

Tuesday, May 8th – Day 17th

08:00 – we got up at our leisure. The last vacation morning in Omaha, in the States.



The next day already would be a departure day ...

But why hanging our heads when outside is so wonderful and sunny morning and the whole day is still before us ! Why we should roll up our pant legs when a ford is still a long way ahead of us ! *(a Czech saying)*

When we climbed upstairs, Susie and Dan had already their breakfast eaten and they were lounging in the armchairs in the



backyard with a newspaper.

We joined them when our breakfast was finished.

Ah, yes ... also Joey and Sunka were our companions. Yes, yes they were our good guys during every time at Newberrys and they made an unseperable couple. However everyone of them was a bit different. Joey, he was a worthy and a bit distant boy. Sunka, she was a curious lady, who liked to be pet and spoiled and whose unmistakable clatter of her claws made a house more lively.

Thus ... the six of us spent the really casual morning time reading, sipping coffee (*Pepsi*), talking and joking and also exploring every corner of that neat and beautified part of our friends' home. We relished our, coming to its end, time together ...



I was quite surprised by a big amount of wires that were going over the back yard. I had noticed that it was a normal thing during our travel in the States, especially in older parts of towns, uptown. I told Dan that they tried to lead and put all those wires under ground in our country, in our town. Maybe they only planned it over there ...

During taking pictures I spotted a small snake among rocks of a pond, it seemed like a Czech slowworm but that one was bigger and more colorful. I showed it to Dan and we looked at it for a while, but unfortunately Joey noticed it too, he nimbly jumped at it and grabbed it in his maw. It was a good thing Dan was so fast and managed to take the snake from Joey again. Without it, that situation would had come out fatally. And only a second before that event our friends spoke highly of Joey, that he did pay no attention to other creatures ...

Finally it ended up well, only with a slight wound on the snake's back and when Dan release it from his palm it disappeared quick as a flesh into a hole among rocks and plants by the pond.

Wow ! A squirrel ! It curiously gazed down at us among branches of a tree and it was quiet even if I took shots from about 12 feet. Only when Joey started barking and jumping, it gracefully climbed down the tree on an upper edge of a wooden fence and run across it to neighbors. And there was reproaching Joey again : „Ah, Joey, what are you doing today ?!”.

„Zuzanka, and what about your moving ? Do you still insist on a change of a place to live ?”, we were curious about an intent of our friends that they spoke about during their visit to us last year.

„No, Mirek. We have changed our decision and we will stay here. We love this our small cozy house and our neat yards. And then ... there is a low property tax that we have to pay for our house. It is \$400 only a year. For example Stacie and Kendell pay for their house \$6000 ! Yes, we will stay here.”

12:15 p.m. – our lazy time was over and we set off for another tour around Omaha. First we took a stop at Zuzanka and Dan's



favorite shop of everything what you need or could need or you even have not known yet you need ☺ for your home. There you can find really anything and more and more to beautify your house and yard. Well, I said a shop ... but it was a huge mall, partly roofed, partly in the open space. Ah, it was so, so extensive ! There we could see a lot and lot of flowers of all imaginable and unimaginable kinds and colors, bushes and palm trees. There you could buy all kinds of tools, a building material, sandstone sculptures, fountains, arbors, garden furnitures and so on and so on. Yes, yes it is easy to think up your landscaping when you can go and find inspiration from all those things, from all that beauty.

01:15 p.m. – we visited a cemetery where Susie’s grandparents and Mom have rested. The nice place, so green and full of peace.

It seems that to use graves with headstones in the Czech tradition is not so usual thing in the States. We could see only granite tablets with epitaphs lying in a nicely trimmed lawn over there.



So, no tombstones, just the place to stand and cast your mind back ...

Unfortunately I did not write down a name of the cemetery.

01:45 p.m. – a stop at Jackson Artworks. The building company did a good job. The hole in the roof was over, there were new carrying beams covered with particleboards and a new roofing so the building was already protected from rains again.



02:05 p.m. – a casual walk down the Old Market, we were



browsing shops and boutiques during the sunny afternoon with high blue sky above. Yes, those former factories and storehouses became the really neat and shi shi shops and stores with a special patina and atmosphere. We would like to buy some T-shirts in remembrance of Omaha but it was maybe not the right place to buy something for us. Everything there was much exclusive, much artistic and much ... expensive ☺. So

we went walking and sighseeing only, we peeked here and there in some stores, to buy only by our eyes and put it all in our minds (*it was free* ☺).

Then we took advantage of a car comfort again and moved for another experience ...

02:45 p.m. – ,Bohemian Cafe’ ! Until that time we had known that restaurant in the tradition of the Czech only from letters of our friends and could hear only much praise for the Bohemian Cafe that was the favorite place for their family meetings. And there we were ... we stood before a colorful and in the Czech folk art tradition decorated front wall of that special restaurant. And when we saw a signboard with the Czech lettering ,VITAME VAS’, we felt like we were somewhere in an open-air folk museum in the Czech Republic.



And it was just outside, what could we expect inside ? Wow ! More than we supposed to see ! It was amazing ! Yes, it was the genuine Czech old time restaurant. There were decorations in the Czech folk art tradition all around again, pictures with Czech motifs on the walls, waitresses dressed in richly decorated folk costumes and we could also hear a brass music from speakers.

Yes, there were everything with the one intent ... to bring a feeling of the Czech background.

There were many customers, mainly older pensioners in the restaurant. How Susie told us, that formerly Czech part of Omaha was gradually becoming a quarter of poorer Spanish-American people, who had a different tradition and their own restaurants, so the Bohemian Cafe was visited mainly by eyewitnesses of old good times and also by lovers of the Czech cuisine and beer.

,The Bohemian Cafe has been serving Omaha's hungry Czechs and non-Czechs since 1924. Louie Marcala was chef-owner until 1947 when he sold it to Josef and Ann (Kapoun) Libor and stayed on as head chef. Our grandparents, Babi and Deda, operated the cafe at 1256 South 13th Street until 1959 when they moved a half block south to our present location. The site was a bank (Bohemian S & L) and a grocery store (Amen's) so there were a lot of changes to be made to get it suitable for a restaurant. Babi and Deda built their reputation through long, hard hours and genuine hospitality. They retired in 1966 and 2 more generations of the Kapoun family has been cooking, serving, cleaning and bussing to bring you Dumplings and Kraut today. With the 4th generation chipping in, we hope to be Omaha's European Connection for years to come.'



Original owners Josef and Ann Libor

We went through a taproom where they have genuine Pilsner Urquell on a tap, passed by a collection of historic pictures of the Czech owners and their crew and came in one part of the restaurant, again with the old fashioned decoration and with the picture of the Prague Castle and the Charles Bridge on the wall. A small, older but agile waitress led us to our table and she immediately brought us the menu and usual glasses with water and ice according to the American manner. And shortly after our first order also dark beers for me and Dan and Coca Cola for Hana.

Hana and me were all amazed at all that Czech style decoration. Dan took a shot of us two in front of the picture of the Prague Castle. We really felt as we were in our homeland. And that look on the menu ! There we could see varied Czech meals even with their Czech names !



We asked our friends if staff speak in Czech and we were dissapointed a bit by her answer that there was a low possibility of it. Maybe the owners, maybe the chef but the normal staff not.

And Dan got immediately devil's flames into his eyes and came out with an idea how we could try it out in practice.

He talked me into doing my order in Czech. Well. I am a good guy and I am ready to every fun ☺. So when the waitress walked to us for our orders, at first Dan made his order, then Susie, Hana and when that good woman came to me, I began :

„Tak paní, já bych si dal tu knedlíčkovou polívku a potom vepřové s knedlíkem a zelím“.

That poor woman only opened her mouth in wonder and her eyes behind glasses became a bit bigger. ☺ No way ! She did not get any word ...

The next moment I apologized her for my trick and also Dan rushed to help me and told her that Hana and me came to the States from the Czech Republic and he and his wife showed us the beauties of America. The waitress recovered from my joke right then, I made my order in English and she wished us a good stay. Dan even entered into conversation with her for a moment and we got from their talking that the woman was born already in the States but her ancestors came from Holland. She had been working for the Bohemian Cafe already for ages ... but she never learned in Czech.



Aaaaaaaaaa ! Food was there ! Liver dumpling soup and Czech dumplings with svickova sauer cream gravy and sauerkraut for Dan, roast loin of pork with Czech dumplings, grave and sauerkraut for Susie and Hana. And me ? Ouch ! I overrated a bit my English and during joking with the waitress I probably made mistake about my order. Yes, liver dumpling soup was right but then I thought I had ordered the same as Susie and Hana - dumplings, pork, gravy and sauerkraut but when that good woman brought me my meal, for that time I opened my mouth in wonder ☺. Breaded pork loin (*schnitzel*) with gravy, Czech dumplings and sauerkraut ! The very odd

combination for my finicky Czech tongue. ☺ (*There is a normal way to serve breaded pork loin with boiled potatoes, a little gravy of butter and with a few pickled cucumbers in the Czech Republic*). And what a big portion of meal I got ! Wow ! It was my another mistake because while Hana ordered a ,lunch' portion for her, my eyes were too big and I ordered a ,dinner' size of meal for me. Yes, of course, I finally managed it and cleared my plate but I was full to bursting ... and even if the meal had unusual taste to me, it was so, so, so yummy !!!

Then we had another mug of beer (*light for that time*) and we enjoyed a good time at our table.

In conclusion I asked the waitress for a new small paper ,Bohemian Cafe' tablecloth in remembrance of our visit to the Bohemian Cafe. She was so nice, she gave it to me even with her writing on it.

Then Susie paid and thanked her for all of those yummys even for her pleasant service and ,See you next time !' we said her our hellos like old friends. Yes, maybe some time in the future ...

04:30 p.m. – our return to the base where we had afternoon coffee ...

we also could see Ginny once again, she came to visit and to share the pictures from the family meeting and from the zoo. In Zuzanka's office room I used her computer to download Ginny's pictures using the card reader that I bought in Panama City Beach. I also wanted to do copies of all my Olympus cards of all my pictures just in case and burn them on CD's . But there a small catastrophe happened during that process ... while my shots of pictures from the South were copying on a hard drive, Susie's computer suddenly collapsed and I lost about 400 files from one my card, unfortunately there were my very favorite pictures and videos from the Overseas Highway, Key West and Dry Tortugas. I was stunned and unhappy about that loss. And it was probably seen on me because Susie was sad of me. But what can be done ... Zuzanka calm me down and promised to send us their pictures and videos of our vacation as soon as possible to fill in our memory bank. Yes, what were we gona do more ?

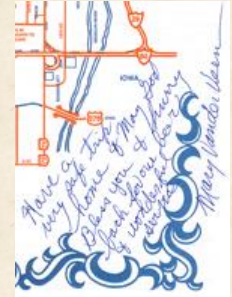
Then I realized and remembered our friends' disaster in the gallery and to compare to theirs, my bad luck was almost nothing. That's life. It seems that we all have always to pay for our nice times ... I do not know way it is but it goes that way ... pluses and minuses ... yin and yang ... as Zuzanka says : „*That which does not kill us, makes us stronger.*”

Shortly after 6 p.m. we left our friends and climbed downstairs to our basement apartment to pack our stuff. We wanted to have done that sad part of evening as soon as possible but it was not so easy as we thought. We had to be careful about weight of our baggage because of the airport inspection. But finally we managed it and we were able at about 8 p.m. to come back to our friends and join them in their sipping wine in the front sitting by a fire.

It was our last evening so we enjoyed it our best. We were joking and smiling and we tried to do not think about next day. However there was a bit nostalgic mood by the fire ... we did not know when we would be again able to be together again. Yes, of course we promised it would be as soon as possible but ...

We also went through all our common vacation spring time ... Hana and me again thanked our friends for all your care and hospitality, for all events and experiences. We again remembered all places that we visited. We special thanked them for the trip to Dry Tortugas, mainly me ☺.

There was also talking about Sunday's family meeting, we admitted that we were a bit confused by that flood of English, but we relished that family atmosphere. We also noted that we liked McDonalds, they looked like the really satisfied family.



Susie added : „*Stacie is a good mother and Kendell a good father. Kendell works for a software company, he works home, so they all of them four spend the most time together. Only Stacie miss her own money a bit, she was used to have her own regular monthly income from her eighteen and now she fully depends on her husband when she is home with girls. But she is satisfied, she does not miss work, just money. ☺* ”.

And Susie even added she did not understand that, she would miss work, she permanently needed any activity.

Me and Dan also had a talk about a question of belief. Me and Hana said we are not believers, but maybe that people who believe have their lives leighter, with their belief. The God helps them with everything (*they think*) and they rely on Him.

But we think that everything is only our deal and we are the only ones who can help ourselves and others ...

Zuzanka added that they were raised in the catholic religion, that Dad was strong in his belief. Brother Joe believed a sort of normal but his wife was almost fanatical in that. I expressed my opinion that some believing people had the God something like an insurance, they made a business with Him : „*My Lord, I will be praying to you, I'll give you presents and please, give me health and property ...*”, and Dan to it : „*Mirek, you're right, you got it ! However you see, sometimes I think that somebody may be up.*” ... „*Who knows ?*”, I nodded.

We also once again praised their cozy house and yards even that wooden sidewalk leading from a driveway. It all was really perfect made and everything went so well together. We liked it immensely. I asked Dan if he gained all his knowledges and skills in a school. And Dan's spokewoman Susie answered : „*Dan took a course in the school where they learned about roofing and framing a house, but his main knowledge about carpentry and building came from working as a carpenter. He always loved building things and working by his hands, so it was mainly his natural ability.*”

And also once again we thanked our friends for all their care in Omaha in spite of all concerns brought them along with that gallery collapse : „*Our friends, you know, we feel a bit guiltily when we are over here after that disaster and we keep you from saving things in the gallery ... and you have to take care about us. We see, we see, you are our sweet friends and you like having us at home and enjoy our company (as well as we yours) but ... anyway ... if we wouldn't be with you at this time you could save more stuff maybe. So we appreciate immensely your care, hospitality and friendship even at this for you hard time. However ... maybe ... on the other hand ... our presence maybe help you got better over that disaster. We hope for it. Our fingers are crossed for you.*”



At that moment a phone rang. Frank called ! Susie talked to him for a while and then she gave the cell to us. Yes, we could hear Frank ! We recognized his voice immediately and it seemed to us it was just yesterday when we spoke to him the last time, not two years ago ...

Frank asked us what was our vacation like and what places we visited during a vacation with Susie and Dan. We answered that we had a great times with our friends and we got to see another wonderful sights of the States and experience interesting events. We told him that we also wanted to phone him during our vacation travel but we still were in a whirlwind, so we postponed it and postponed it ... So that it was nice of him to call, he made us really happy, we were really glad to hear him. We also asked him for giving our regards to Anne. Then we said him our good bye and promised him that the next time us two would be ones who would call. Yes, it was a pleasant surprise.

We kept talking even for a while and enjoyed our last times together. But because we all knew that we would get up early the next day, afterward we finally said our last Good night one another and parted our company. We once again checked our baggage and all things and went to bed, dreamed our last American dreams.