

TCHCC
Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center, Inc.
LA GRANGE, TEXAS

NÁŠ ČESKÝ ŽIVOT

"OUR CZECH LIFE"

(Centrum českého kulturního dědictví v Texasu)

SPRING 2022

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 1

BENJAMIN KOLIBA RECEIVES 2022 TOCA AWARD FROM TCHCC



LEFT - RIGHT: TOCA PRESIDENT TOM STAVINOH, TCHCC HONOREE BENJAMIN KOLIBA,
TCHCC VICE PRESIDENT WILLIAM SCHOVAJSA

Dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the history, language, culture, and heritage of Texans of Czech ethnicity.

Náš Český Život "Our Czech Life"

TEXAS CZECH HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER

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La Grange, Texas 78945-0006
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Newsletter Address: All articles, photographs, advertising and correspondence should be directed to Retta Chandler or Janis Hrnecir, co-editors, P. O. Box 6, La Grange, Texas 78945 (979) 968-9399.

Articles: Anyone may submit articles, which will be accepted for inclusion as space permits and subject to review and editing as necessary. All articles must be typewritten. The publication is not responsible for the return of unsolicited material not submitted with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Ads: Contact the co-editors regarding advertising. Advertising Rates: We will accept limited advertising-only standard business card size (3 1/2" X 2") - \$20.00 per issue; Send camera-ready business cards to co-editors.

The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center, Inc. does not endorse or guarantee the products or services that are advertised in this publication.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the TEXAS CZECH HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER, INC. is to provide a central facility for the preservation and promotion of the history, language, culture and heritage of individuals of Czech ethnicity who can trace their ancestry to the Czechs who immigrated from the present day Czech Republic or former Austria-Hungary (including Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Silesia), to honor those immigrants, and to operate exclusively for charitable, scientific, literary and educational purposes.

The goals of the TEXAS CZECH HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER, INC. are:

To educate the public about the past and present contributions and status of persons of Czech descent

To encourage the study and preservation of the Czech language, fine arts, music and dance

To provide for the preservation and exhibition of artifacts that are historically significant to the Czech people of Texas

To provide a library and archives for the collection and preservation of books, newspapers, periodicals, family histories, research material, photographs and all printed data of historical significance to the Czech people of Texas

To provide adequate space for gatherings, meetings and educational activities for the benefit of the Czech people of Texas

To encourage and promote a cultural exchange program between the Czech people of Texas and the citizens of the Czech Republic

To provide the public with updated information regarding Czech-related activities and historical sites in Texas, the United States and abroad.

You are invited to continue receiving the newsletter Náš Český Život and an annual calendar by sending in your ANNUAL SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP. This journal will only be sent to members. Support your Center — JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY.

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We are currently taking 2022 memberships
and donations online on our website.

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President's Letter
April 2022



*TCHCC President
Retta Slavik Chandler*

Dear Members,

This year we celebrate our 25th Anniversary as a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the history of our Czech ancestors who immigrated to Texas. It is with great pleasure that I announce this milestone in the history of The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center (TCHCC). We began in a one-room office in 1997 and then moved to the Kalich House in 2001 that was restored by volunteers. It became a Visitors Center, Office, and Gift Shop. In 2009, we moved into the Main Building. Now we have a large campus with the Main Building that includes a museum exhibit hall, library, gift shop and banquet hall. Surrounding the Main Building is the Czech Village. It has restored vintage buildings with displays of artifacts owned and used by our early ancestors.

It all came about when members of Czech-founded organizations, Texans of Czech Ancestry (TOCA), met to address a common concern that Czech history and language may soon be forgotten. In 1995, the call for this meeting was initiated by the Czech Heritage Society of Texas. Czech traditions were no longer practiced because many had moved away from the close-knit Czech communities and thereby lost contact with parents and grandparents. Texans of Czech Ancestry (TOCA) voted to support the project of developing a state-wide Czech Center to preserve and promote Czech Heritage. The project was named and incorporated as the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center on March 24, 1997.

As part of our 25th Anniversary Celebration on May 15, 2022, we invited the Czech organizations of TOCA to set up a display on the front lawn during Slavnost (May Fest). This gave each organization an opportunity to share the ways each one preserves Czech history and culture. We are grateful to the members of these organizations for their support.

We are also grateful to volunteers and board members, whose enthusiasm, support and dedication made TCHCC a loving tribute to our Czech ancestors. Some of our volunteers have been with us since our beginning. We thank them and all of our supporters who helped us over these many years.

Děkujeme,
Retta Slavik Chandler

We Thank RVOS for their annual donation of \$5000.00 that was presented to TCHCC Board Members at the TOCA Awards Dinner. Pictures l-r: top: Bradley Stavinoha, Dennis Vanek, Wayne Wilson, Brian Vanicek, Walt Stoeber (partially hidden). Center: Donna Vanek, Dana Vanek Caudill, Tom Stavinoha, Retta Slavik Chandler, Linda Wilson, J. G. Hrncir, Bill Schovajsa.



TCHCC 2023 CALENDAR THEME

***GENERATION TO
GENERATION***

**Submit a picture of your family members
in a group picture consisting of more
than one generation.**

**Please include the year that the photo
was taken and the names of those in the
picture.**

**Send your photo via email to
JHrncir@tchcc.org or Janis@hrncir.com.
OR**

**You may mail your non-returnable photo
and information to TCHCC,
P.O.Box 6,
La Grange, Texas 78945
by JULY 31, 2022.**



TCHCC's 2022 TOCA Recipient, Benjamin Koliba

Benjamin and Doris Sykora Koliba

Benjamin Koliba supported the development of TCHCC since the beginning. In 2006 during Christmas Open House, Ben and his wife Doris presented TCHCC with a generous donation, which funded the Koliba Lobby in the Main Building. This was a tremendous boost to all our volunteers to support the project. They both volunteered at our events each year.

In 2010 an agreement between Benjamin and TCHCC was made to underwrite the construction of a chapel at TCHCC. This chapel (Chapel of Mary Magdalene) will be a replica of the chapel in Mnisi, Czech Republic and was the one where Ben's grandparents lived. Ben traveled to the Czech Republic several times to make sure that the replica would be as close to the original as possible. It is beautiful and almost finished and we are looking forward to its opening and dedication. However, no date has been set.

Ben is a quiet person and had to quizzed prodded, and pleaded to get him to tell about his life's work. Ben worked faithfully at each task or job that he pursued and he always learned the details of that job. He was an airline pilot that could fly any craft with wings. Ben spent most of his life as an airline pilot with more than 23,000 logged miles and worked for Continental Airlines for 29 years.

Ben was born in Corpus Christi, Neuces County, Texas to parents: Edmond and Julia Koliba and now lives in Cuero, Texas. He was drafted in the Army at age 21-Stationed at Ft. Hood and Germany (2nd Armored Division), he studied auto mechanics at Del Mar College. His first job was as a civilian flight instructor for the Air Force. He holds numerous flight licenses including private pilot, commercial pilot, Airplane Stock England Land, Multi-Engine Land, Flight Instructor, flight instructor multi-engine instrument, and Airline Transport Rating. Ben owned and operated an automotive machine shop, an automotive automatic transmission shop, a radiator repair and maintenance shop, and a Ranch Dozer Service.

He married Doris Sykora Koliba on July 21, 2001. They spend their time volunteering and living on Ben's ranch in Cuero, Texas. Doris passed away on February 14, 2018.

CONGRATULATIONS

The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center would like to congratulate the 2022 CHS of Texas Miss Czech-Slovak Queen Destiny Hollingsworth and her Little Czech Sister Gloriana Hollingsworth. The two young ladies were sponsored by Bexar County Chapter of the Czech Heritage Society of Texas. Their parents are Justin and Marianna Hollingsworth. Destiny is a junior at Sandra Day O'Connor High School in San Antonio, Texas.



TOCA HONOREES RECOGNIZED AT TOCA AWARDS RECEPTION & DINNER

The 2022 TOCA Awards Appreciation Reception and Catered Dinner was held on Saturday, March 26, 2022 in the Pavilion Hall. RVOS sponsored the hall rental. Refreshments provided by KJT and A Wine and Cheese Reception sponsored by SPJST was held from 4 to 5 PM with the Awards Ceremonies beginning at 5 PM when it was called to order by TOCA President Thomas Stavinoha. Brian Vanicek, Honorary Consul to the Czech Republic for Texas greeted all and Rev. Paul Chovanec led the Invocation. Henry and Susan Machicek, sponsored by KJZT, provided the music. We thank all of the sponsors for their support of the Texans of Czech Ancestry.

Current TOCA Officers are: President Thomas Stavinoha, Vice President Leon Anhaiser, Secretary Vlasta Vitek, and Treasurer and Immediate Past President Kevin Kana. Note: TOCA Awards have not been presented for two years, therefore several organizations presented awards to recipients covering three years.



Susan and Henry Machicek provided the music.



Donnie Victorick and Brian Vanicek served the wine and cheese



Rev. Paul Chovanec and Kevin Kana.



Czech Heritage Society of Texas Honoree Evelyn Skopik



CEFT Honoree Raymond W. Lenart



Czech Heritage Society of Texas Honoree Rudy Rusnak



*Austin Czech Historical Association
Honoree Lori Najvar*



*Ft. Bend County CHS Honorees: L-R: Gloria Mican,
Neal Adamcik, Kathy Krejci Taylor (award accepted by
Joyce Lolly).*



*KJT Honoree Benedict Kallus pictured with wife
Dianna and granddaughters Rylie & Lexie Noska.*



KJZT Honoree Joan Johnson



*TCGS Honorees Daniel Mares and Edwin Hlavaty
(award accepted by Nancy Machu)*



*RVOS Honorees Rosalie and W. K. Leonard & daughter
Lisa Alexander*



SPJST Honorees Alfred and Bernice Vrazel



TOCA Honorees James and Pavla Van Bibber



Travis-Williamson Counties CHS Honoree Dawn Orsak

TEXAS BLACKSMITHING CONFERENCE AND HUME L. BAKER TEXAS ANTIQUE GAS ENGINE REUNION

The Texas Blacksmithing Conference and The Hume L. Baker Texas Antique Gas Engine Reunion was held on the grounds of TCHCC on January 28 and 29, 2022. Sponsors included: the City of La Grange, TCHCC, Texas Trio Blacksmiths, South Texas Wheel Spinners & Crank Twisters Club, Oviedo Auto Group of La Grange, Pearland Lumber, Andrew J. Sehna in Memory of Bohuslav Kocourek, McCoy's Lawn Equipment of Austin, TK Land & Cattle of Corpus Christi, Kathy Havran In Memory of Victor Ray Havran, Norman Smoot, and Tim Blacksmith. Entertainment throughout the day was provided by Mike Stroup Trio and Walt and Glynis Harfmann.

Picture right: Proceeds from the event benefit the future site of the TCHCC Blacksmith Shop.



Blacksmithing classes began on Wednesday and ran through Friday with full classes all three days. Students for the classes came from all over Texas and from out-of-state. Presenters and teachers also traveled from across Texas and other states to take part in this educational and historical preservation event. Some presenters were from the television show “Forged in Fire”.



THE ANNUAL VALENTINE CONCERT AND DINNER

The Annual Concert and Dinner was held in the Hanslik Hall on February 12, 2022. Professor John Dujka performed on the Zimmermann Baby Grand Piano donated to TCHCC by the George Hetherington Family. Accompanying him on a few songs was Alfred Vrazel singing along. The meal was catered by Celebration Events & Catering and featured local Texas wines.





ORPHAN TRAIN IN BURLESON COUNTY

The Depot in Deanville, Texas was restored to as close as possible to the original depot. The depot had been moved from the original site decades ago, and the current land-owner did not want it on the property, so he was willing to donate it back to the community. It was in bad shape but was structurally sound and did not look anything like a depot. An Historical Association was formed. Land was donated and fund raisers were held. It has been beautifully restored, and the grand opening was held on April 30th. In addition, the committee decided to honor the 14 known Orphan Train Riders who came to Burleson County. A statue was purchased to represent each rider.

*We thank Beverly Blinks and Angelina Kretzschmar for the information and photo.



MORAVIAN GLORY, *Preserving Our Brilliance* EXHIBIT AT TCHCC

TCHCC has displayed a Museum exhibit showing life in Moravia that describes the specific destiny of a woman, great-grandmother Maryška, from Charvátská Nová Ves. Her life is told in pictures through the backdrop of the four seasons that were used to tell the four phases of life: Childhood, Youth, Adulthood, and Old Age. Her life is arranged on 21 panels that visitors were able to read in order to get an idea of the joys and struggles of her life. The customs and traditions of the seasons are associated with Maryška's destiny including historical moments such as World Wars, political changes, and lifestyle changes of the 20th century. Woven throughout the panels are authentic period materials, recipes, stylized photographs and graphics.

The exhibit was composed by the Moravian Glory Foundation from Atlanta, Georgia, which supports its sister foundation in the Czech Republic by project management assistance services in Czech American Communities and also with fundraising activities.

The exhibit opened on January 14th and closed on May 15, 2022 and is now on its way to other cities in the U.S. where many more people can enjoy the story. Over 200 visitors have traveled through the seasons of Maryška's life at TCHCC. Below are a few pictures of recent visitors. Top Left: Friends from Dallas area and San Antonio met in La Grange for a tour of the area (l-r: Kathleen Dennard, Janet Barker, Lisa Massena, Myrna Lancaster, Sue Burk, Pat Smith, Billye Crumlish). Top Right: Jan Woska, First Secretary/Cultural Attache at the Czech Embassy, Washington D.C. Bottom left: Deacon Pavel Fiala and Rev. Stephen Nesrsta. Bottom right: Deacons Frantisek Sary, Lukas Gelnar and Pavel Fiala from Olomouc, CZ with Rev. Stephen Nesrsta.



A VISIT FROM THE CZECH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Jan Woska, Cultural Attache at the Czech Embassy in Washington D.C. visited TCHCC on April 7, 2022. He was able to tour the library, museum, hold court in the SPJST Museum, view the Print Museum and all the village buildings including the new archival storage building (row 2-right photo 1-r: Board Member Walt Stoeber, Jan Woska, TCHCC Manager Mark Hermes, Board Member J. G. Hrncir) and then enjoyed a reception with TCHCC volunteers.



PIVOVAR, WACO, TEXAS

PIVOVAR held a grand opening on March 31, 2022. TCHCC Board Members Retta Chandler and J. G. Hrnecir along with Janis Hrnecir were able to make the trek to Waco. Czech Consul for the Czech Republic Brian Vanicek (also a TCHCC Board Member) and his wife Joan were present and a part of the Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony. There were many other familiar faces as well with Czech-funded organizations represented.

The afternoon festivities included food and drinks along with entertainment by the Hartmann Traditional Band, the Chris Rybak Band, and the West Junior Historian Dancers among others. The Brewery built the complex on the site of an old train depot on 8th Street in Waco. The complex includes a brewery, a bakery, a restaurant, and a hotel.

Top l-r: Retta Chandler and Pivovar Manager Julius Kramaric. Center: Imported malt. Right: West Junior Historian Dancers. Center: Kathy Podsednik, Miss McLennan-Hill Counties Czech-Slovak Queen and Little Sister: Jillian Sexton and Cora Mechell. Right: Susan Chandler, Joan Vanicek, and Nina Marcussen. Bottom left: Pivovar's Bakery, right: Pivovar's Hotel.



Czech Family Day

Saturday, June 25, 2022

Co-Sponsored by the Czech Heritage Society of Texas
and the Texas Czech Heritage & Cultural Center

Connect with your Heritage



All Day Fun for the Whole family!

Everyone welcome! Don't have to be a member to attend so bring your friends!

- 10 AM: Registration for the *Czech Family Day* activities inside TCHCC.
Czech Family Day is free! Food is separate cost upon registration.
- 10:30 AM-3 PM Random activities throughout the day along with touring of the TCHCC Museums and grounds.

Ice Cream Making • Cookie Decorating • Butter Making • Czech Bingo
Rock Painting • Czech Musical Chairs • Pickle Canning • *and More!*

For more information and to RSVP for lunch, contact
Phyllis Teykl at 512-971-4453 or email p.teykl@sbcglobal.net
You may also call TCHCC at 888-785-4500 or email info@czechtexas.org

250 West Fairgrounds Road • PO Box 6 • La Grange, TX 78945 • 888-785-4500

2022 UPCOMING EVENTS

June 25	TCHCC & CHS FAMILY DAY
	10 AM Registration (please RSVP for lunch)
July 23	Czech Heritage Society of Texas State Meeting and Genealogical Conference Sponsored by CHS Fayette County at TCHCC
	10:30 AM-3PM Activities throughout the day & touring of TCHCC Museums
October 14-15	HERITAGE FEST & MUZYKY, MUZYKY & SPJST 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
	Friday: Oktoberfest on the Deck (4-9:30 PM) Music by the Dujka Brothers Band Chicken & Dumplings sold in the Hanslik Hall
	Saturday: Heritage Fest in the Village Hospoda Music from 11 AM - 6 PM Heritage Demonstrations throughout the day, children activities Muziky, Muziky 7 - 9:30 PM with Fireworks Finale
December 3	TCHCC ANNUAL GALA - Pavilion Hall 6-9:30 PM Honorees TBA, Music, Open Bar, Buffet, Silent Auction, Raffle, & More
December 10	CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE 10AM - 3 PM

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January 1, 2022 – April 30, 2022

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**"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise
in democracy. You vote in elections
once a year but when you volunteer,
you vote every day about the kind
of community you want to live in."**

Anonymous

LIBRARY & MUSEUM DONATIONS

Clara Bartek: prayerbooks and early Czech organization ribbons

Hendrick Berger: Book: *History of SPJST*

Mildred Bohlmann: Boom Box, VCR Player

Michael Chittwood: fabric for Czech kroje belonging to Evelinka Drizga of Fayetteville

CHS Harris County: 8 pieces of pottery from Sean Sitka, a collection of personal items belonging to John Vojtech. Wall border sign with Czech motif.

David Chroust: Collection of research files and books

Jeff Cook: Blacksmith anvil, one post vice from John Krenek farm circa 1925, Ellinger, Texas

Waymond Davis: Welding machine, leads, miscellaneous items, torch set and dolly.

Frank & Marie Dulak: Restored Champion Blower and Forge Company Blower for Blacksmith Shop

Fayette County Library: Black and white photo of High Hill Church

Hugo and Mary Genser: 2 Czech Dolls

Debbie Chovanec Griffe: 6 Bohemian Cordial Glasses, 6 Bohemian Wine Glasses

Raymond Faraizl, Sr.: 4 coronets In Memory of Edward Louis Faraizl, book of music, Czech dolls and a collection of Krozek Club documents

Judith Lanik: two books

Emil & Ella Kana Family: Antique Flower Cross Picture in white frame

Rick Kocurek: Kocurek Family History

Lloyd & Judy Matejowsky: antique mercantile items

Geraldine O'Day: Tablecloths of Rev. Pustka, 2 crystal vases, 15-piece set of Bassett Czech dishes

Vlasta Pitra: Collection of Czech Books

Marvin Marek: 2 Family Histories: Marek and Lamza

Dale Meek: Collection of Czech books, wooden plates, pottery, vases and Emil Lukas paintings

Donna Mitchell: 11-piece set of Bassett Czech dishes

Dawn Orsak: Video files from Czech Exhibit

Jiri Pachla (via Nicole Radtke): Collection of Czech books

Larry and Mary Vrana Svehlak: 45 record of Frank Vrana, Poster of Moravian Society in 1966

Alice Vida: Czech tourist and promotional booklets and maps

Vera Wehring: Mother Vicki Matocha's set of Sonata Czech dishes, antique adding machine, and tools

Fan Mail

Dear Friends, Congratulations on all your accomplishments! We admire the TCHCC and its wonderful mission.

To recognize the efforts of so many volunteers who unselfishly give of their time and expertise, we are making a \$250 donation.
Sincerely, Emil & Elaine Thomas

Dear Retta, I really enjoyed our time together in La Grange. The tour of the Czech Center was great. So proud of you and your efforts and dedication to this project... Love, Myrna Lancaster

Hello Retta, We are so very proud to be a member of the TCHCC. You have done so much for the TCHCC and so have others. Keep up the beautiful work you all are doing and make us be proud of our Czech Heritage. God Bless you, Mary Jane and Bill Kahanek

Dear Mark & Team -- Thank you for the incredible tour of the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center and the use of the beautiful community room for our dinner.

You all have worked so hard preserving these important pieces of our history and it's just beautiful: Thank you! Seneca McAdams & Pam. Texas Independence Trail.

Texas Polka News Editors - Enclosed is our check for \$25.00 to renew another year. We enjoy reading each month. Keep up the good work. Jan and Charles Preuss.

IN ADDITION ...

Lillie Brightwell donated the print of the First Wedding near Ellinger that was highlighted in our Wedding Apparel Museum Exhibit (pictured below) and provided the information. The original print was owned by Sylvia Vavra who placed it in the Fayetteville Museum. The print used in Museum display was reproduced by Dybala Photography, Fayetteville, Texas.



TCHCC Memorials can be made to your deceased loved ones or to honor a family member that is still active in promoting Czech culture and tradition.

IMMIGRANTS' WALL

A stone wall with engravings on plaques that include the name(s) of the immigrant(s), village of origin and date that he/she/they arrived in the United States. Plaques are available for \$2500. Contact us for details.

ENTRY PAVING STONES

A 12"x12" pink granite stone will be engraved with your choice of wording up to 40 letters for \$1000. These stones are in the entryway of the Czech Center. Contact us for details.

25TH ANNIVERSARY STONES

A 12"x12" pink granite stone will be engraved with your choice of wording up to 40 letters for \$1000. These stones are in a special section of the Czech Center. Contact us for details.

ROSE GARDEN MEMORIAL

For \$250 an 8" x 8" brick will be placed along the Rose Garden path that lines the entry sidewalk to the Czech Center. The brick will be inscribed with your choice of wording. Contact us for details.

MEMORIAL BRICK PAVERS

An 8" x 4" brick paver will be engraved with your choice of wording for \$100. The bricks will be placed in the sidewalk leading from the flagpoles to the steps that enter the Czech Center. Contact us for details.

BELL & BELFRY

For donations of \$50 or more, inscriptions are painted on the memorial sign. For donations under \$50, a record of the donation is made on a parchment list.

AMPHITHEATER SUPPORTERS

A designated amphitheater seat will be reserved with your name plate. Participant can reserve this seat whenever there is an event at the Amphitheater by calling ahead. Seats range: \$1,000, \$750 and \$500.

FLAG SPONSORS

Sponsorship can be made in Memory of or in Honor of an individual or group. \$250.00/newsletter.

**BECOME A FRIEND OF THE
CENTER.**

Donation amounts are recognized by levels:

____ Permanent Endowment Fund
____ Maintenance and Operations
____ Other: _____

200,000	____ Five Star
100,000	____ Platinum Benefactor
50,000	____ Gold Benefactor
25,000	____ Silver Benefactor
10,000	____ Bronze Benefactor
5,000	____ Benefactor
2,500	____ President's Circle
2,000	____ Pioneer
1,500	____ Heritage Friend
1,000	____ Founder
750	____ Steward
500	____ Patron
250	____ Donor
150	____ Special Friend
100	____ Friend

Membership from

January 1—December 31

\$2000 ____ Lifetime Membership **NEW!**

\$500 ____ Corporate

\$200 ____ Non-Profit Organization

\$ 75 ____ Family

\$ 50 ____ Individual

ANNUAL SUSTAINED MEMBERSHIP (yearly)

Benefits: Preserving YOUR Heritage, Annual Calendar
and *Nas Cesky Zivot* newsletters

MEMORIALS can be made to honor someone living, on their
birthday or anniversary etc., or the memory of a deceased friend
or family member.

FOR _____

Send Acknowledgement to: _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Donor: Name _____

Address _____

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Message: _____

MAIL TO:

TCHCC, P.O. Box 6, LaGrange, TX 78945-0006



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