

Celebrate '08 • August Vestnik Project

This project earns a maximum of one point in the SPJST Youth Clubs Merit Points System. Mail completed project no later than **September 15, 2008** to:
SPJST Youth Program c/o SPJST Home Office • P.O. Box 100 • Temple, Texas 76503

Name _____ Age _____ Lodge _____

Great Things Are Possible When You Let Your Creativity Flow

Boys and girls the world over love to draw, paint and create. Through their artwork, they develop their skills as well as their imagination. What's more, it's been proven that early exposure to visual art, music and drama helps children to understand other subjects much more clearly — from math and science to language arts and geography. One of the best things about drawing, painting and creating is that it doesn't have to stop when you get older. For many, art becomes a life-long form of self-expression that sometimes turns into an enjoyable career.

This Little Mole Knows How to Get Things Done

Krtek does not live in Texas. He is originally Czech, and like many Czechs, he likes to travel, but he's not very well-known here in America. Over the past 50 years, generations of Czechs and European children have grown up with Krtek, the red-nosed, wide-eyed mole who was created in 1957 by Czech illustrator and cartoonist Zdenek Miler. Many of the Krtek cartoons are now available for viewing on youtube.com.



Image: <http://www.obrazkyprodeti.cz>

It was like that with the great Czech cartoonist Zdenek Miler. Born in 1921, near Prague in what was then Czechoslovakia, Miler enjoyed painting as a child. He took his hobby to a new level when he joined the national graphic school in Prague in 1936. He later studied at the College of Arts and Crafts.

In 1954, Mr. Miler was assigned to make a film for children showing how linen is made. He thought long and hard about the project and came to the conclusion that a fairly dull subject could be livened up by introducing an enjoyable cartoon character. He decided on using a mole (*krtek*) after stumbling over a molehill during a walk. That's how Krtek the Mole was born!

Over the past 50 years, generations of Czechs and children all over Europe have grown up with Krtek, the red-nosed, wide-eyed little mole. The first Krtek cartoon took Mr. Miler a year and a half year to make. In this first cartoon, Krtek makes a pair of linen overalls, with help from a frog who soaks the flax, spiders who spin the yarn, ants who weave the cloth and a crawfish who cuts the fabric. This cartoon was the only one in which Krtek actually spoke. Mr. Miler wanted his mole to be understood everywhere in the world so he so he decided to use his daughters as voice actors, reducing Krtek's speech to short exclamations that would express his thoughts and feelings.

Between 1957 and 2002, Krtek starred in 62 cartoons. Krtek changed slightly over time, but the basics were always there: the forest, other animals, and a problem that Krtek always managed to solve. Krtek is a kind soul, good to his friends, an environmentalist and an excellent gardener. His curiosity and willingness to try give him great charm. Krtek is so famous and beloved in Europe, that he was the first Czech cartoon character to appear on DVD. Many of the Krtek cartoons are now available for viewing on youtube.com.

Now, it's your turn to get creative!

You've been assigned the job of creating a new cartoon character to help Orel the Eagle in promoting the SPJST. Using a separate sheet, draw, color and name your new character. Select illustrations may be reprinted in a future issue of the *Vestnik*.

