



LA GRANGE, TEXAS

NÁŠ ČESKÝ ŽIVOT

"OUR CZECH LIFE"

(Centrum českého kulturního dědictví v Texasu)

SUMMER 2022

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 2



25th Anniversary



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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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.

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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.

FOLLOW US ON

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We are currently taking 2023 memberships
and donations online on our website.

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President's Letter
August 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. 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.

Not only was this year's Slavnost celebrating 25 years since inception, but it was the 20th Anniversary of Slavnost/Mayfest.

I want to thank everyone who has helped us in any way to thrive and grow throughout the years. We could not have done it without our dedicated volunteers and those who supported us financially.

Děkujeme,
Retta Slavik Chandler



L-R: Retta Slavik Chandler, Martha Marek, Daniel Marek, recipient of Czernin Palace Memorial Award, Czech Consul General Raymond Snokhous.

Daniel J. Marek, 92, of El Campo, passed away June 27, 2022. He was born on July 21, 1929 in Shiner to the late John and Rosie Stavinoha Marek. Daniel was a U.S. Army and Air Force Reserve Veteran. He was a member of TCHCC, Wharton County Czech Heritage Society, K.J.T., an honorary life member of Knights of Columbus Council 2490, Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Council 1131, American Legion Post #251, Texas Retired Teachers Association, TOCA, CEFT, TAMIC, NAMIC, Catholic Life, AARP, Active Advantage and Taiton Community Center.

He is survived by his children, Diana Orsak [Thomas] of Bay City, Dennis Marek [Jan] of Sugar Land, Kenneth Marek [Clara] of Edna, Donna Barrett [David] of Bay City and Nancy McLain [Daniel] of Lake Jackson; 14 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great grandchildren; brothers Marvin Marek [Judy], Raymond Marek [Ethel], sister-in-law, Josie Mican and brother-in-law, Jerome Bartos [Betty].

Daniel was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Martha Bartos Marek; in-laws, Joe and Annie Spurny Bartos; daughter, Annette Matula; son-in-law, Allen Naiser; brothers, John and Robert Marek and sister, Marie Luchak.

The funeral was held on Friday, July 1 at St. Philip Catholic Church with a KC Rosary recited at 9:30 a.m. Funeral Mass followed at 10 a.m. with the Rev. Michael Rother officiating. Entombment with military honors under the auspices of the American Legion Post 251 followed at Holy Cross Memorial Park.

Daniel was a close, personal friend of all TCHCC volunteers and personnel and a staunch supporter of TCHCC having been on the Board of Directors and physically helping out along the way. He was a recipient of the Czernin Palace Memorial Award in 2014 (pictured above) which was bestowed on him by the Czech Republic and presented to him by the Czech Consul General Raymond Snokhous. He received this award for his many years of dedicated service to all the major Czech organizations in Texas. All Texas Czechs have benefited from the work that Daniel and his wife Martha did throughout the years to preserve and promote the Czech heritage and culture.

TCHCC 2022 CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE & BAKE SALE
Tour the vintage decorated Czech Village
December 10 from 10 AM - 3 PM
TCHCC Volunteers are asked to provide items for the bake sale.



OCTOBER 14TH & 15TH
TEXAS CZECH HERITAGE & CULTURAL CENTER
250 West Fairgrounds Road, La Grange, Texas
CELEBRATING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPJST!



SPJST Tent:

PERFORMANCES BY:
 SPJSTs

Houston Concert Orchestra
 & Dallas Czech Orchestra

**CORNHOLE
 TOURNAMENT!**

Friday, Oct. 14th

~KJT Oktoberfest on the Deck~

4:00 PM to 10:00 PM

Czech Style

Chicken & Dumplings Served!!

Music 6:00 - 9:30 PM
with The Dujka Brothers

FREE Admissions



The Dujka Brothers



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LA GRANGE
 MAIN STREET & VISITORS BUREAU

Saturday, Oct. 15th

Opening Ceremony - 11:00 AM

Cavender HOSPODA



CZECH & THEN SOME



ROUND TOP BRASS BAND

Amphitheater 7:00 pm!!

THE KING LIVES! \$10 Admission

KRAIG PARKER: ELVIS TRIBUTE, ROYAL BAND & BRASS



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 •TRAIN RIDES
 •VILLAGE TOURS

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~ SATURDAY NIGHT FIREWORKS FINALE ~

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 Sponsored by
 H-E-B**

20TH ANNUAL SLAVNOST/MAYFEST & 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF TCHCC MAY 15, 2022



Left: Former and present TCHCC Board Members were on hand to participate in the 25th Anniversary celebration at the 20th Annual Slavnost/Mayfest. L-R: Walter Stoeber, Bill Melnar, Bill Schovajsa, Marvin Marek, Ben Bohuslav, Retta Chandler, Johnnie Polasek, Barbara Hruby, Ed Krivacka, Sandra Matthijetz, Arnold Pechal, Carolyn Heinsohn, Brian Vanicek, Rudy Patek, and J. G. Hrnecir. Right: Visiting Louisiana Czech Consul Monika Ventrilkova, Retta Slavik Chandler, and Brian Vanicek, Texas Honorary Czech Consul.



Food, Fun, Maypole Dance, and Music by the Czechaholics were evident at TCHCC Slavnost 2022 as the 25th Anniversary of TCHCC was celebrated. Guest Speaker Gabriela Gerhart spoke and signed copies of her book *After The Fall*.



The Annual Wreath Laying at the Immigrant Wall was performed by Brian Vanicek, SPJST President and TCHCC Board Member. Royalty from the Czech Heritage Society of Texas and SPJST which included: l-r: 2022 Little Czech-Slovak Sister Natalie Hollingsworth, 2022 Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Queen Destiny Hollingsworth, Brian Vanicek, Honorary Czech Consul, 2021-22 SPJST State Queen Megan Ohnhaiser, Miss Czech-Slovak US 2021-2022 Queen Lauren Gerik, CHS 2021-2022 Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Madison Murphy.



The Moravian Glory Exhibit was the highlight of the Museum.
Left: visitors to the exhibit. Right: TCHCC President Retta Slavik Chandler, Louisiana Czech Consul Monika Ventrilkova, and Dr. Lida Cope.





Pardubická Muzika performed in the Sanford Schmid Amphitheater on May 24, 2022

Brass-band music has a long tradition at the Pardubice Conservatory. It has been a part of the Brass Department for almost as long as the Conservatory has existed, representing it at many events in the region. In 2012, the Banda di Feste ensemble was founded. In the beginning, it focused exclusively on classical Czech brass music. As time went on, it began to play dance and popular music, so there wasn't as much room for brass band music in the band's repertoire anymore. Therefore, Banda di Feste eventually split into two separate ensembles, a big band and a brass band bearing the name of "Pardubická Muzika".

The new band honours the traditional Czech line-up - two clarinets, two flugelhornes, two bass flugelhornes, two trumpets, trombone, tuba, and drums. The band also has two amazing singers. The band is led by Michal Chmelař, the first trumpet of the Pardubice Chamber Philharmonie Orchestra.

Band members - the US tour: Flugelhornes - Michal Chmelař, Jan Buček; Trumpets - Iva Jindříšková, Michael Stehno; Bass flugelhornes - Richard Kosuk, Ladislav Herz; Trombone - Jiří Matyska; Tuba - Petr Kabele; Drums - Kamil Pecina; Vocals - Veronika Sokolová, Marie Novotná.



Left:
Pardubice Mayor Regiand and TCHCC Manager Mark Hermes. Right: the band members view the informative TCHCC video.



CZECH FAMILY DAY

Czech Family Day took place on Saturday, June 25, 2022 at TCHCC. This event is co-sponsored by the Czech Heritage Society of Texas and the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center.

Families spent the day "Connecting with their Heritage" by participating in various activities such as Ice Cream Making, Cookie Decorating, Butter Making, Czech Bingo, Rock Painting, Czech Musical chairs, Pickle Canning and more. Photos courtesy of John Vaculik.



DUBINA. A place of freedom and hope

A new book written by Ed & Margie Janecka gives a comprehensive look at the people who settled the first Czech settlement in Texas, as well as Czech culture, traditions, and values.

The book is over 350 pages long with over 400 pictures.

If interested in buying a copy, please send \$40 for the book plus \$5 for postage to Country Publishing Company,
2405 Dubina Weimar Rd , Weimar, Tx 78962
For more information, please see DubinaTexas.com

The book is also available in the TCHCC Gift Shop

Left: Former Fayette County Judge Ed Janecka



The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center, Inc. was incorporated on March 24, 1997 after many years of planning and meetings and was the brainchild of the Texans of Czech Ancestry (TOCA). TOCA is a coalition of representatives of Texas Czech founded organizations that were initially founded in 1985 to celebrate the Texas Sesquicentennial by presenting to the public aspects of Czech history and culture and the contributions made by Czechs in the growth in Texas.

In 1995, TOCA officers were chosen with Retta Slavik Chandler as President, Carolyn Sumbera Heinsohn as Secretary, and Arnold Pechal as Treasurer with the purpose of building a site to celebrate Czech heritage.

The next phase was to choose a site for TCHCC to call home and after selecting La Grange, fund raising began. A Capital Campaign was launched and interested individuals, businesses and other non-profit organizations were invited to contribute \$1,000 to the Million Dollar Club to provide seed money. The response was overwhelming and the funds gave the organization the green light to proceed.

Twenty five years later, the 20 plus acres includes an amphitheater, barns, vintage homes, saw mill, museums, library, and hall rental buildings providing the public with a cultural center that emphasizes the Czech history, language, heritage, and culture. And more is on the way including a Blacksmith Shop and two churches.

It would not have happened if it had not been for the following members of the MILLION DOLLAR CLUB!

Leon & Bettye Anhaier	Celestine Ermis	Lamza Family Reunion c/o Dan
Allen Bartosh	Georgia Funderburk	Marek
A. J. & Jennifer Batla	Laddie & Helen Gajdica	Daniel & Martha Marek
Ernest & Evelyn Bezdek	James & Virginia Gerick	Marvin J. & Judy Marek
Frank J. & Margaret Bilek	Joe M. & Doris Gurecky	Ted & Neldina Marek
Milady Ann Blaha	Anton Hajek III	Vickie Matocha
Ben W. & Lou Bohuslav	Ladislav & Ann Hala	Raymond & Sandra Matthijetz
Willie V. & Joyce Bohuslav	Milady Blaha Hejl	Clarence Matula
John Robert & Lillie Vavra Brightwell	Paul Hlavinka	Donald E. Mazoch
Dorothy Parma Broussard	JG & Janis Hrnecir	Jerome (Sonny) Mazoch
George & Dorothy Grafe Bujnoch	George & Barbara Hruby	Kenneth & Ethel Kuzell Meek
Agnes Elzner Burge	Msgr. Joseph Hybner	William & Betty Melnar
Vicky L. Castleman	Louis J. & Irene Jasek	Peggy Buchorn Mensik
Richard G. & Molly Cernosek	Lawrence and Mary Ann Kainer	Guenter & Donna Merkle
Aurelia Cerny	Donna Kaspar	Joe E. & Shirley Kalich Michka
Henrietta Cervenka	Ted & Dorothy Kaspar	Frank H. & Elrose Migl
Charles & Retta Chandler	John & Irmgard M. Kebrle	John A. & Nancy Migl
Leland & Paula Chvatal	Lester & Carol Kitchen	John W. Mikeska
Pat Crow	Joe E. & Margaret Klecka	Helen Trnovsky Mikus
Esther Cunningham	Mary Jane Kocurek	Kathy Lee Miller
Conrad & Betty Danner	Thomas A. & Alice Kocurek	Leland Miller
Edwin F. Darilek	Leslie J. & Georgia Kovar	Earl & JoAnne (Korenek) Milliken
Waymond & Jean Blaha Davis	Florence Krejci	Edith Molberg
John & Hattie Peter Drozd	Kenneth & Mary Ann Krivanek	Paul & Leona Najvar
L. L. Duckett	William J. Kriz	Leo & Josephine Noska Family
Jerry L. Elzner	Eugene & Katherine Labay	Albert Novak, Jr.

Million Dollar Club Continued

Joe A. Novak
Joe J. & Helen Novosad
Gladys Oakley
Peyton Ohl
Patricia Parma
Richard Pavlasek
Anthony and Mary G. Pavlik
Robert Petter
Johnnie Joe & Lorenda Polasek
Hattie Poole
David A. & Nancy Jirasek Reeves
Eugene J. Repka
Sanford & Mannie Schmid
Bernice Netek Schoenfeld
Mrs. Henry (Ruth) Schovajsa
Weldon & Delores Schulte
Perry & Sara Schwierzke
Evelyn Tichavsky Skopik
T. J. & Myrna Slansky
C.S. (Woody) Smith
Marie Plachy Smith
Albert & Margaret Smotek
Clarice Marik Snokhous
Hon. Con. Gen. Ray Snokhous
Robert Stall
Margaret Charbula Sunderman
Irene Polansky Szwarc
Margaret Baron Taylor
Mary A. Tokoly
Leo & Mary Triska Family
Edwin & Dolores Guenther Vacek
Ed & Mary Vasek
Carson Vecera
Conner Vecera
Jeramie Eugene Vecera
Gilbert & Vlasta Vitek
Helen Vodicka
Kathy Miller Voshalike
Vydrzal Family Reunion
Elmont & Georgia Vyvial
Paul & Dottie Watthuber
Patrick & Charlotte Yates
Lou & Jo Ann Zaeske
John & Erlene Zavadil
Jeanette & Ervan Zouzalik
Mary Zycha

Million Dollar Organizations

Austin Czech Historical Association
Fayette Czech Singers & Dancers
Fort Bend County Czech Alliance, Inc.
KJT
KJZT Family Life
KJZT #72 El Campo
KJZT # 93 Austin
KJZT #120 St. Bernadette Society
RVOS Director, District 4
RVOS #144 Ft. Worth
SPJST #130
Czech Heritage Society of Texas

CHS-Brazos Valley
CHS-Concho Valley
CHS-Fayette County
CHS-Ft. Bend County
CHS-Lavaca County
CHS-McLennan Hill Counties
CHS-Travis-Williamson Counties
CHS-Victoria County
CHS-Wharton County

Million Dollar Businesses

ExxonMobil Foundation
Mico Machine Co.

WE ARE ALSO GRATEFUL FOR OUR 25 YEARS OF VOLUNTEERS

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James & Mary Lou Anderle
Gary & Shirley Antosh
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John & Kim Bartos
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Ben Bohuslav
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Audrey Cernoch
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 Gilbert and Vlasta Vitek
 Ted & Sarah Jo Vitek
 Elmont & Georgia Vyvial
 Ron & Ann Vyvial
 Walt & Lucy Walicek

Ron & Susan Wall
 Shayley & Vera Wehring
 Grace Ann Wilhelm
 Marie Wilhelm
 Sarah Wilhelm
 Melanie Zavodny
 Alice Zezula
AND VOLUNTEERS FROM
 La Grange Leo's Club
 Czech Heritage Society
 KJT State Office
 KJZT
 Polka Lovers Club of Texas
 South Texas Wheel Spinners & Crank Twisters Club
 SPJST
 Texas Trio Group
 and many more...

THANKS TO THE DEDICATED BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT HAVE STEERED THE SHIP FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS.

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If your name was omitted, please let us know so we may update the list.

THE 25 YEAR PROGRESS OF TCHCC

- 1996** TCHCC initially begun by TOCA and operated out of desk housed in the La Grange Chamber of Commerce.
- 1996** TCHCC moved to a one-room office in the BEFCO building in La Grange.
- 1997** TCHCC signed the lease with the City of La Grange for the property next to the Fairgrounds.
- 1998** The Walking Trail and Stations were built around the property.
- 2000** The Kalich House, donated by Jonathan and Peggy Kalich of Schulenburg, was donated to TCHCC in memory of the Kalich Family of Ammannsville. The house was moved to the site by Kana Brothers House Leveling and Moving Inc. and restored by volunteers and a \$50,000 Heritage Building Fund. It was restored by Robert Slovak of Slovak Construction, Ennis, Texas and volunteers under the direction of Marvin Marek. Thousands of hours were spent restoring the dog-run house into a single structure. The Open House was held on October 21, 2001 and served as the official Visitors' Center until 2009.
- In 2012 the Kalich House's four rooms were converted into the Czech Music Museum of Texas.
- 2002** Sanford Schmid Amphitheater was completed. The open air, state-of-the-art theater sits in a natural cove on the hillside overlooking a 60-mile vista including La Grange and the Colorado River Valley. The amphitheater seats 425 people and is built in a Texas Czech style which includes an open stage, dressing rooms, rest rooms and prop storage area. The construction was made possible by grants from the LCRA, Mr. Sanford Schmid, Union Pacific, Leo Legler Estate, as well as individual donors.
- 2003** The Wallachian Bell and Belfry arrived at TCHCC. The Bell and Belfry began as an idea in September of 1992 when a group of historians and performers from the Wallachian Open Air Museum in Roznov pod Radhostem visited Texas as guests of the Czech Heritage Society of Texas. In 1995 the Bell and Belfry was on display in Washington, D. C. at the Festival of the American Folk Life and after the festival ended the belfry was dismantled and brought to Texas on a rental truck by Eugene Labay and Ladislav Zezula where it sat in Mr. Zezula's barn in Runge for 14 months before being reassembled at its temporary location at St. Mary's Church in Praha, Texas. In June of 2003 CHS of Texas donated the Belfry to TCHCC where it came to its permanent location on July 5, 2003. The Donor Wall was installed next to the belfry during the week of August 17, 2003. The signage documents donors who have given memorials to help provide maintenance and upkeep of the structure. The Fort Bend Chapter of the Czech Heritage Society of Texas added the concrete walkway in 2010.
- 2004** The Migl House was moved to the site in the Spring of 2004 after being completely restored by the Migl family. The house was constructed in 1890 and lived in by several generations of Migls and Jaseks.
- 2004** Frank J. Parma Bridge "Mostek" was built across a small stream by Charles Chandler, Dan Marek, Raymond Matthijetz, Johnnie Polasek, Ed Vasek, and Elmont Vyvial. Funding was provided by Patricia Parma in memory of her husband Frank J. Parma.
- 2005** Log Barn. An authentic circa 1904 Double Log Corn Crib with Dog Trot was donated by Hilda Fajkus and Sylvia Ratcliffe of Cistern and moved to the site by Kana Brothers Moving Company after being restored by Vasek brothers Ed, Ernest and David of Plum, Texas. Restoration took over a year and was completed by logs donated by Jeb Pape. Vickie Matocha donated antique hewn logs and other antique wood.
- 2005** The Country Store was donated by Roy Bucek and was moved to TCHCC on May 11, 2005. It once stood in Schulenburg. After three years and many volunteer hours of restoration it became part of the Czech Village. In 2010 an addition was added to the side of the store which increased display space. The volunteer carpenters included Ben Bohuslav, Charles Chandler, Waymond Davis, J. G. Hrnecir, Ted Kaspar, Charlie Ripper, and Johnnie Polasek.
- 2005** The Hoelscher Haus, donated by Henry and Esther Hoelscher, was moved to the site on October 19, 2005. The house was built in the late 1870s by the Anton Hoelscher, II Family. The restoration was realized through contributions made by Charter Members of the Polka Lovers Club of Texas and others and houses the Polka Lovers' Club of Texas Museum. The museum honored Msgr. Joseph M. Hybner on February 28, 2016 with the ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony for the addition to the Hoelscher Haus. Major donors recognized were Msgr. Joseph M. Hybner and Sanford Schmid.
- 2007** TCHCC received the *Gratias Agit Award* in Prague, Czech Republic for its contribution for preserving and promoting Czech culture in the U. S.
- 2008** The Hlucanek Salas (Salač) House, located in Holman, Texas was donated by Don and Betsy Chovanec and was moved to its present location in the village in May of 2008. The two-story house was built by Frank F. Hluchanek in 1889 with additions made in 1915 by the Hluchanek Family.
- 2009** Library Museum Archives Complex was constructed in 2008. Designer Roger Kolar using a "dvur" courtyard concept, the building is reminiscent of the homes, farm buildings and meeting halls that early Czech settlers built. There is an exhibit museum room that was completed in 2014 funded by Liberty Pollard, The Schwartz Family, and Richard and Molly Cernosek. A library room that was funded by Bill and Betty Melnar contains books and periodicals focused on genealogy, Czech and Texas history and culture. A multipurpose room for meetings and special events was funded by Adolph Hanslik. The board room was funded by KJT, and a gift shop was funded by Willie and Mardi Kopecky. The foyer is a large glassed-in area with a futuristic look funded by Ben and Doris Koliba.
- 2010** The Immigrant Wall was added and dedicated to Czechs who emigrated to Texas.
- 2014** Krasna School Bell was donated in 2011 by Raymond and Clarice Snokhous and dedicated in 2014.
- 2014** Janak Barn is a replica of an early 1900s Texas Czech farm housing the Texas Czech Agriculture Museum. Major donors were Rita Hybner Janak, Sanford & Mannie Schmid, and the Economic Development Corporation of the City of La Grange.
- 2015** Maintenance Building was built to house all of the display and groundskeeping equipment thanks to the donation and continuous support of TCHCC by Richard and Molly Cernosek and their children Bailey Steinhauser, Chris, Carmen and Lisa Cernosek.

2015 Zapalac Sawmill is an 1895 DeLoach No. 1 Mill that was owned and operated by the Vinc B. Zapalac family from the Ellinger area on the Colorado River. Donors were Donna Zapalac Mueller with a partnership from Dickson-Allen Foundation of Hallettsville, Texas. Installation of the mill and making it operational for demonstrations requires intensive, hard work from volunteers from the South Texas Wheel Spinners and Crank Twisters Club.

2016 Sladek Smoke and Wash House were added in 2016. Walt Walicek assembled the building that was donated by the children of Erwin A. and Frances Sladek, Sr.: Erwin A. and Bonnie Sladek, Jr., Dr. Tim and Tami Sladek, Brian and Shirley Sladek Varner and Keith and Patricia Sladek Korenek.

2018 SPJST Lodge #19 Velehrad in Lavaca County, Texas was moved to the grounds of TCHCC in 2017. The hall traveled through the community of Praha on November 9, 2017 and joined the other TCHCC Village buildings. Kana Brothers, Inc. House Leveling and Moving performed the task. Repairs began and a Dedication Ceremony was held on May 19, 2019.

2019 The Czech Newspaper Museum was dedicated in March 2019. The Kluge Printing Press and printing equipment that made its way from Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 2003 was owned by the Jan Barta Letovsky family. Jan founded the first weekly Czech language newspaper in 1869. It was passed down to John Albert Kuba around 1997. In 2003 Adolph Novy of Ennis, Texas transported it to Ennis where he restored it and then transported it to La Grange, Texas. Through funding by Richard and Molly Cernosek, Sanford Schmid and Armin & Regina Keilers the building that was to house the press was completed and dedicated on March 16, 2019.

2022 The New Archive Storage Building was completed. Content work has begun and continues.

CURRENTLY. Work on the Blacksmith Shop and a remodel of the Country Store has begun. Two churches, one Catholic and one Czech Brethren, will be completed in the near future.



Czech Heritage Society (CHS) of Texas Czech-Slovak Queens participated in the 35th Miss Czech-Slovak US National Pageant during the 61st Annual Czech Days Festival August 5-7 in Wilber, Nebraska, the Czech Capital of the USA

Lauren Gerik, Miss Czech-Slovak US Queen 2021-22, led the weekend of national royalty and participating queens through bandstand introductions, daily parades, private interviews, onstage interviews, kroj modeling, and talent presentations. During her reign, Lauren traveled to seven states, in addition to Texas, to attend cultural events and festivals, meeting with many Czech-Slovak dignitaries. Lauren, an Abbott native, is a member of the McLennan-Hill Chapter of CHS, KJZT Family Life Society #104 Abbott, and SPJST Lodge #66 Waco.

Madison Murphy, CHS Miss Texas Czech-Slovak 2021-22, competed in the pageant alongside state queens from Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and South Dakota. She was welcomed by a host of supporters from the State of Texas, all her family, and Kathy Podsednik, CHS Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Pageant Director. Madison traveled throughout Texas and other states with her title at many festivals and events, making many new friends along the way. Madison is a senior at Abbott High School and is also a member of McLennan-Hill CHS, KJZT Family Life Society #104 Abbott, and SPJST Lodge #6 Cottonwood.

As visiting royalty, Destiny Hollingsworth, CHS Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Queen 2022-23 and a member of Bexar County CHS from San Antonio, participated in bandstand introductions, daily parades, and onstage introductions. All the queens and visitors forged relationships with Czech and Slovak attendees, as well as honorary consuls, dignitaries, and embassy representatives from various states.

During the competition, Madison modeled her personally hand-made kroj of Czech imported fabrics honoring her ancestral homeland. Her talent presentation included her love of quilting, especially from family fabrics. In recognition of her heritage representation, Madison was honored to receive the Gruntorad-Stastny Heritage Award. The \$450 award was accompanied by Bohemian crystal and was sponsored by donors from Canada, Iowa, and Colorado. She was also awarded the Miss Congeniality Award, receiving a scholarship and Bohemian crystal sponsored by the Czech Alaska Society and Peter Ptak. Monica Pechous, a practicing attorney from Missouri, was crowned Miss Czech-Slovak US 2022-23; Anna Sedivy-Thompson, Miss Oklahoma C-S as first runner-up; and Cecelia Minchow, Miss Nebraska C-S as second runner-up.

For more information about the CHS Czech Queen and Little Sister program, visit www.czechheritage-texas.org/miss-tx-czech-slovak or contact Texas Pageant Director Kathy Podsednik at kathypods@gmail.com.

Letters in Chronicling Migration and Integration
Book Review – Dr. Eva Eckert



Jan and Wilhemina Boehm Pribyl



Ferdinand and Anna Malcak Pribyl

In 1883 Jan Pribyl, his wife Wilhelmina, and their four children immigrated to central Texas from Frenstat in the Moravian region of the Austrian Empire. He had lost his income as a weaver and in describing his decision, Jan later wrote from America that, “I have not immigrated out of carelessness but due to certain principles and after sound and mature reasoning and deliberation in order to establish a better future not necessarily for myself but for my posterity.” In 1885 his brother Ferdinand, wife Anna and their son, Anton, also immigrated, settling near Jan.

The story of Jan and Ferdinand has been preserved in the form of over 200 letters written between the brothers and their friends and relatives. These have been passed down through four generations by family members. Most were written in the interim after Jan came to Texas, while Ferdinand was still in Austria. Eloquently expressed, they paint a vivid depiction of life on both sides of the Atlantic during that pivotal era in world history. From Ferdinand’s perspective they describe the difficulties of procuring a life sustaining salary in Europe and on Jan’s side the equal difficulties of establishing roots and procuring an income for his family in a totally new, untested and unknown country.

A further legacy preserved by the family is the artwork of Ferdinand, who painted impressive nativity scenes after he emigrated. These have been displayed in numerous exhibitions, including Christmas exhibits at the TCHCC in 2010 and 2011.

The letters of Jan and Ferdinand are the subject of an upcoming book by Dr. Eva Eckert, a professor of linguistics at the American Anglo University in Prague. In 1990 Eva was teaching at Trinity University in San Antonio when a colleague asked her help in deciphering Czech tombstone inscriptions in the Praha cemetery for a research project. During subsequent visits to other such cemeteries, Eva became fascinated with the determination and tenacity of the immigrants who decided to leave a settled life in usually quite picturesque settings in Europe to move to an unknown land with an often hostile climate. “The contrasts between the geography, architecture and history of the Czech Republic and Texas seemed irreconcilable to me”, Eva wrote. Hoping to answer this question, she visited numerous Czech cemeteries, finding clues to the lives of the people buried there. She also met with descendants of those immigrants, many of whom generously shared their family letters. Her research on those immigrants, using previously untapped and unpublished sources, has been recounted in her book, *Stones on the Prairie*, which is also a detailed history of Czech immigration to the US before World War II.



The Pribyl Staha Scene: one of the hand-crafted nativity scenes by Ferdinand Pribyl.

After reading the book, Bette Stockbauer, a descendant of the Pribyl family, contacted Eva and shared with her the Pribyl letters. Impressed by their depth of feeling and the compelling picture they paint of the immigrant experience, Eva has used them as the subject for a book soon to be published by Slavica Publishers called *Letters in Chronicling Migration and Integration*. During the era it describes, letters were the only means of maintaining contact between the members of separated families, many of whom would never see one another again. They were vital in relaying news and often deeply moving. Dr. Eckert does a brilliant job of not only telling the story of Jan and Ferdinand, but in showing their experience as a reflection of the lives of millions of others who held the same aspirations and faced the same challenges.

Information about Dr. Eckert: <https://www.aauni.edu/directory/eva-eckert/>

Information about the letters and artwork of Jan and Ferdinand Pribyl: <https://www.pribylbrothers.info/>



Bette Stockbauer-Harris, Betty Stockbauer, James Harris



Dr. Eva Eckert



Pictured above: The Stockbauer Nativity Scene.

TCHCC will inform our readers of the publication date of *Letters in Chronicling Migration and Integration*.

The Life and Sojourn in Texas of Reverend Bohumír Gottfried Menzel Presentation at TCHCC

The Life and Sojourn in Texas of Rev. Bohumír Menzel was presented at TCHCC on August 25, 2022 by Dr. Lukas Perutka from Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, Czech Republic.

Dr. Perutka has a PhD in History, is a 2012 graduate of Charles University, Prague and has focused on migration from Valachia to Texas since 2015. His teaching experience includes courses taught at U. C. Berkley and Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico. He is currently back in the Czech Republic teaching World History and Czech Migration at Charles University and is also an assistant professor at Palacký University in Olomouc.

Bohumír (Gottfried) Menzel was born on June 6, 1798 in Krasny Les in northern Bohemia to a farming family. He was somewhat of a mysterious figure who visited Texas between 1849 and 1851 with a group of German and Czech settlers. He settled in the New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, Castroville, and D'Hannis areas where he taught school, was a natural scientist, and a Catholic priest.

Dr. Lukas Perutka has studied his life and is preparing a paper detailing his career. Perutka informed the TCHCC attendants that "Menzel's first intention was his passion for natural sciences, and his desire to discover unknown flora and fauna in Texas. He was very likely influenced by his friend August Corda, who was invited by count Franz Colloredo Mansfeld to participate in a biological expedition to North America in 1848... His second reason was the fact that Menzel served as a guide of Czech and German emigrants to Texas."

Menzel's third intention was to his missionary efforts. German Catholics in Texas lacked the services of a priest who spoke their native tongue. It is known that he served the communities in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels and erected a huge cross at a hill near Fredericksburg that is still present today.

Menzel returned home to northern Bohemia in 1851 where he was recognized for his humanitarian endeavor and was promoted to the position of a dean. He spent time researching local nature and publishing books on the topics. His life's work was recognized by Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I who decorated him with the Golden Cross for merit with Crown in 1875. Reverend Menzel died in Nové Město four years later on May 4, 1879.



DONATIONS

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TEXAS POLKA NEWS

Joe and Lucy Lamer

2023 CALENDAR ADS

Daniel & Rose Cernoch

CHS of Texas

Cistern Country Store

James Corporron

KJZT Family Life

Pivovar Waco

Queen of the Rosary Parish, Hostyn

Majek Vineyard & Winery

National Polka Festival of Ennis

RVOS Farm Mutual Insurance Company

Schulenburg Historical Museum

Schulenburg Chamber of Commerce

St. Peter & Paul Catholic Church, Plum

Stanzel Family Foundation, Inc & Aircraft
Museum

Texas Cotton Gin Museum

Honorary Czech Consul Brian Vanicek

ENTRY PAVING STONE

In Honor of Frankie Joe & Nettie Dell Cernosek

Nettie Cernosek

MEMORIAL BRICK PAVER

In Honor of Frankie Joe Cernosek

Nettie Cernosek

In Memory of Bryan R. Kaderka

Denise K. Saha

25th Anniversary Paving Stone

*Fayetteville Bank Directors, Officers and
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In Memory of John Kahanek, III

Sonia Kahanek

25th Anniversary of TCHCC

Melinda & Lynette, Bill & Betty Melnar

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In Memory of Ben & Mildred Mikula

Paul Mikula

National Polka Festival of Ennis, TX

National Polka Festival of Ennis

*In Honor of Larry & Kathy Podsednik &
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Marek*

Marek Family

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Lucinda Stinson
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In Memory of Alice Zezula
Retta Slavik Chandler
Elizabeth Anna Kallus
Johnnie & Lorenda Polasek
Jennie Schubert

LIBRARY AND MUSEUM DONATIONS

Donna Baker: Quilt rack
Clara Bartek: Prayerbooks and early Czech organization ribbons
Stan Cerny & Elizabeth Patalik: Praha Church Income Report (1931-1940)
C. Cervenka: History of Community of Cervenka, Hana Region
Jeanette Cervenka: 4 framed religious pictures
Michael Chittwood: carved wooden clock and various other carved objects, books
CHS Fayette County: Dance Hall video
Frank & Marie Dulak: Restored Champion Blower and Forge Co. Blower
G. G. Dvorak: Czech prayer book, Ft. Bliss Army photo
Vincent Fecher: Czech books
James Fojtik: Books belonging to Beatrice Fojtik
Charles and Sylvia Hebert: Book
Ed Janecka: Dubina historical book
Ed Jalufka: Rocking Horse, 3 crosses wooden statue
Jennifer Klanika: Shiner Texas History book
Rick Kocurek: 2 family histories

Sr. Colette Kouba: books, music sheets
Joyce Madden: 5 Czech dolls ***In Memory of Dan and Lillie Jemelka***
Marvin Marek: Marek and Lamza Family Histories
Dorothy Machac: Satin wedding dress
Eugene Mitchan Family: Der Rhine Steins Band Stand
Monica Muras: books, Hoelscher Family Video
Vlasta Pitra: books
W. F. Raley: Czech cimbal
Pauline Stryk: books and religious cards
Paula Vecera: Books
Susan Vichova: books
Monika Vintrilkova: Book on Moravian Glory Exhibit
Ron Vitek and Jan Cornelius: 2 Czech dolls, Child's Kyjov kraj
Lisa Votti: items from Estate of Lee Colwell
Grace & Laura Willis and Rosemary Holt: Framed oval picture of John & Claudie Leshikar
Jocelyn Woodburn: Photo of Mary and Peter Cada
Rosalyn Wise: Czechoslovak cookbook given by Emilie Woytek Trojacek

"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

2022 UPCOMING EVENTS

October 14-15	HERITAGE FEST & MUZYKY, MUZYKY & SPJST 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION Friday: Octoberfest 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 Tent Music from 11 AM - 6 PM - Round Top Brass Band, Czech & Then Some SPJST Tent Music - Houston Concert & Orchestra, Dallas Czech Orchestra Heritage Demonstrations throughout the day, children activities KJT State Tarock Tournament Muziky, Muziky 7 - 9:30 PM Kraig Parker, Elvis Tribute Royal Band & Brass with Fireworks Finale
December 3	TCHCC ANNUAL GALA - Pavilion Hall 6-9:30 PM Honorees TBA, Music, Open Bar, Buffet, Silent Auction, Raffle, & More ADVANCE TICKETS
December 10	CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE & BAKE SALE 10AM - 3 PM Tour the vintage decorated Czech Village
2023	
January 17	MUSEUM FEATURE: NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS Exhibit on how communities came together, shared work and expenses of everyday life.
January 28-29	TEXAS BLACKSMITH CONFERENCE & TEXAS ANTIQUE GAS ENGINE REUNION Blacksmithing Demos, Vendors, Engine Displays and Demos
February 11	VALENTINE'S DINNER & CONCERT 4-9:30 PM ADVANCE TICKETS
May 21	TCHCC SLAVNOST/MAYEST

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.

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