

## Jiri Munk With His Wife Alena, The Artist Zdenek Smetana, And Staflik And Spagetka



This photograph was taken at an autograph session for our second book about Staflik and Spagetka, in the Luxor bookstore in Prague on Wenceslaus Square in 2005. Sitting on the left is a person without whom Staflik and Spagetka would never have looked the way they do, the artist Zdenek Smetana, with Spagetka on his lap. My wife, Alena Munkova, nee Synkova, is in the middle, and I'm on the right with Staflik. In 1965 my wife and I began to write scripts for animated films together. My wife began with it, but I soon joined her, because I found it fun. Cartoons about two doggies - Staflik and Spageta (Stepladder and Spaghetti), became widely popular. In 1999 the Albatros publishing house approached us with the idea of realizing Staflik and Spageta in book form. We wrote two books, the first sold out a press run of 20,000, and was also translated into other languages. The second came out recently, so it's still too early to evaluate it. Staflik and Spageta were shot as a cartoon from 1968. The original name was 'A Dog's Life,' and of course after the Russian occupation this was a problem. Some censor noticed it, so in the end we had to think of a new name. The cartoon sold into about 40 countries. Thanks to the fact that the cartoon was without any spoken text, there was no need for dubbing. This is why when we wrote books we had to make many things up completely anew. We made up that the dogs live in a town named Psinice (Dogtown). There's a funny story connected to this. Because some lady from the publishing house came and told us that Psinice by Jicin really does exist, that they had a cottage there. We said to ourselves that this has got to mean trouble, because we were making fun of this town of Psinice in our books. Recently we were invited to Psinice, and it turned out to be exactly the opposite. A big celebration was held on a local soccer field, with majorettes, firemen, village residents and even the mayor. They named Staflik and Spageta honorary citizens of Psinice, and long afterwards we were still signing our books under a tent on the field. Our other scripts didn't become as famous. These were for example Edudant a Francimor according to K. Polacek, Pucalkovic Amina based on the book by J. Plachta, or Pozor, bonbon! about two beavers, which was an attempt at a cartoon detective story, and others.