

History of the Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Pageant

*Czech Heritage Foundation
Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

In August 2000 Lisa Volesky, daughter of Dennis and Debbie Volesky of Swisher, Iowa and granddaughter of Czech Heritage Foundation board members John and Adeline Volesky, entered the Miss Czech-Slovak US pageant in Wilber, Nebraska. Lisa was very impressed with the pageant, and in 2001 she returned to the competition with thirteen other contestants. Here Lisa was crowned Miss Czech-Slovak US 2001-2002. Her Little Sister, Amanda Odvody from Wilber, Nebraska, accompanied her during the pageant.

On November 13, 2001 John Fiala, National Pageant Director from Lincoln, Nebraska, attended the Cedar Rapids Czech Heritage Foundation board meeting and encouraged the group to sponsor pageant contestants. John described the history of the national pageant. It began informally in 1985 with two states involved: Nebraska and Oklahoma. In 1987 the first "true" pageant was held with Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska. Since then, as many as twenty-two states have been involved during any given year, with an average of eighteen participating states. While the national pageant began as a Czech pageant, in its third year Slovaks were represented by Michigan. A single contestant represents each state, and each state has its own rules and calendar of events. The pageant is not all pomp and status, but tries hard to instill pride of heritage in the young women participating. There is a Little Sister program to encourage younger girls to become involved as well.

After John Fiala's presentation, the Czech Heritage Foundation board voted to be Iowa's sponsoring organization, sending a candidate to the national competition each year. Iowa's pageant is held in conjunction with Houby Days Festival in Czech Village, located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The festival is held the weekend following Mothers' Day in May. Adeline Volesky served as the first pageant coordinator and retired her position in 2009. Iowa's current pageant committee consists of coordinator Zeldia De Hoedt, Debbie Volesky, Joyce Netolicky, Adeline Volesky, and Amanda De Hoedt.

The Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa program has been very successful. In 2002 Miss Katie Ziskovsky was crowned Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa and competed in Wilber to win the \$400 talent competition. Iowa brought home another national title when Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Stasia Krivanek was crowned Miss Czech-Slovak US 2003-2004. Iowa has also sent several other representatives to compete in the national pageant.

In 2010, Iowa implemented a new reign pattern that provides queens with an entire year to prepare for nationals. Under this plan, the retiring queen represents Iowa at the national pageant. The newly crowned queen may attend Wilber and events throughout Iowa to begin preparing for nationals. She will then represent Iowa in the national pageant the following year, at the end of her reign.

The national event is held each year at the Wilber Czech Festival. Wilber has a population of about 1,600 but during the festival 30,000 to 50,000 attend with two parades being the main attraction. Here contestants compete to win the title of Miss Czech-Slovak US and for several prizes.

Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Pageant

Official Rules and Procedures

Failure to comply with any of the below rules will result in disqualification of contestant from the Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa pageant.

Pageant Rules

1. Contestant must be between the ages of 16 and 26 prior to April 1 of the current year. She must be attending high school, junior college, technical school, college, university, or be a high school graduate.
2. Contestant must be a citizen of the United States of America.
3. Any contestant who is an Iowa resident, but is attending an accredited college or university in another state may compete in the pageant.
4. Any contestant who is not an Iowa resident, but is attending an accredited college or university in Iowa may compete in the pageant.
5. Contestant must be single, never married, and cannot be expecting or with child.
6. Contestant must be of full or partial Czech, Moravian, Silesian, or Slovak descent or be legally adopted by parents of this descent.
7. Contestant will be responsible for their Little Sister(s) during the pageant.
8. Contestant may be not be a former Miss Czech-Slovak US. Contestant may have reigned as Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa for one year, but may not compete to extend her rein to two consecutive years. Reigning queen must serve as Master of Ceremonies and pass down her title at the pageant held during the end of her rein.
9. Contestant must appear in authentic or Americanized Czech/Slovak costume for the duration of the pageant. Contestants will not wear a previous state sash or crown during the contest.
10. Contestant must be personally present at all four judged categories of the competition and the crowning as scheduled per pageant program. This is critical to prepare contestants for the national pageant; therefore failure to complete any category will result in disqualification from the pageant. The four categories are:
 - Private interview
 - Talent presentation
 - Costume modeling
 - Interview by the Master of Ceremonies
11. Included with the application is a copy of the official judges' guidelines for contestants to review before the pageant.
12. A photo (any size) must accompany the entry form. It must be clear and easy to reproduce. The photo can be black and white or in color. The picture may be used in media pertaining to the Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa pageant or the Czech Heritage Foundation.

13. The contestant is responsible for travel expenses to and from Cedar Rapids. Lodgings or early arrival will be the responsibility of the contestant. Lunch during the pageant will be furnished to the contestant. If hotel accommodations are needed, a list of hotels may be sent by request only. The contestants are tentatively needed throughout 8:00am – 9:00pm on the pageant date.
14. The crowned Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa will receive:
 - Jeweled Crown
 - Sash
 - Flowers
 - \$500 award
 - Sponsorship to the Miss Czech-Slovak US pageant in Wilber, Nebraska
 - Numerous appearances, publicity, and various gifts
 - She will serve as a representative for Czechs and Slovaks from the State of Iowa
15. All contestants will receive flowers and a gift.
16. Contestants will be required to be available upon conclusion of the pageant for additional pictures, interviews or personal visits with various individuals of the Czech Heritage Foundation.
17. Contestants and/or guardians must become members of the Czech Heritage Foundation. Membership forms may be downloaded from the Czech Heritage Foundation's website at: <http://www.czechheritagefoundation.org/forms/membership.pdf>
18. **Entries must be postmarked on or before April 2. Send entry forms to:**
Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Pageant
c/o Zelda De Hoedt, Pageant Coordinator
5767 W. Mustang Rd.
Cedar Rapids, IA 52411

Be sure to send the entry packet together with an entry fee of \$25 payable to the Czech Heritage Foundation

Private Interview Rules

1. Contestant must be interviewed in the same kroj she presents during kroj modeling category.
2. Contestant will receive a seven-minute interview panel-style with the judges.
3. All contestants will receive the same first three questions. After these questions, judges ask questions utilizing the contestant's entry form and questionnaire.
4. Judges cannot ask questions about personal political affiliation, sexual topics, or personal religious affiliation or beliefs.
5. Timer will announce when 30 seconds are left, contestant should answer final question or finish current question.

Talent Rules

1. Talent act is limited to no more than **four minutes**. It begins with a formal introduction and concludes with work, note or motion.
2. Contestants are encouraged, but not mandated, to introduce their talent including: what talent they will be performing, why they chose their talent and how it relates to the contestant. The introduction is part of the four-minute time limit.
3. Talent can be singing, dancing, playing a musical instrument, dramatic reading, art display, dress designing, poetry, drawings, gymnastics, or a verbal oration on a subject or topic.
4. Pre-recorded, and pre-created props will not be considered/judged in overall performance.
5. An on-stage accompanist is allowed but no other partners can perform with contestant.
6. Contestants must describe their talent in detail on their pageant application.
7. Contestants are responsible for all props for their talent. Pageant may provide, microphone, piano, and speaker system. The contestant must provide any other props.
 - a. Presentations are not recommended; they are not guaranteed to be seen by the judges and audience at Nationals.
8. We encourage contestants to perform their talent in Czech or Slovak language or works by Czech or Slovak composers. However, performing a Czech or Slovak talent is not mandatory.
9. There will be an official talent timer located next to the judges' table. The timer will hold up cards at minute intervals for the contestant's information. At four minutes the timer will hold up a STOP card. If the stop card is held up the contestant will be deducted 5 points from her overall talent score.

Kroj Modeling Rules

1. Contestant must appear in authentic or Americanized Czech/Slovak costume. It must be of her local creation from either America or the Czech/Slovak Republic. Costumes from the Czech/Slovak Republic cannot be purchased as a wholly assembled importation. Kroje that are family heirlooms are acceptable.
2. A brief description of your costume must be sent in with the entry form. This will be read aloud as you model your costume on stage during the costume competition. Mention if it is handmade, made by you, if any part or whole of the costume is from your ancestors, or if any of the material comes from the Czech/Slovak Republic. If any part of the costume has meaning of Czech, Moravian, Selesian, or Slovak culture or ancestry, make this part of your description. Limit description to no more than 250 words in length.
3. Descriptions must be typed with contestant's name in page header.
4. At the national level there will be two categories of kroj description: Americanized and authentic. Americanized costumes represent Czech, Moravian, Silesian or Slovak ancestry with American or modern accents. Authentic kroje are traditional costumes that are from the native country, or are very similar representatives of the original.

Onstage Interview Rules

1. Contestant will draw for two formal questions.
2. Contestants cannot read question prior to handing to Master of Ceremonies.

Duties of Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa

1. While attending the Miss Czech-Slovak USA pageant in Wilber, Nebraska you must abide by all of the rules at the National level and represent the Czech Heritage Foundation in Iowa.
2. You must attend all functions where the Czech Heritage Foundation requests your presence. Exceptions can be made with valid conflicts.

EXAMPLES OF FUNCTIONS – ATTENDANCE IS NOT LIMITED TO ONLY THESE EXAMPLES!

- Attend Czech School or their Final Program and provide a brief description of yourself and your duties. (June/July - optional)
 - Represent Czech Heritage Foundation at Nationals in Wilber, Nebraska (August - required)
 - Participate in the Svaty Mikulas activities (December - required)
 - Present your talent at the Annual Czech Heritage Foundation Meeting (January – optional)
 - Participate in the Cultural Diversity Days (February in Iowa City – required)
 - Attend St. Joseph's Day Dance and events (March - required)
 - Attend Houby Days and be Master of Ceremonies for the pageant (May – required)
 - Attend parades and promotions in the Cedar Rapids area and surrounding communities (on-going – depends on event)
 - Represent Czech Heritage Foundation by attending some ethnic events in Iowa and surrounding states. Ensure that you have time to speak or perform your talent for their organization. The pageant committee will help you to find and organize events, but the Queen may also take the initiative herself. (2 events are required, others are optional)
 - Participate in Czech Village / NCSML events (optional)
 - If residing in a Czech community outside the Cedar Rapids area – other activities are possibilities
3. You will be responsible for your Little Sister(s) at all functions. Your Little Sister(s) may attend the Miss Czech-Slovak USA pageant as a guest only. Nationals will assign you a Little Sister from the Nebraska area.
 4. Contestant must appear in an authentic or Americanized Czech/Slovak costume called a kroj at all functions they attend.

Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Pageant Official Judges' Guidelines

Serving on the panel of judges at the Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Pageant is a most important responsibility. To assist you in discharging this responsibility, we have set up the following guidelines.

Prior to beginning your actual judging duties, however, it is important that you first consider the qualifications of the Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa. She is NOT to be considered entirely on her beauty. Consider this pageant as an ethnic pageant. She is to be judged as an intelligent young woman who possesses dignity, poise, charm, good manners, talent, and that intangible called personality.

A Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa must be able to meet the public, speak extemporaneously, and represent her state and the United States with dignity and youthful charm. She must also have the necessary appearance and wholesomeness to appeal to the American public. The Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa will be involved in many public appearances, parades and festivals.

To acquaint you with each contestant, the Pageant Committee will supply you with individual fact sheets for each contestant.

This will include:

1. The Official Entry Form and resume for each contestant. You are urged to study these fact sheets carefully and then use them as a basis for your questions as you meet the contestants at the Judges' private interview prior to any stage competition.
2. A copy of the Official Rules and Procedures is attached in this packet.
3. Judge's Work Sheets for Valuable Notes

The committee will provide you with work sheets for keeping personal notes as the contestants appear individually in each phase of the pageant competition.

Casting Your Ballots

1. The most important consideration in each phase of the competition is that you cast your ballot for all of the contestants in that particular competition.
2. Concentrate ONLY on the qualifications being sought by that phase of the competition and vote accordingly, regardless of whether you feel your first place vote is going to the contestant you would like to see capture the title. By following this procedure religiously, you will find the total points result in the best contestants reaching the overall points.

The committee will supply you with ballots for each individual competition. Give each contestant a value from 1 to 15 points. 15 points is the top vote in any individual competition. As soon as you have marked your ballot and signed your name, turn it over to the Tally Committee. If you change your vote or make an erasure, initial same before the ballot is collected.

Categories for Judging

Judges' Private Interview (1 - 15 points)

During this interview, consider your overall impression of each contestant. Make notes regarding her personality, diction, expression, sincerity, and mannerisms.

Contestants will be individually interviewed by the Panel of Judges. After each seven-minute interview, you will be given a few moments to make brief notes prior to the introduction of the next contestant. Keep in mind the interview competition begins the moment you first encounter each contestant and continues during various phases of the pageant.

Talent Competition (1 - 15 points)

This is an extremely important phase of the competition for all of the contestants, especially the winner. There is a talent award given, and only one can be valued at 15 points! You should consider trained talent as well as potential talent that can be developed and perfected.

Costume Modeling Competition (1 - 15 points)

Consideration should be given to originality and authenticity of the costume and design. Points in these divisions are given with NO relation to the contestants other qualifications. The costume must not be a wholly assembled importation. A costume award is given; therefore only one contestant can receive the top points of 15.

Introduction and Interview of Contestants by the Master of Ceremonies (1 - 15 points)

The Pageant's Master of Ceremonies initiates this phase of the competition. Consideration should be given to the contestant's appearance of face, figure, grace, poise, and posture, with no relation to their other qualifications. Communications with the MC and contestant's responses are important in this category. Take notes, as the contestants appear individually to help you reach your final decision.

**Official Pageant Entry
Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Pageant**

Name _____ **Date of Birth** _____

Address _____

City, State, & Zip Code _____

Phone () _____

E-Mail Address _____

Guardian Name(s) _____

High School _____ **Graduation** _____

College _____ **Graduation** _____

Special training in music, drama, dancing, etc. _____

Ambition and future plans _____

Talent for the pageant _____

How are you of Czech/Slovak decent? _____

How do you feel about your Czech/Slovak ancestry? _____

Why do you want to be Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa? _____

- Please attach a one-page resume, which can include honors earned in school, community and school activities, employment, hobbies, and interests.
- Be sure to enclose your entry fee, photo, costume description, and resume.
- If you or your guardian(s) are not currently CHF members, please attach CHF membership application and fee.
- Entries must be postmarked no later than April 2.

I hereby declare that I have read the Rules and Procedures and my application and information submitted is true and complete, and furthermore, I agree to the official rules and procedures of the Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa pageant.

Signature _____ **Date** _____