

**May 12, 2023**

**Program: *For Better or Worse — The Velvet Divorce 30 Years Later***

**Presented by: William "Bill" Smriga**

Bill retired from Kansas State University in 2018. He was the Executive Director of the Kansas State Student Union corporation. In 2020 he and his wife Elaine, moved to Lincoln to be closer to their son and his family, which includes three small grandchildren.

Bill's parents and two older sisters immigrated from Czechoslovakia, and he was born in the US shortly thereafter. Bill grew up in Whiting, Indiana and attended Indiana University, where he received his Bachelors and Masters degrees. He has worked at five different universities, including Indiana University, University of Missouri, and Kansas State University. Bill has visited the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic numerous times and has hosted Czech and Slovak University students here in the US.



Tonight's Program: ***For Better or Worse — The Velvet Divorce 30 Years Later***

With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I, the Czechs and the Slovaks joined together to form one country, known as Czechoslovakia. In 1948, Czechoslovakia became part of the Eastern Bloc of the Soviet Union. Then the "Velvet Revolution" occurred in 1989 and booted the Communist Party from power. However, on January 1, 1993 Czechoslovakia peaceably, separated into two independent states.

So, how and why did the Czechs & Slovaks do this? Tonight, Bill Smriga is going to enlighten us.