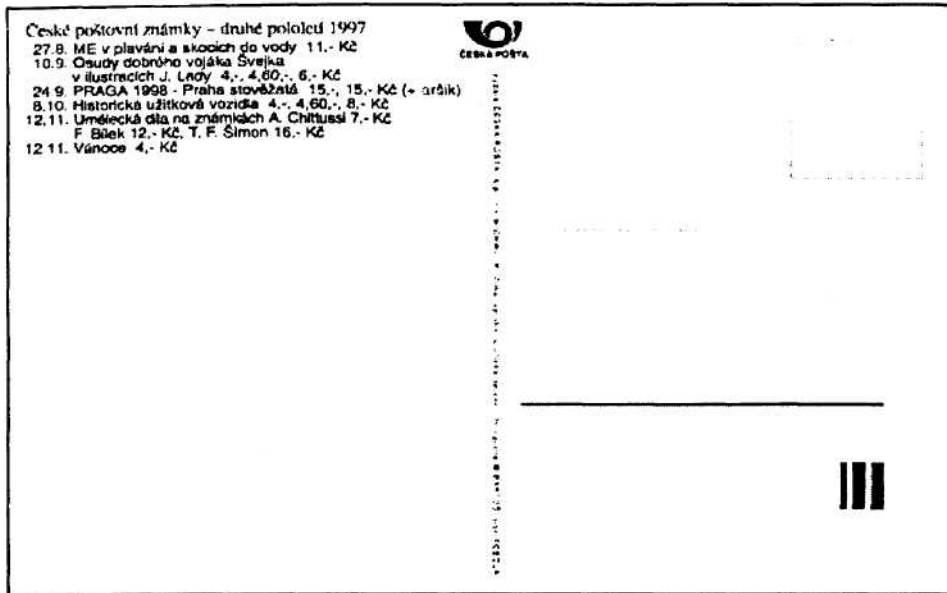


Fig. 2

(Fig. 1). Then on the message side they announced the next six months of the upcoming stamp program (Fig. 2). The second example (Fig. 3) has an aerial view of Prague with the two new 15 Kč PRAGA 98 stamps superimposed. The message side shows the Czech stamp program for the first six months of 1998 (Fig. 4). They sell for 6 Kč apiece.

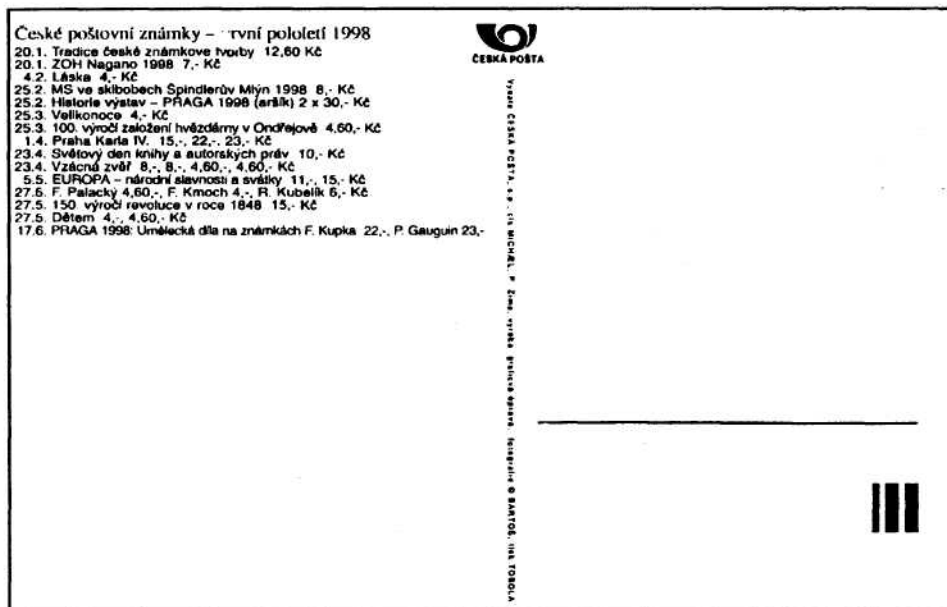


Fig. 4



Fig 5

Another new item is a set of 8 picture post cards -- each with a different color background -- and each showing Czech stamps with a particular philatelic topic. Card 1 portrays art stamps issued since 1990 (background color is olive green)(Fig. 5); card 2 shows Czech architecture (dark wine); card 3 shows famous personalities (dark purple); card 4 shows sports (dark red); card 5 shows antiques -- cars, planes, and trains (dark blue-green); card 6 shows nature -- insects, rodents, and birds (dark green); card 7 shows children issues and dinosaurs (blue); and card 8 shows religious themes (dark mustard). In the upper left hand corner of the message side is shown the sequence number of the card in a circle. Each card carries a statement "Issued by the Business Centrum of Posts PRAHA 1 and 2" and then the name of the printer. A total of 7,500 sets were issued. They were selling for 3 Kč per card, which today is less than 10¢.

They also sell envelopes that have the address areas prepared for proper addressing -- obviously designed by the postal administration to encourage that the piece of mail be properly addressed for easy processing and delivery (Fig. 6).

None of these items has postage imprinted, and thus, stamps have to be purchased and applied before the item can be mailed. All envelopes and picture post cards are privately printed and some have the Czech Post logo (the post horn) printed on the address side.

Recently appearing is a set of plasticized pocket calendars (about 3" tall by 2" wide, about the size of bridge playing cards) which show previously issued stamps -- minus their denomination -- displayed on their back (Fig. 7).

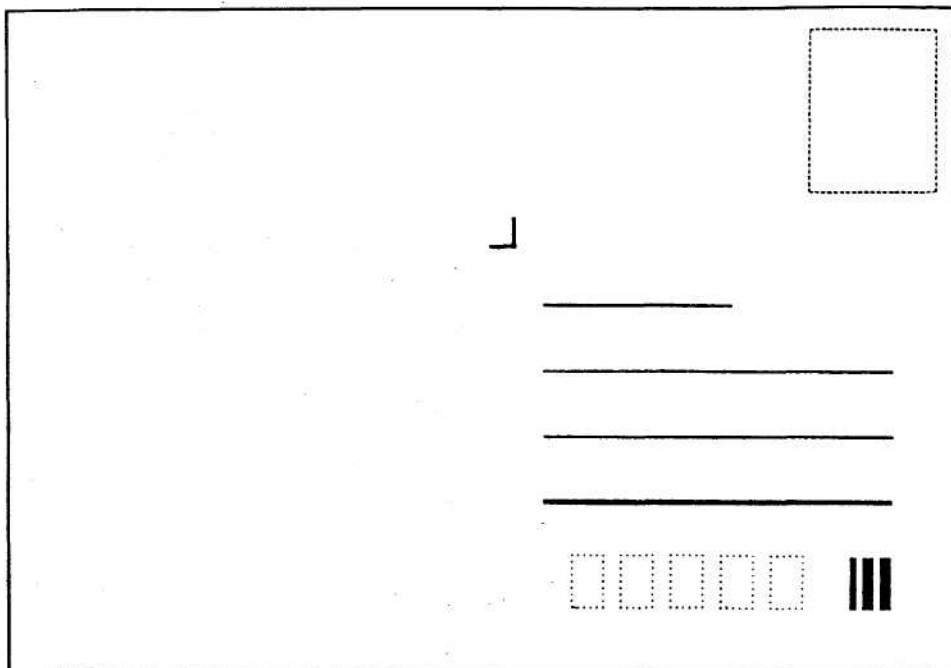


Fig. 6

And finally, they have issued a large (20" x 13") 1998 wall calendar in color titled "60 Years of Stamp Exhibitions PRAGA • 1938-1998". It contains excellent color reproductions of all of the souvenir sheets from the previous six PRAGA exhibitions: PRAGA 38 - the Vondrouš/Seizinger two stamp s/s; PRAGA 55 - the Stretti/Sukdolák/Švengsbir 5 stamp s/s; PRAGA 62 - the Liesler/Jirka and Bouda/Jindra 5 Kč souvenir sheets; PRAGA 68 - the Svengsbir 5 Kč and 10 Kč souvenir sheets; PRAGA 78 - the 10 Kč Herčík and 20 Kč Ondráček souvenir sheets; PRAGA 88 - the 5 Kč Ondráček and 10 Kč Fajt souvenir sheets. The cover shows the PRAGA 98 souvenir sheet with the two 15 Kč views of Prague. The calendar is printed on quality paper and sells for 130 Kč at selected post offices.



Fig. 7

Jiří Majer
and
Jaroslav Thraumb Auctions

will conduct
their sixth auction during

PRAGA 98

Friday, Sept. 11, 1 p.m.

with the hope that many of our overseas customers
attending the exhibition will be able to attend in person.

This auction will be especially strong on progress
proofs, proofs, and classics of Czechoslovakia.

Catalogs will be available to all previous bidders in
early August. Others may receive a copy for this auction
by contacting our American agents or writing us directly.

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President's Corner
(Continued from Page 1)

You will also have noticed, I am sure, that the *SPECIALIST* has gotten fatter of late. This is due to the hard work of our editor and all the writers, translators, and others who help in the production and distribution of this fine publication. Even though Lou has had sufficient material for the publication of late, articles are always needed. We would especially like to have original articles on any aspect of Czechoslovak philately.

During this past year there has been great interest in purchasing back issues of the *SPECIALIST*. These sales are handled by our Librarian, Richard Palaschak, and I urge those of you who have been considering filling out your holdings of the *SPECIALIST* to act quickly since there are very

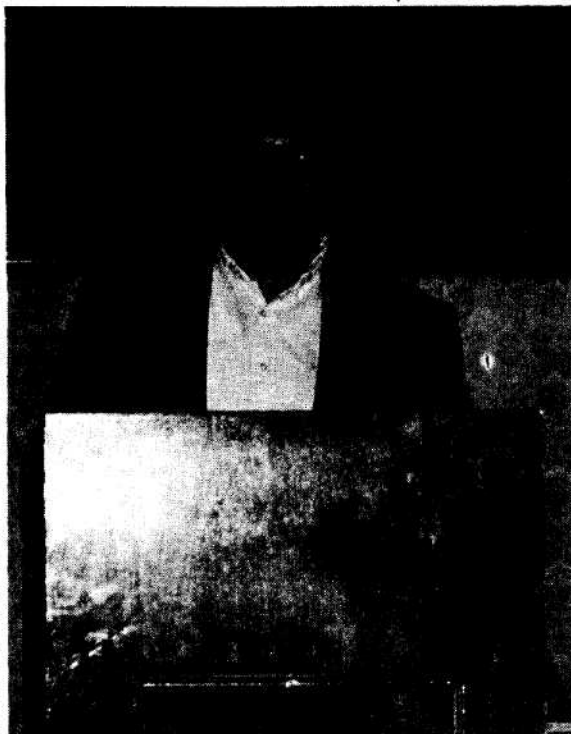


Figure 1. Our guest speaker, John Miskevich, enlightening us on the airmail routes and rates from Czechoslovakia to the New World and beyond.



Figure 2. The usual motley crew manning our Society table. L to R: Lou Svoboda, Bob Koschak, Ed Lehecka, Jerry Verner (above), Helen Garancovsky, Mark Garancovsky (above), Frank Garancovsky, Tony Strechansky.

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limited numbers of many issues. Back issues of the *SPECIALIST* are a treasure trove of information on all aspects of our hobby, and this trove is easily accessible through the 50 year index, also available through the Society.



Figure 3. A friendly breakfast meeting on the veranda by the river. L to R: (seated) Lois Verner, Helen Garancovsky, Anne Vondra; (standing) Lou Svoboda, Tony Strechansky, Bob Koschalk, Mirko Vondra, Frank Garancovsky, Jerry Verner.

Finally, I would like to mention the Society circuits which have been very popular and effective vehicles for Society members to dispose of their duplicate or unneeded Czechoslovak material. Our current problem with this service is a lack of material. There are buyers out there! Contact Alan Hoover for details.

The Society business meeting at NOJEX was followed by an excellent lecture by John Miskevich on Czechoslovak foreign air mail routes. In his illustrated lecture he explained the routings of Czechoslovak air mail from the first flights through World War II. John has graciously agreed to turn this talk into articles for the *SPECIALIST* so those of you who were not able to make the annual meeting will not lose the benefit of his extensive research.

NOJEX was a very well run show, though this was not easy since the show hotel had overbooked their facilities and were constantly changing rooms for the various events. The organizers, however, were responsive to our needs.

Our exhibiting members were fortunate that the jury, which included our members, Dom Riccio and Henry Hahn as Chairman, understood the material they were judging. This is not always true at these exhibits. You will find a report on the Czechoslovak related exhibits and how our members fared appended to my column.

I would like to share a tale of a snafu that wasn't, thanks to the U.S. Post Office. The Society now has very handsome medals, and they were to be used for the first time at NOJEX. Unfortunately they did not get packed for the trip to New Jersey, and it looked like presentations would have to be made by mail. One of our members who was returning to Northern Virginia on Saturday had agreed to try to ship them FedEx or some other courier service. When he tried to ship via the private sector firms, he was informed that they do not deliver in Secaucus, New Jersey, on Sunday.



Figure 4. Jerry Verner showing his NOJEX Reserve Grand Award to NOJEX Jury Chairman, Henry Hahn.

He then turned to the U.S. Post Office. The clerk checked the schedules and said "No problem, we'll have it there by 2 P.M." In point of fact, the parcel was at the hotel by 11 A.M. Sunday. It was a pleasure to inform both the Postmaster of Secaucus, who had a sales point at the exhibit, and attendees at the Awards Banquet that our much maligned postal system was able to deliver when its private sector competitors could not.

Our next general meeting of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately will be a first ever meeting outside the United States for our organization. We will meet for dinner on September 9 in Prague, where PRAGA 98 will open the following day. This will be an excellent opportunity for our members from many countries to come together to re-new old friendships and make new ones. We especially look forward to having our European members to join us on this occasion.

Jaroslav Verner

Below are listed the exhibits by members of the SCP as well as those by others that had exhibits in the Czechoslovakia area.

NAME	TITLE OF EXHIBIT	CLASS/AWARD
Henry Hahn	Austrian Pneumatic Mails of Vienna, Prague and Karlsbad	Court of Honor
Dominick Riccio	Czech Republic Selected Pages	Court of Honor
Jaroslav Verner	Czechoslovak Field Post in Italy, France, and Slovakia	NOJEX Reserve Grand, SCP Gold Medal, NOJEX Gold Medal, Postal History Society - Post Horn Award
James Lewis	German Military Mail in Bohemia-Moravia, 1939-45	NOJEX Section Award - Czechoslovakia, NOJEX Vermeil Medal, SCP Silver Medal
Mirko Vondra	Overprints on Stamps of Czechoslovakia	NOJEX Vermeil Medal, SCP Bronze Medal

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Robert Koschalk	German Occupation of Czechoslovakia 1939-45	NOJEX Vermeil Medal
Richard Green	Prestamp Postmarks of Moravia & Silesia	NOJEX Silver Medal
Phillips B. Freer	Masaryk on Stamps, Covers, and Postal Stationery	NOJEX Special Studies Silver Medal

* * * * *

THE CONTRACT POST OFFICE (UPDATE)

by Karel Holoubek
trans. by Ludvik Svoboda

*[Ed. Note: This is a follow up article to the one that appeared
in the Mar/Apr 1998 issue.]*

I am providing a supplement to the previous information about contract post offices (CPOs). This new information -- provided in the tables below -- covers those that were established in the meantime. Included in the second table is some new information about the previous CPOs that has since become available.

<u>ZIP CODE *</u>	<u>CPO Name</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Accountable Post Office</u>
687 99, 687 64	Slavkov	1997 1.10.	Horní Němčí
333 10	Honezovice	1997 1.9.	Stod

<u>ZIP CODE</u>	<u>CPO Name</u>	<u>Additional Change</u>
696 99, 695 01	Velké Mikulčice	Taken over by Velkomoravské Mikulčice
530 50, 530 02	Pardubice 50	
280 09	Kolín 40	Totally shut down 1.12.96
348 98, 348 02	Bor - Vysočany	
	Pozlovice	
542 91	Sněžka	
463 99	Kobyly	
348 99, 347 01	Lesná u Tachova	
281 64	Ždánice	
691 99	Dobré Pole	
757 10	Valašské Meziříčí 50	
430 08, 430 01	Chomutov 50	
471 99	Sosnová	
756 60	Rožnov pod Radhoštěm	
	Bulovka	Transition to a CPO did not take place

* The second ZIP Code was only used during transition.

Philatelic News & Views

From Savoy Horvath:

- The Czech postal authorities have put into use a special horizontal coil commemorative registry label with the PRAGA 98 logo (Fig. 1). It is for use from February 1 to September 13, 1998, at post office PRAGA 6 with ZIP code 11006. It has the PRAGA 98 logo, lettering, and numbers in blue with the remainder in red.

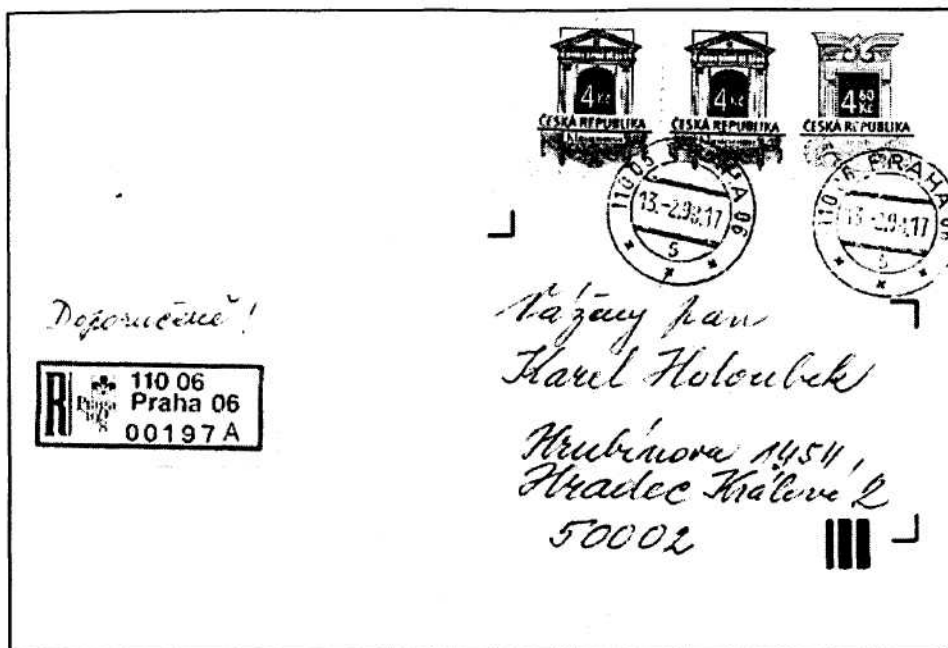


Fig. 1

- Early in April the Czech daily newspaper DNES (Today) ran a short article noting that the Czech Post is issuing a postage stamp portraying the First Lady, Dagmar Havel (Fig. 2). I heard from two different collector friends that lines formed while it was still dark since the daily hit the newstands at midnight. With President Havel in and out of the hospital constantly and the Nagano gold in hockey souvenir sheet being issued on April 1st, nobody realized that this stamp was an April Fool's joke!! No such stamp was every intended to be issued.

- On Jan 1, 1998, the ČR issued a PAMĚTNÍ TISK (Commemorative Print) for the 5th anniversary of the Czech Republic (Fig. 3). There were 50,000 printed, they sold for 50 Kč, and sold out in the first week. The print is the size and paper weight of a postal card. The top half of the print shows an unissued stamp design which was turned down as the 1st ČR issue. The bottom half contains the 1st ČR issue applied along with two similar looking cancels from 1/1/93 and 1/1/98. The prints are numbered and were engraved by Josef Herčík.



Fig. 2

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

The development of ČR stamp booklets has gone through an interesting but laboured evolution. There are actually three types of booklets. First, with each stamp issue they also issue makeshift booklets that have printed cardboard covers with five stamps enclosed that are attached by the sheet margin. The stamps in this case were simply torn out of the regular printed sheets of 50, etc. The printed quantity of these booklets varies from as low as 5,000 to some as high as 300,000. Then there are commemorative booklets similar to the above except that these are numbered and have much nicer covers. In addition, the stamp sheet margin has an overprint -- usually philatelic. I have one such booklet which only had a printing run of 700. Finally, there are the real booklets with stamps specifically printed for booklet inclusion. Typically they have eight or more

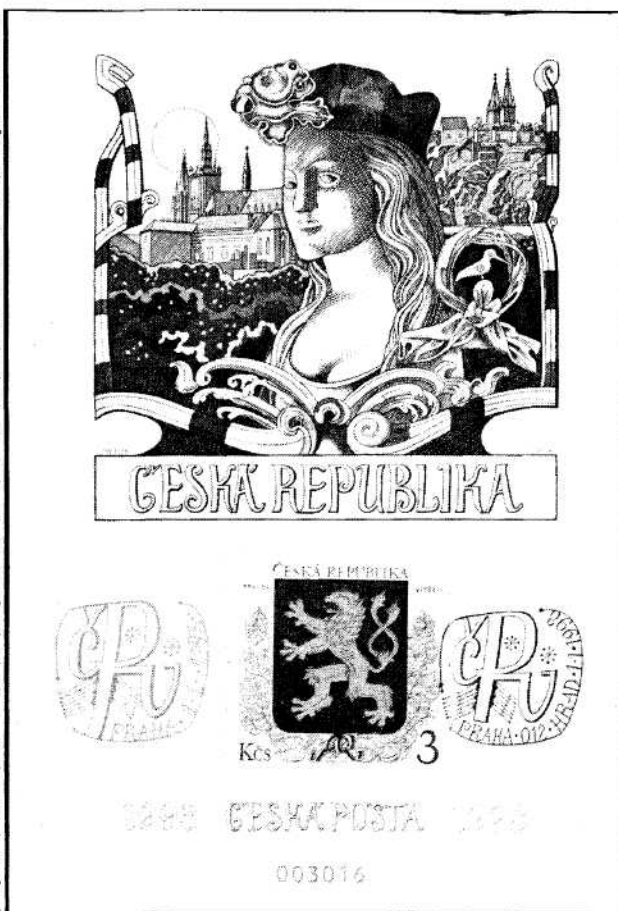


Fig. 3

stamps that have a perfed margin all the way around and are perfed in the middle of the selvage for easy folding into the booklet. The first issue scheduled to be produced in this last way was the Good Soldier Svejk issue of 1997. Booklet production problems caused extensive delays from September 1997 to November and then finally until release in February 1998.

- The 12.60 Kč stamp entitled "The Tradition of Czech Stamp Production" issued 1/1/98 represents the rate to send a domestic registered letter. The new kind of booklet pane was used on this issue (Fig. 4).

- Czech philatelists were asked to vote for the best Czech stamp of 1997. The 7 Kč Art on Stamp issue showing "Landscape with Chateau in Chantilly" by Antonín Chittussi was the winner. It was issued 11/12/97.

- I'm slowly gathering information on varieties of the ČR's first definitive issue picturing cities. The 1 Kč České Budějovice was reprinted last year on white paper. The 2 Kč Ústí n. Labem was reprinted in a reddish color, and the 8 Kč Olomouc now has its value of 8 printed in light yellow. I went through hundreds of used copies of



Fig. 4

these issues and found big differences in color shifts and the thickness of the value numbers.

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PRAGA UPDATE

by Jaroslav J. Verner

It is good to report that 27 American collectors had their exhibits accepted for PRAGA 98. Of these, eleven were members of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately (Fischer, Fischmeister, Hahn, Koschalk, Riccio, Sandrik, Stupell, Svoboda, Unwin, Verner, and Vondra) -- several exhibiting internationally for the first time. Even though PRAGA 98 is not a full fledged FIP show, at their meeting during MOSCOW 97 the FIP directors agreed to the request of the Union of Czech Philatelists that the medals awarded at PRAGA would be recognized as qualifying medals for future FIP shows. This decision makes exhibiting at PRAGA 98 a very wise move on the part of aspiring international exhibitors.

The program is still tentative in some of the details and will probably remain so until just before the show begins. However, there are enough fixed events and activities to convince anyone that there will be plenty to do for our members attending the show. In addition to the events listed below there will be meetings with designers and engravers of Czech stamps, mail carrying balloon flights, activities for young philatelists, and daily meetings of philatelic organizations. Right now the schedule looks like this:

September 9	1000 -- Meeting of Board of Directors 1900 -- Society for Czechoslovak Philately dinner at Na Poříčí Restaurant (tickets are available from our Treasurer Ed Lehecka for \$15 each)
September 10	PRAGA 98 opens
September 11	Olympic Day -- Meetings with Czech Olympic athletes Evening -- Vltava river dinner cruise (reservations from Cedok)
September 12	1300-1800 -- Congress of Collectors of Czechoslovak Stamps, Auditorium, Faculty of Pedagogy, Charles University, M.D. Rettigové Street (Praha Center) (Speakers) P. Pittermann - Rarities of Czechoslovak Stamps J. Verner - 80th Anniversary of Siberian Field Post ARGE Tschechoslowakei - Czechoslovakia -- 1945 2000 -- PALMARES, Hotel Ambassador, Václavské Náměstí (\$80 per person, reservations required)

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September 13 Postal History Day - Historical mail coach will carry mail
Afternoon - PRAGA 98 closes

In addition to the above activities the holdings of the Postal Museum may be viewed as well as participating in the first public showing of the National Museum's collection of Austrian revenue stamps. For the philatelists interested in enhancing their collections, there will be auctions by Majer & Thraumb on September 11th and by Profil on the 12th. Dealers will have booths in the Exhibition Palace, and there will be a bourse a couple of blocks from the Exhibition.

For those not drawn to exhibits, booths and bourses, the Čedok travel agency is offering tours in and outside of Prague at very reasonable prices.

Perhaps the first time traveler might find a few suggestions I have found useful when traveling to Prague:

- Credit cards are in general use and give about the best exchange rate. Use them especially in hotels, restaurants, and shops that cater to tourists, of which there are many.

- American Express has a bank on Václavské Náměstí which will exchange American Express Travelers Cheques into Krouns at the going daily bank rate without charging the usual exchange fee. Beware of this exchange fee at the ubiquitous exchange booths you will find around town. It can run to several percent of the amount you exchange.

- Make sure that you bring at least one pair of well broken in walking shoes. You will be doing quite a bit of walking and much of it will be on cobblestone sidewalks and streets that are death to anything but flatbottomed shoes.

- Avoid taxis when possible. There was a real problem last year with terrible over-charging of foreigners -- and worse. Some recommendations here would be to have the hotel or restaurant order the taxi for you, agree to a fare before you get into the cab, always make sure that the taxi has a working meter, never catch a cab at other than a taxi stand, and never take a taxi unless it looks like a professional one not a private one.

- The underground metro and the streetcar systems are inexpensive and run frequently. These -- plus the buses to the suburbs -- will allow you to reach virtually anywhere in the city. However, to use them you need to buy a ticket and have it with you while you ride. No one collects tickets, but there are spot checks, and if you don't have a current ticket you can be fined 1,000 Kč (\$30) as a tourist. You can get tickets at metro stations, news stands or tabak (tobacco) shops. Buy the 12 kroun ticket which will allow you to transfer up to an hour after your initial ride. When you get on the metro or the streetcar look for a small box, slide the ticket in the slot, and an expiration time will be stamped on it. Hotels have maps of the city which include public transportation routes. All stops have placards with time and routes listed. When setting off to a new destination, ask at your hotel for the best connections.

- If you have not made arrangements to be met at the airport, take the airport vans to your hotel - not a taxi. The vans have a fixed rate and have been reported to work well.

- I strongly recommend you buy one of the several good, current books on Prague. You can get these in any good book store here in the United States. Many of the same books are also available in Prague, but a little reading ahead of time will prove to be a good investment. I rather like the Baedeker *Czech/Slovak Republics*, but there are several other good ones.

Finally, given there will be a great deal to do during PRAGA 98, both philatelic and tourist, we can already hear the plaintive cry: "Where do I start?"

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THE TOWER OF THE PRAGUE LORETTO

by G. M. van Zanten

In the Sept/Oct 1996 issue of the SPECIALIST, under the heading NEW ISSUES, brief mention was made of the 9 Kč stamp showing the Prague Loretto Tower.

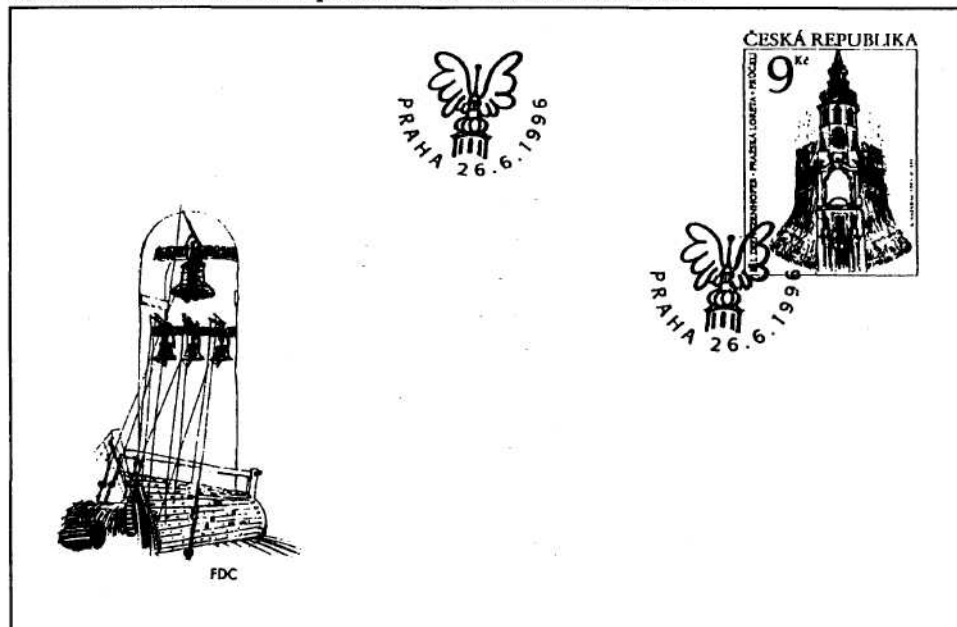
This baroque tower dominates the entire Loretto building, which was founded in 1626 by Benigna Kateřina of Lobkovice.

The lower part of the tower is tetragonal in form, the upper two floors have an octagonal form, the whole is supplanted with an onion shaped copula having an open lantern.

Besides a clock, the tower comprises a carillon which was purchased in Holland in 1694 by a rich merchant of the Lesser Town, Eberhard of Glauchov. The carillon had been ordered from Claudy Fremy (K Fromm), town bell and cannon maker of Amsterdam. In 1694 Fremy supplied thirty bells weighing 3000 pounds in total.

The bells were solemnly blessed in 1695 with the participation of the high ranking Czech nobility, clergy and benefactors of the Loretto. The Prague clockmaker, Petr Neuman, set the carillon working. It is operated by an intricate clockwork mechanism, shown simplified on the left side of the FDC for the above mentioned stamp (see figure). It may also be worked by a keyboard in a special area of the tower. The carillon can play pieces having a range of two octaves. The playing mechanism -- basically a metal cylinder with pegs that put into motion the pull-rods connected to the bell hammers -- has several musical variations. It usually plays every hour, on the hour, and a song in praise of the Virgin Mary, "A Thousand Times We Hail Thee". The carillon was first heard on August 15, 1695.

In addition to the above FDC with stamp, a card depicting the Loretto was issued in 1996 as one in a pictorial set -- it's number is A44.



PROMOTING CZECH PHILATELY IN THE USA

by Mirko Vondra

The Chicagoland Branch of our Society contains within its orbit a small splinter group called the First Czechoslovak Philatelic Club of America (F.C.P.C.A.). Organized and founded by the late Joseph J. Janečka Jr., this tiny group of patriotic Americans of Czech and Slovak extraction has continually appeared in the foreground in promoting and publicizing Czech philately in this country. J. J. Janečka himself set the pace for such activity by creating an oversized metal replica of the U.S. Champion of Liberty stamp of T. G. Masaryk in 1960 (see *SPECIALIST* for Sept/Oct 1991, pages 4-6). That replica has since been donated to the

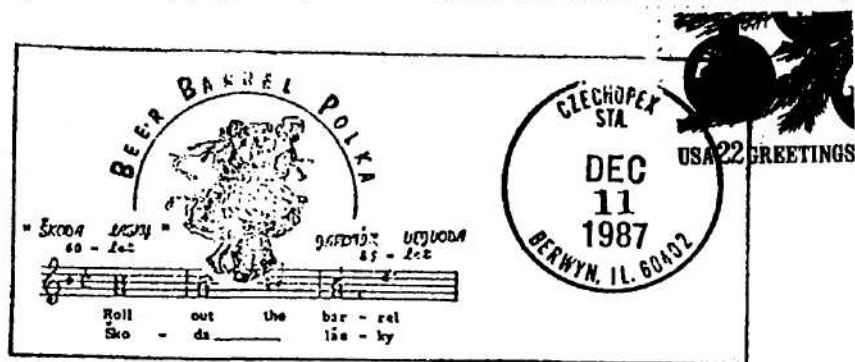


Fig. 1

Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. where it languishes in its storage compartment. The Institute would serve its donors well by relinquishing, at least temporarily, its possession of that fine piece of metallurgic art by allowing our Society to display it at the International Philatelic Show at PRAGA 98 this coming September.

With the demise of Janečka, others have taken over and for the past two decades have concentrated on making special cancellations authorized for use by the Berwyn Post Office located in the suburbs of Chicago. These of course are private local

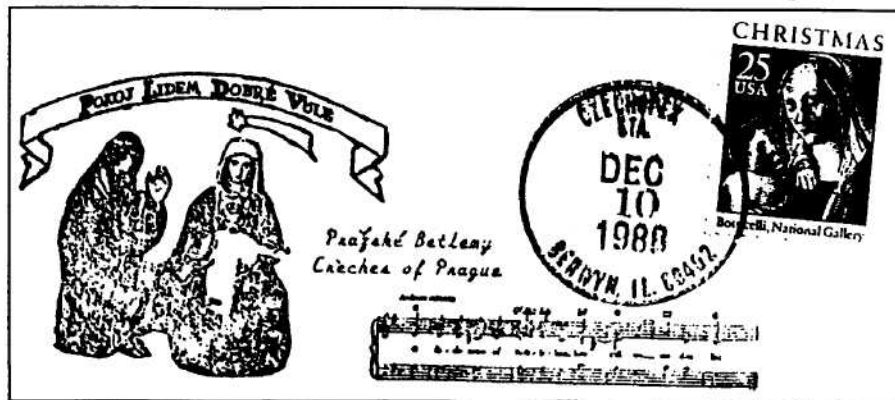


Fig. 2

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

cancellations, NOT official ones approved by the Postmaster General's Office. Nonetheless they have served to publicize Czech philately in that part of the country. Just to list a few, there was the Beer Barrel Polka cancel of Dec. 1987 (Fig. 1), the Manger Scene of Dec. 1988 (Fig. 2), the memorial to Josef Maneš of Dec. 1991 (Fig. 3), and the St. Nicholas (Svatý Mikuláš) cancel of Dec. 1997 (Fig. 4). Currently the F.C.P.C.A. is headed by Joe Vitek, President, and by our own honorary and longtime member, Jane Sterba, secretary.

Recently, publicizing Czech philately in our country has come from sources outside our own Society. Most notable among such efforts has been a decision by the Czech Heritage Foundation located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to circulate a sample letter among many of the Czech Americans in and around that area to urge the issuance of a new U.S. postage stamp honoring the Czech & Slovak National Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids. The opening ceremonies of this fine structural tribute to Czechs and Slovaks in the U.S. was covered in my article in the Jan/Feb 1996 *SPECIALIST*, p.1. A picture of the building is shown on p. 17, same issue. The sample letter suggests as the theme for a stamp "the Museum's logo created by a local Czech artist who was one of the 200 folk artists for National Endowment of the Arts." Interested persons desiring to write such letters were advised to address them to: Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, c/o United States Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza Southwest, Washington, D.C. 20260-2436.



Fig. 3

When I received a copy of the sample letter, I quickly realized the well-founded noble intentions of the Foundation, but also recognized the futility of that effort. After I discussed it with several of our members, we agreed that a more plausible and potentially successful approach would have been to urge the Committee to have a picture of the Museum shown as a 20-cent stamp imprint on a U.S. postal card with the full name of the building shown below the picture much as the recent postal cards illustrating such important landmarks as Healy Hall at Georgetown University (1988), Jane Addams' Hull House (1989), the Isaac Royall House (1990), Chicago's Orchestra Hall (1990), New York's Carnegie Hall (1991), Holocaust Memorial Museum (1992), St. Louis Union Station (1994) and a host of others. Even

more dramatic would be issuing a postal card jointly with a similar one issued by the Czech Republic. This kind of joint undertaking occurred in 1986 when the U.S. Postal Service issued jointly with the Government of Italy a postal card honoring Col. Francesco Vigo whose statue and monument at Vincennes, Indiana, appears on the card. The Roma Filatelico was instrumental in this successful joint venture.

In one respect it is commendable that splinter groups and non-philatelic organizations take enough interest to foster the growth and recognition of Czech philately in a nation as great as ours. This is true even though, in instances such as the Czech and Slovak National Museum & Library, the motive is the promoting of a Czech and Slovak cultural landmark rather than philately itself. But where non-philatelic interests overlap with philately, it would seem more prudent for the non-philatelic organization to consult with and seek advice from our own Society which, after all, is the leading organization on Czech and Slovak philately in this country if not the world outside of the Czech Republic itself. Of course, there is no hard and fast rule governing such procedure. It is a matter of communication and cooperation between our own Society and those outside the Society who have the interest and good will at heart to make their own overlapping causes known.

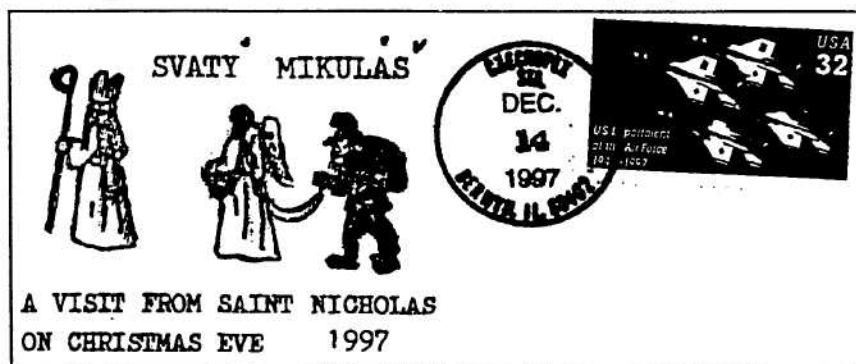



Fig. 4

Perhaps in the final analysis, part of the blame lies in our own Society's failure to make known the expertise and counseling that may be found here through our various publications and through our worldwide periodical *THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST*.


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A NEW SOUVENIR SHEET VARIETY

by Frank Garancovsky

There is a second variety of the 55th Anniversary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party souvenir sheet issue (Scott #2070/POFIS #A2205).

The Type II is readily identified by two prominent blue stains. The first is to the left of the 5th line of text of the inscription under the perforated stamp. The second one -- a larger one -- is shaped like a lower case letter "n" with a flared left leg and located left and between the 6th and 7th line of the inscription. The blue stains are the same shade of blue used in printing the entire inscription. There is also a blue dot located below the "N" of the word "STRANA" on the 1st line of the inscription.

In addition, the vertical line of the gold linden tree trunk touches the letters "H" of "OSTATNICH" and the "V" of "GUSTAV". The top left leaf outline runs through the "Z" of "NEZ" in the 1st line of the inscription. The other leaves are also shifted proportionately.

In Type I, the vertical

linden tree trunk line runs between the "H" and "P" of "OSTATNICH PRACUJICICH" and outside of the "V" in "GUSTAV". The top left leaf's left outline clears the "Z" in "NEZ".

An embossed logo centered at the bottom of the souvenir sheet does not lend itself to photocopying. However, in Type II, sight an imaginary line extending down from the linden tree trunk to the logo. The logo is shifted 2mm to the left. In Type I, the logo shifts to the right of the imaginary vertical center line.

Further observation shows that the printing of the inscription in Type II begins exactly below the 11th bottom



Figure 1: Type I



Figure 2: Type II

perforation. In Type I the printing begins between the 10th and 11th perforation.

Obviously this is not a plate flaw since the stamps in both types are identical. This may have been a two part printing operation, first the stamp followed by the second phase of printing the inscription. Somewhere during this second stage there was a paper shift or machine malfunction that resulted in a Type II variety. It would be interesting to know of other discoveries.

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THE WELL KEPT SECRET

by Ludvik Svoboda

I have been editor of the *SPECIALIST* now for a year and a half. During this time I have received numerous queries from members and others about various aspects of Czechoslovak philately. Typically they are relatively simple, and I can answer them off the top of my head. But every once in a while they delve into some rather esoteric areas that demand a significant level of time and effort in order to prepare a proper response. Whether or not I can respond depends on the extent of my interest in the topic and my current level of commitment to other projects.

But whether I answer the question or not, I always bring to the writers attention the fact that the Society has gone to great lengths to provide the tools for members to answer their own questions.

I am referring, of course, to the Society's library, to our system for purchasing back issues of the *SPECIALIST* for ridiculously cheap prices, AND to one other item which is really the key to anyone doing research of any kind in the Czechoslovak philatelic area -- the CUMULATIVE INDEX OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK *SPECIALIST* 1939-1992, compiled by professional librarian, Anne Vondra.

This is a tool that every serious collector and researcher cannot do without. It is a professionally choreographed and very impressively produced spiral-bound book that encapsulates the first 54 years of our publication -- The *SPECIALIST*. In its 114 pages of extensively cross referenced data you will be able to locate Czechoslovak philatelic subjects in a variety of ways. Then, a simple and inexpensive request to our librarian will put the required issues or copies of articles into your hands.

So why is this a well kept secret? Because the Society has neglected to advertise the existence of this publication. The need for advertising was simply overlooked, because it was felt that its value would be so self-evident to members that advertising was not necessary. It has been included in our Available Publications feature, but only as a one line listing without any explanation.

So, if you would like to help bring this wonderful benefit out into the light, why not send \$15 to our book manager, Ed Lehecka (address on page 2).

P.S. -- There is a rumor that a supplement covering 1993 - 1998 is being prepared and will be available early next year. Between the two publications the first 60 years would then be available for revue.

New Issues

CZECH REPUBLIC

by G. M. van Zanten
and Miloslav Vlček

1. On April 1, 1998, the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Czech Republic issued a special souvenir sheet containing a single 23 Kč stamp celebrating the gold medal victory of the Czech Republic's men's ice hockey team at the Nagano Winter Olympic Games (Fig. 1). The multicolored stamp with upper and lower



Fig. 1

coupons depicts the goalkeeper, Dominic Hášek, with his arms raised in triumph at the end of the team's 1-0 victory over Russia. The stamp is completed by the Olympic rings and the translated text "The Gold Medal -- Winter Olympic Games NAGANO 1998". The coupon above the stamp shows the colored Olympic rings and the translated text "Winter Olympic Games NAGANO 1998". On the coupon under the stamp is the translated text "CZECH REPUBLIC -- OLYMPIC WINNER IN ICE HOCKEY". The sheet is divided by four vertical lines of perforation and horizontally by two lines. The left side of the sheet includes an illustration of two hockey players in a tackle for the puck. The illustration spans the perforation lines. The graphic designer of the souvenir sheet was Karel Dvořák. The sheet measures 106 x 88mm

and was printed by Victoria Security Printing using multicolored offset, an indirect process that transfers an inked image from a plate to an intermediate cylinder, which prints it on the paper. A FDC has as a cachet a gold-foil stamped image of the obverse of the Olympic gold medal and a cancellation depicting a hockey player in action.

2. On April 23, 1998, the Ministry issued a 10 Kč stamp commemorating "World Book and Copyright Day" (Fig. 2). This multicolored stamp depicts a book and the copyright symbol. In 1995 UNESCO declared the 23rd of April "World Book and Copyright Day". On this day every year we commemorate the immense cultural wealth contained in books all over the world and the associated rights of the authors, which it is necessary to protect and respect. The graphic artist was Zuzana Lednická, and the engraver was Bohumil Šneider. This stamp was produced by Victoria Security Printing, Prague, using recess printing from flat plates in sheets of 50. A FDC in grey repeats the motif of a book.



Fig. 2

3. On April 23, 1998, the Ministry issued a series consisting of a se-tenant pair of 4.60 Kč stamps and a se-tenant pair of 8 Kč stamps entitled "Nature Conservation -- Rare Wildlife" (Fig. 3). The graphic design for the series was done by Libuše and Jaromír Knotek, with the engraving being done by Martin Srb. The stamps were produced by Victoria Security Printing, Prague, using multicolored offset in sheets of 50 pieces. The sheet consists of se-tenant pairs alternating in checkerboard fashion (the two birds together and the two mammals together). Each stamp has its own FDC (described later). All drawings on the FDC's are accompanied by the logo of CIC (Conseil International de la Chasse et de la Conservation du Gibier) which was founded in 1930 in Paris under the shorter title Conseil International de la Chasse. It is an international non-governmental organization associating about 80 states of the world. It sets as its aim international cooperation in the active protection of endangered species of fauna and their environment including research projects and legislative steps. Czechoslovakia was one of the four founding states.

-- 4.60 Kč, Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*). The grey partridge is native to the Czech Republic. It prospered the most in the days of small fields divided by balks, which served both as nesting sites and as a source of food. The modern system of agriculture led to the destruction of the partridge's habitat and food, as a result of which it nearly died out. Nowadays it enjoys long-term year around protection and is not hunted. By law it is classified as an endangered species. A FDC in brown-red shows a group of partridges.

-- 4.60 Kč, Black Grouse (*Lyrurus tetrix*). The black grouse was once widespread in many areas of marshland and mountain foothills. The destruction of most of the grouse's habitats was caused by encroachment of agriculture on the landscape, especially by drainage. Black grouse are now also raised in captivity, but their transfer to the wild is very problematic. Black grouse are protected year around. They are a seriously endangered species. A FDC in blue-green shows three black grouse.

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-- 8 Kč, White Deer (*Cervus elapsus*). The white deer is the country's world rarity -- it is a white color mutation of the red deer and is considered a national heritage. The red deer was brought to the Czech Republic area in the 18th century and has retained its original form to the present day. Thanks to the great efforts on



Fig. 3

the part of breeders, it has been possible not only to conserve this species but also to substantially improve its reproduction. This is the world's largest population of these animals, and they are strictly protected. A FDC in brown depicts two white deer.

-- 8 Kč, European Elk (*Alces alces*). The European elk was still living in the Czech Republic area in the 14th century, but was hunted to believed extinction a few hundred years ago, and only began to reappear in the second half of this century. It is a very majestic animal, reaching a height of nearly 2 meters (about 6 1/2 feet) and a weight of up to 500 kg (about 1100 lbs). It lives a solitary life. There is now a stable population of several tens of individuals in South Bohemia between Jindřichův Hradec and Treboň. A FDC in blue-gray shows an elk with a young one.

4. On April 27, 1998, the Ministry issued a set of two multicolored commemorative stamps in the "For Children" series (Fig. 4). This stamp series appears annually just before International Children's Day. The graphic artist for the set was Karel Franta, while the engraving was done by Miloš Ondráček. The stamps were produced by the Post Printing House, Prague, by rotary recess print in black combined with photogravure in yellow, red, blue, and gray in sheets of 30 pieces. There will also be two philatelic booklets produced with 6 stamps set-tenant with 4 labels, the motifs of which alternate in the opposite way to those of the stamps.



Fig. 4

-- The 4 Kč stamp shows a drawing of two devils who are infernal musicians holding stringed instruments. The label associated with this stamp in the booklet shows the water sprite with the catfish. A FDC in grey-green shows a drawing of a small dragon listening to a melody from the flute of Punch sitting on his tail.

- The 4.60 Kč stamp shows a drawing of a water sprite riding on the back of a catfish. The label associated with this stamp in the booklet shows two devils. A

FDC in brown shows a drawing of a boy-painter standing proudly before his finished work.

5. On May 5, 1998, the Ministry issued a set of two multicolored commemorative stamps in the "EUROPA" series entitled "NATIONAL FESTIVALS AND HOLIDAYS" (Fig. 5). The European Association of Public Postal Operators declared the common theme National Festivals and Holidays for the member countries for this year. The graphic artist was Josef Liesler, and engraving was by Josef Herčík. The stamps were produced by the Post Printing House, Prague, using recess print from flat plates combined with multicolored offset in sheets of 10 pieces.

-- 11 Kč, Young King. This stamp shows a young king disguised as a woman, decorated by colorful ribbons, with a rose in his mouth, and accompanied by two



Fig. 5

women. In the bottom right-hand corner is inscribed text which translates as "The King's Ride". The King's Ride is a tradition which has been handed down since the 16th century in the Czech lands and was probably connected with ensuring and protecting the harvest. Nowadays this tradition is upheld mainly in Vlčnov and a few other southern Moravian villages. Only young men who are entering military service in the year in question ride in the mounted procession, and the king must be a male virgin who carries a rose in his mouth in order not to betray himself even with his voice. The festival commemorates the escape from battle in the Middle Ages of a young king disguised as a woman. A FDC in blue-grey shows the "young king".

-- 15 Kč, Carnival Parade. This stamp depicts several characters in a carnival parade. The carnival celebrations lasted from Epiphany (January 6) until the beginning of Lent (Ash Wednesday), the last Wednesday before Easter. This custom was also connected with ensuring a good harvest. Tours of the village were made with animals, to which a great power (the bull) was attributed, which was supposed to ensure the success of all agricultural activity. This developed into the custom of using masks, especially animal masks. The mischievous participants in a masked parade walked through the village and even into houses. The carnival parades reached their climax in the last three days before Ash Wednesday. A FDC in blue-grey shows two carnival masks.

Postal Stationery

6. On March 11, 1998, the Ministry issued a commemorative postal card with imprinted 4 Kč stamp dedicated to the International Stamp Exhibition PRAGA 98 and entitled "PRAGA 98 -- POSTAL MUSEUM" (Fig. 6). The unbordered imprinted

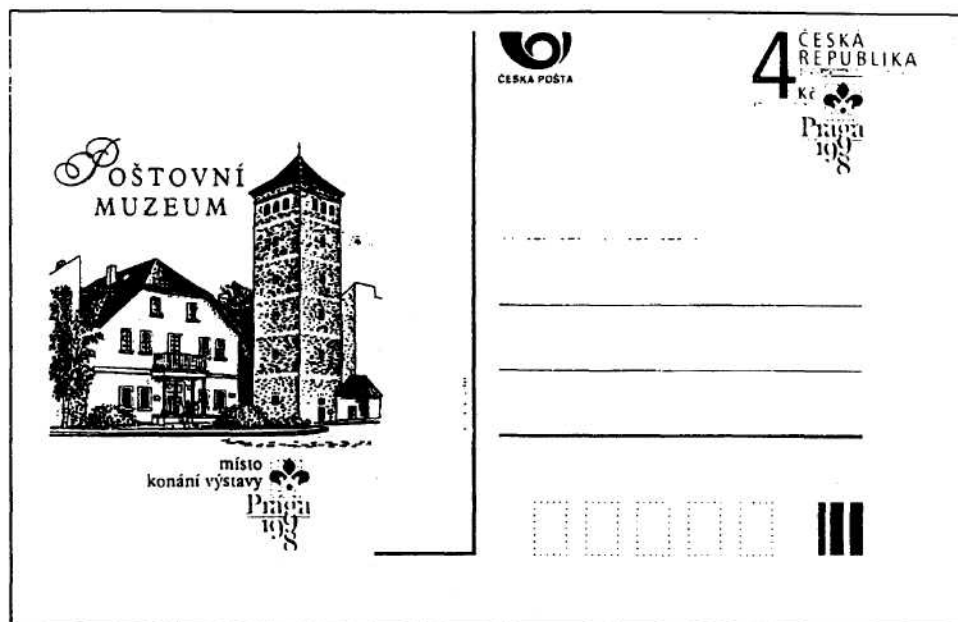


Fig. 6

stamp in green bears the composition of the face value along with the logo of the Exhibition. The multicolored pictorial part of the postal card is the drawing of a Postal Museum in Prague, a venue of PRAGA 98. A translation of the text on the pictorial side states "POSTAL MUSEUM" above and "place where the exhibition is held" on the bottom. The author of the graphic design of the imprinted stamp is Jan Solpera -- who is also the author of the PRAGA 98 logo. The author of the drawing in the pictorial part of the postal card is Jiří Bouda, with Karel Dvořák being the author of the typographic design. The postal card was printed by the Post Printing House, Prague, by multicolored offset. The selling price of the card is 4.40 Kč.

7. On March 11, 1998, the Ministry issued a commemorative postal card with imprinted 4 Kč stamp dedicated to the International Stamp Exhibition PRAGA 98 and entitled "PRAGA 98 -- TRADE FAIR PALACE" (Fig. 7). The unbordered imprinted stamp in green bears the composition of the face value along with the logo of the Exhibition. The multicolored pictorial part of the postal card is a drawing of the Trade Fair Palace accompanied by the logo of the National Gallery. The inscriptions on the left translate as "TRADE FAIR PALACE -- The Center of Modern Art" and "place where the exhibition is held". The design details and selling price of this postal card are the same as those for the twin postal card described in paragraph 6 above.

8. On March 11, 1998, the Ministry issued a commemorative cover with imprinted 4.60 Kč stamp dedicated to the International Stamp Exhibition PRAGA 98 and entitled "PRAGA 98" (Fig. 8). The imprinted stamp in blue-green bears the bust of Merkur (Mercury) -- messenger of the gods -- with a winged helmet and a fluttering

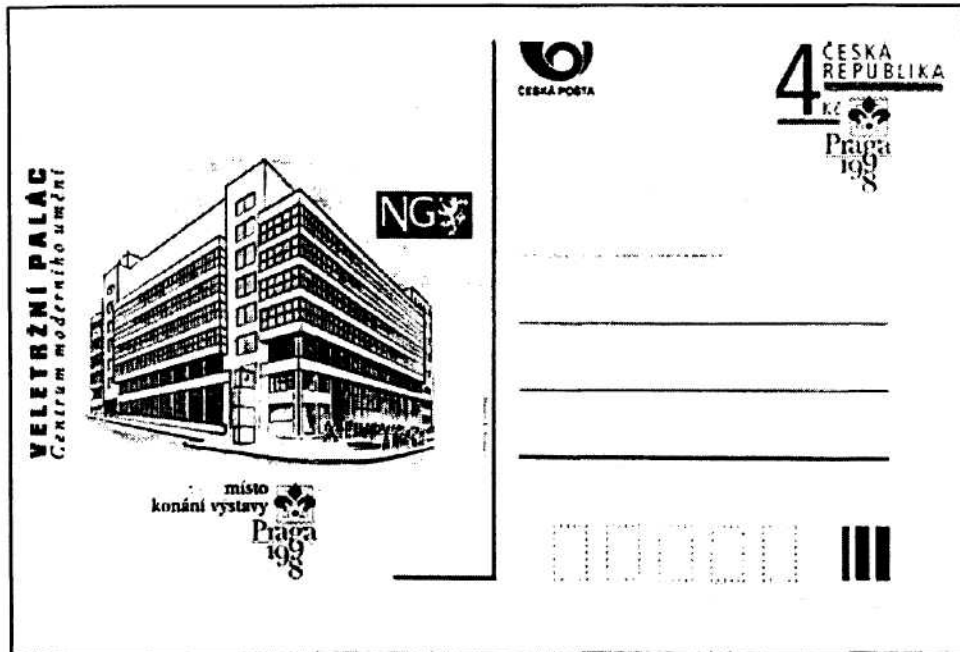


Fig. 7

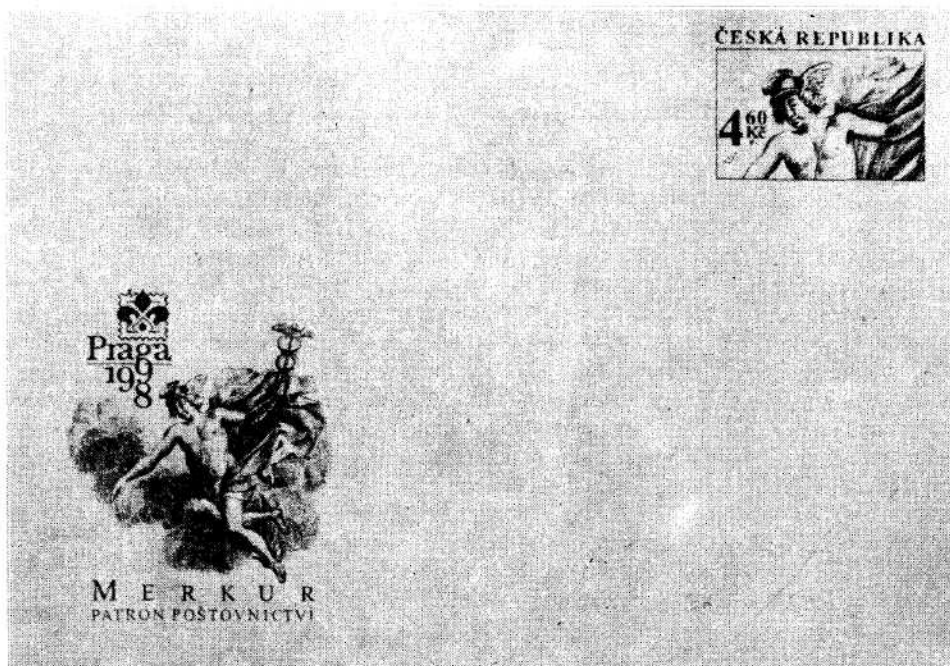


Fig. 8

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

cloak. In the left pictorial part is a blue-green drawing of a flying Merkur in clouds with winged sandals and a wand twined by winged snakes. The drawing is completed by the PRAGA 98 logo and the text "MERKUR -- PATRON OF THE POSTAL SERVICE". The author of the drawing -- made according to the contemporary gravure of Johann Georg Mansfeld (1764-1817) -- and the graphic designer of the cover is Karel Dvořák. The cover was printed by the Post Printing House, Prague, by recess print from flat plates in blue-green. The selling price is 9.10 Kč.

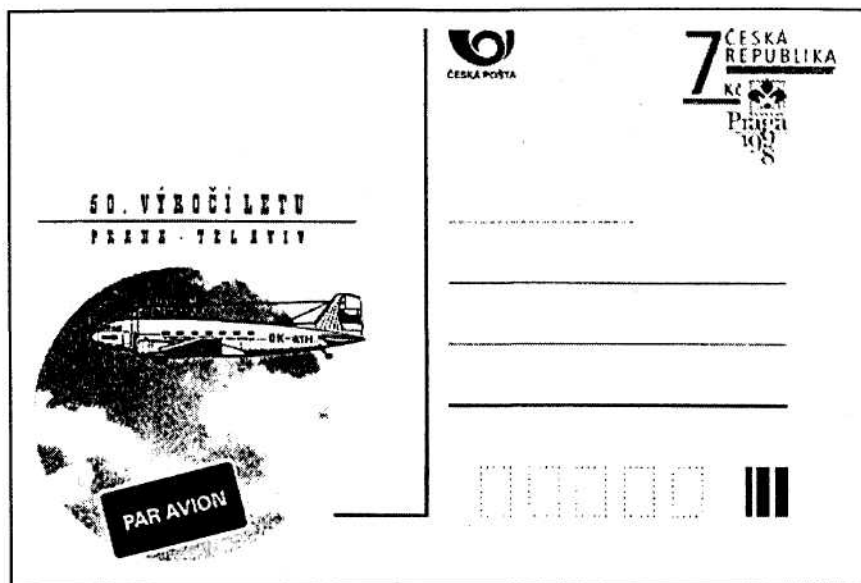


Fig. 9

9. On April 23, 1998, the Ministry issued a commemorative airmail postal card with imprinted 7 Kč stamp dedicated to the International Stamp Exhibition PRAGA 98 and entitled "PRAGA 98 -- 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FLIGHT OF CSA FROM PRAGUE TO TEL AVIV" (Fig. 9). The unbordered imprinted stamp in blue bears the composition of the face value and the logo of the exhibition. The red, blue, and black drawing on the pictorial portion on the left commemorates the above flight made on May 5, 1948. Against a backdrop of a cloudy sky is depicted the historic DC-3 "Dakota" which carried the post as well as war material on this as yet unexplored line from Prague via Rome and Athens to Tel Aviv. The plane was piloted by Capt. Jan Prchal, who was the personal pilot to Winston Churchill during World War II. The drawing is accompanied by the translated text "50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FLIGHT -- PRAHA • TEL AVIV" and the imprinted label "PAR AVION". The author of the graphic design of the imprinted stamp is Jan Solpera -- who is also the author of the PRAGA 98 logo. The author of the graphic design of the pictorial part of the postal card is Karel Dvořák. The card was printed by the Post Printing House, Prague, by multicolored offset. It's selling price is 7.40 Kč.

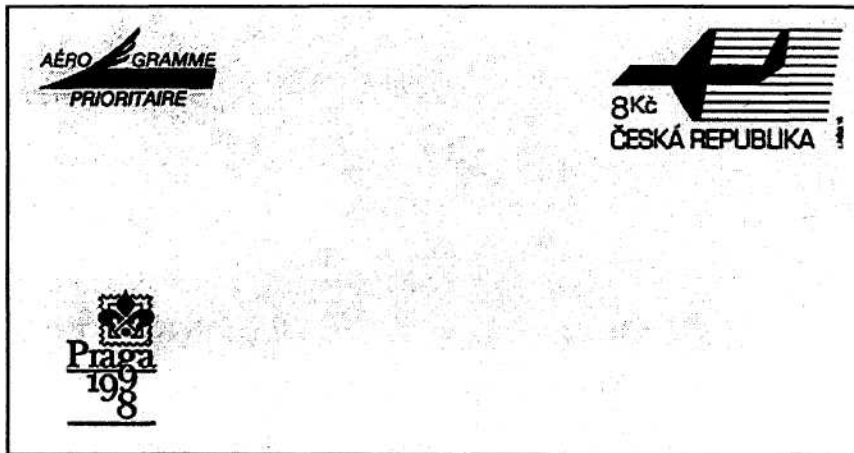


Fig. 10

10. On May 5, 1998, the Ministry issued a commemorative aerogramme with imprinted 8 Kč stamp dedicated to the International Stamp Exhibition PRAGA 98 (Fig. 10). The unbordered imprinted stamp in blue, black, and red shows the silhouette of a transport plane with "speed lines" trailing behind. In the left upper address part is the aerogramme sign in the form of a winged dart with the French text "AÉROGRAMME" and "PRIORITAIRE". The term "Prioritaire" directs for priority handling in the international postal system. In the bottom of the senders side (not shown) is the logo of the Czech post and the directive: "Neither any further sheet nor object can be inserted into the aerogram". The aerogram is printed on light-blue paper on the outside and white on the correspondence side. It has gum along the edges so that it can be folded into the form of a letter. The author of the graphic design of the imprinted stamp as well as the whole aerogram is Jaroslav Pišer. Printing was by HELMA, v.o.s. using flexoprint in blue, red, and black. Its selling price is 15Kč.

11. On May 7, 1993, the Klub Filatelistu in conjunction with the City Council of Kroměříž and POSTFILA of Prague has issued a new commemorative postal card as shown in Figure 11. The card has a blue numeral stamp imprint with a multicolored cachet honoring two significant anniversaries -- the 125th birthday of Kroměříž's native academic painter, Max Švabinsky, and the 150th anniversary of the seating of the city's Imperial Diet, the Assembly Hall of which is shown in Figure 12. The theme of the cachet is a detailed portion of Švabinsky's painting "Žně" (The Harvest) found in the artist's personal album on display in Kroměříž's Museum. The concept and draft proposal for this card was authored by Miloš Vlcěk (member of the SCP) with graphic essay submitted by Jiří Novák. Their initials appear immediately beneath the signature of J. Schmidt, who designed and engraved the cachet. The text to the left of the picture translates as: "The Kroměříž of Max Švabinsky • 1873-1998 • 125th anniversary of his birth • Max Švabinsky's Picture Album • Museum at Kroměříž". Above the dates is the trademark of the Czech Post "PTC-POSTFILA". Below the text is the logo of the celebrating committee with its translated text "150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEATING OF THE CITY'S IMPERIAL DIET". This postal card was produced in a limited quantity of 15,000 by

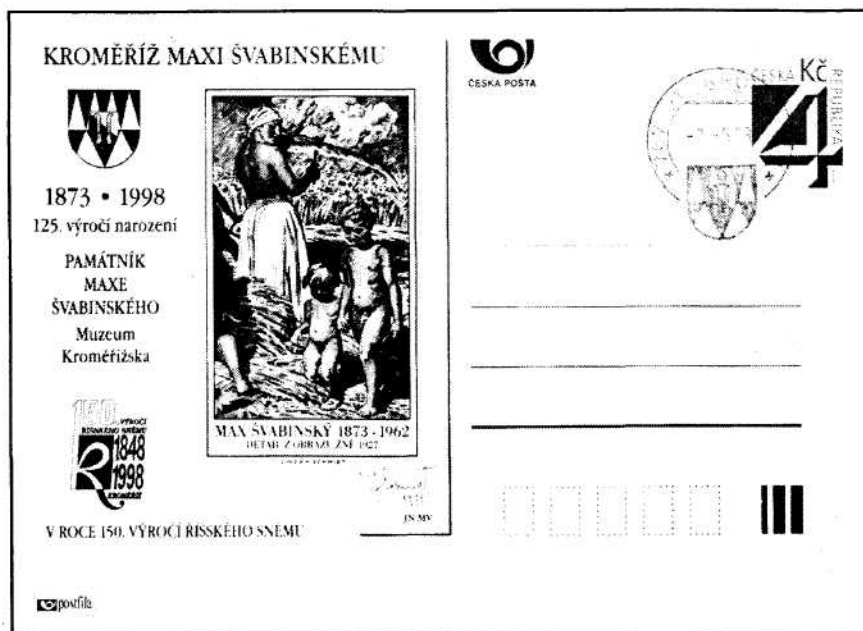


Fig. 11



Fig. 12

the Postal Printery in Prague. We are grateful to Miloslav Vlček for these statistics and illustrations.

SLOVAKIA

by Frank Garancovsky

12. On May 5, 1998, the Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications issued a multicolored 12 Sk stamp entitled "Folklore Festivals" from the "EUROPA" series (Fig. 13). It shows a picture of a portion of the Jozef Baláž work "Tekov Wedding" (a detail showing a figure of the bride). Graphic modifications to the original were done by Martin Činovský with engraving by Josef Herčík. It was

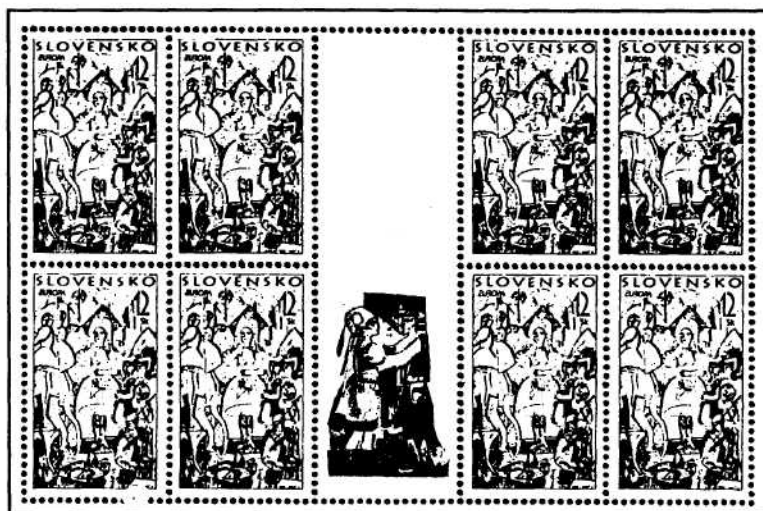


Fig. 13

produced by the Postage Stamps Printing House, Prague, in a printing sheet of 8 pieces consisting of two blocks of four separated by a gutter using recess printing from flat plates in combination with offset printing. In the lower part of the gutter there is a reproductive detail from the mentioned work consisting of a pair of dancing figures. A FDC shows another detail from the mentioned work with a figure of a bridegroom. It is canceled in Starý Tekov.

13. On May 5, 1998, the Ministry issued a commemorative 4 Sk stamp entitled "Spiritual Renewal 98" (Fig. 14). The multicolored stamp depicts an illustration by Vincent Hložník titled "The Sending Down of the Holy Spirit" from the series "The Old and the New Testament". The graphic modifications to the original as well as the engraving were done by Martin Činovský. It was produced by the Postage Stamps Printing House, Prague, using rotary recess printing in combination with recess printing in sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in pastel blue shows an illustration by Vincent Hložník of baptism in the Jordan. It is canceled in Trnava.



Fig. 14

Letters to the Editor

1. Dear Lou:

- The Jan/Feb'98 issue had an error in the New Issues section. It stated that with the Good Soldier Svejk issue (9/10/97) that the printing was in sheets of 50 and in miniature sheets of 8 [with 4 coupons]. That is wrong as to the miniature sheet part. The 8 stamps and 4 coupons were actually for a stamp booklet.

- A second version of the forged "Problems of the Blind" postal card discussed in the Mar/Apr 98 issue has appeared. On the genuine the "Kč" of the value tablet is perfectly vertical while on the forgery it leans to the right. Also, the genuine has the dotted rectangles for the Czech ZIP code made of round dots while the forgery uses square dots. And finally, on the forgery there is a dot slightly above the start of the second address line (the first solid address line).

- After reading Frank Garancovsky's article on the Marco Polo sheet varieties [Mar/Apr 98], I checked what I had in my collection. I discovered that there is an additional variety associated with the Marco Polo issue. The Marco Polo stamps imprinted by the CR Post on the 3 Kč postal card for the 1996 Riccione Stamp Show (30.8.- 1.9.1996) also have a variety (Fig. 1). The marginal printing around the stamps as well as the elephants ear can be reddish or they can be dull brown.

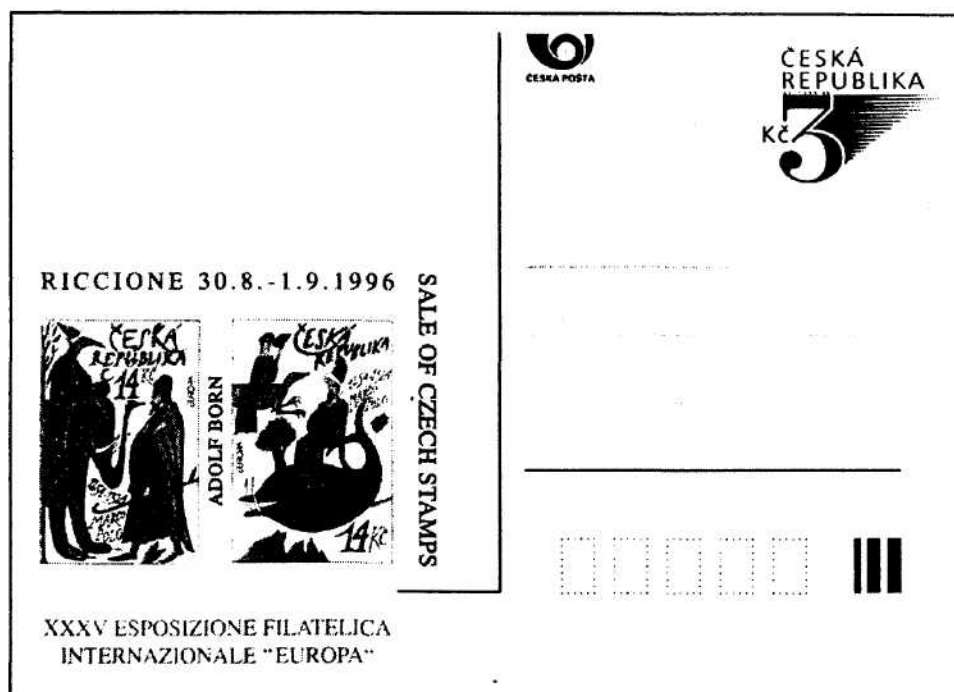


Fig. 1

- I love the Comparison Survey of Catalog Numbers. I just got done using it for ordering some Czech material from Austria. Finding somebody with a Scott catalog in Europe is impossible.

- In your Glossary Update, I believe that the Czech word "tvář" -- in philatelic terms -- should be translated as "face" rather than cheek. An example would be "tvářová cena" which translates as "face value". [Ed. Note: While Mr. Horvath's example is correct, the original reason this word was added had to do with its use in a description of a stamp variety where there is a blemish on an individual's cheek. It would seem that putting in both terms would be appropriate in this case.]

- I had a thought on all the Czech postal card forgeries -- to date about four. The claim is that it's done to defraud the ČR Postal Service. I really do not think so. A few hundred cards are sold through kiosks and news stands, they get discovered and announced in the media, then the second wave hits the bourses and sales circuits at highly inflated prices --- so who is really being taken?



Fig. 2

- My non-philatelist cousin who resides in Praha 6 - Dejvice sent me an envelope with an interesting cancel (Fig. 2). He has read that this cancel was in use for a very limited time late in February. It is a meter cancel in red which shows on the left "ZLATO 22.2.98 NAGANO" with the Olympic rings and a hockey player (where ZLATO means gold). A used cover with this cancel on it is now going for 1,000 Kč [about \$30].

- The 4 Kč PLAGA 98 postal card described on page 19 of the Sep/Oct 97 issue has now been reported to be forged. The most obvious indicator is that the heat sensitive light gray Czech postal logo of a post horn does not disappear with the application of heat -- it is simply gray ink.

- The new NAGANO Gold souvenir sheet and its FDC have really shot up in price. I guess everybody in the Czech Republic has discovered "national pride".

Savoy Horvath

2. Dear Mr. Svoboda:

Your article on Mucha post cards in the "Specialist" was of special interest to me. Over the years I have collected various books, envelopes, cards, 3 bank notes, four catalogues and graphic works on Mucha, and the Slavic epics in booklet form.

I'm trying to find out whether there is a card from Ivance [sic: Ivančice], his birthplace.

Joseph E. Bush
8252 Barningham Rd.
Richmond, VA 23235

[Ed. Note: Does any member have a card from Ivančice that they would be willing to part with? If so, why not drop Joseph Bush a letter.]

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3. Dear Mr. Svoboda:

Very soon the PRAGA 98 world postal exhibition will be going on. As I read in the *SPECIALIST*, some of you will come to the Czech Republic to visit the show. If you have never visited the Czech Republic and Prague, then you will find some interesting information in this article written by a Belgian friend. He has visited Prague about 5 times a year for the past 8 years.

Most of you will come by plane and stay in hotels. Prague has some nice hotel accommodations, but for good quality you will have to pay deluxe prices!

One of the first things you will have to do is buy yourself a metro ticket (touristkarte) like the one shown in Figure 3. You can buy them in every metro station. You can get tickets for 24 hours and 3, 5, or 7 days. They are very cheap and allow you to take any form of public transportation within the area of the city. The metro is very clean and safe even in the evening and night. Remember that the last metro leaves around 12:30 a.m. If you miss this one, you have to take a taxi. If you are away from your hotel, please agree about the price BEFORE you leave! The metro is very easy to use. Prague has only 3 lines (red, green, and yellow). PRAGA 98 is at the northern end of the green line in the section of Prague called Holešovice. As you are entering the stairs to go down to the metro, be sure to validate your ticket

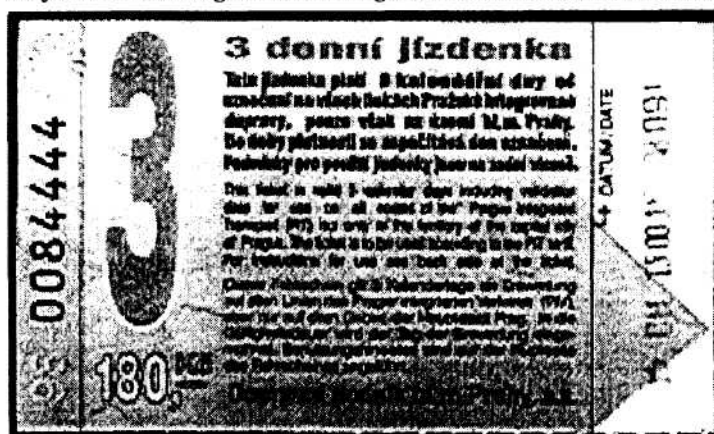


Figure 3: A Prague metropass for 3 days. It costs 180 Kč, which is just under \$6.

by putting it into the machine with the small yellow light. For those of you who will go shopping for the famous Bohemian crystal, please do not buy on the street nor at the market at the end of Wenceslas Square by the Můstek metro station. Most of the time the items there will be of poor quality and may even be simple glass (sklo) instead of crystal. A shop of excellent price and quality is HB Crystal. It is at the intersection of Pařížská and Celetná near the old town square. A fine place to eat is across from the famous beer hall "U Fleků". It's small but very good. You'll have a lovely meal for about \$8. If you like to have dinner with style and grandeur, please make reservations at "Ubecký Dům".

These are some notes I wanted to put on paper in the hope that some of you could use them. I'll visit PRAGA 98 also, and if you would like more information on any subject, please feel free to write me. You will get a prompt answer. I'm hoping that I will see some of you there, and I'll buy you a 1/2 liter brown beer for 35¢ a glass!

Paul Wijnants
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