

Czech Embassy Hosts DC Guild Guides as a Prelude to Prague

by Pete Mc Call

In preparation for the WFTGA convention this month in Prague, members of the Guild of Professional Tour Guides Washington DC participated in a special panel discussion January 8 at the Embassy of the Czech Republic. They presented their well-researched papers during an informative two-hour program, “The Czech Republic: Yesterday and Today,” focusing on the host nation’s culture, history, personalities, religion, cuisine, music, Czech immigration to America and a royal guide.

The Prague-bound DC Guild guides and guests were welcomed warmly to the Czech Embassy by Cultural Attaché Dr. Robert Řehák. A former tourist guide in Prague, Dr. Řehák commended the panelists and acknowledged that he learned a lot about his nation and hometown from their presentations. He also provided some useful travel tips for those visiting the “magical” Czech capital.



Dr. Robert Řehák, Cultural Attaché, Embassy of the Czech Republic welcomes the panelists.



Maricar Donato reflects on The Prince is a Guide

Dr. Řehák thanked WFTGA International Trainer Maricar Donato for orchestrating a series of productive learning meet-ups for the participants, culminating in the scholarly discussion at the Embassy.

The panelists (and their topics) included:

- Writer Celeste McCall (wife of panel moderator Pete McCall), “Czech Republic: Yesterday and Today,” contrasting her two visits to Prague (1968 and 2014);
- Carol Bessette and her husband John Bessette, “Prague 1984”
- Kathleen Bashian, “Czechoslovakia: The 1938 Munich Agreement and the Aftermath”;
- Joe Steinbock, “Masaryk, Mucha, Dubcek and Me;”
- Cora Eng “History of the Moravian Church”;
- Ellen Gold, “Bedrich Smetana: Father of Czech Music”;
- Melanie La Force, “Czech Immigrants in America, Antonin Dvorak and Culture”;
- Maricar Donato, “The Prince is a Guide,” describing the role of Boston-bred Czech Prince William Lobkowitz, whose royal family fled Prague twice after the Nazi and Communist takeover.



Joe Steinbock, Guild President, and Carol Bessette, panelists.

The seven Guild panelists are part of the 28 US guides planning to attend the Prague convention January 26-30, 2015.



Guild Guides attending Prague Convention with Dr. Robert Řehák

Rounding out the event, Lou Ann Filadelfo taught a brief linguistics lesson on useful Czech expressions and Melanie La Force treated everyone with a slice of Czech apple pie a recipe from her great grandmother.

Photo credit: Nathaniel Bernard



Attendees standing outside the Czech Embassy surrounding the statue of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Father of the Czech Republic