



LA GRANGE, TEXAS

# NÁŠ ČESKÝ ŽIVOT

“OUR CZECH LIFE”

(Centrum českého kulturního dědictví v Texasu)

FALL 2019

VOLUME 23

## RETTA SLAVIK CHANDLER AWARDED CIVIL SOCIETY VISION AWARD BY THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC



**Top Left:** Retta Slavik Chandler holds the award she received on November 16, 2019. An award that recognizes over 25 years of volunteer dedicated service to promoting Czech heritage and culture in Texas. **Top left:** Retta and Charles Chandler. **Top right:** Molly Cernosek, Retta Chandler, and Lisa Cernosek. **Below:** Mrs. Chandler is surrounded by her family: Susan Chandler, Grace Anne Wilhelm, Sarah Wilhelm, Sean Ryan. (Photo courtesy Jennifer Klanika).

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 Policy: The purpose of Náš Český Život is to disseminate news of the development and activities of the center, as well as to publish material on the history, culture, and accomplishments of Texas Czechs. Náš Český Život does not involve itself in matters of a political nature.

Newsletter Address: All articles, photographs, advertising and correspondence should be directed to Retta Chandler or Janis Hrcncir, 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.

### *FOLLOW US ON*

Facebook: Texas-Czech-Heritage-and-Cultural-Center,

*Twitter @TexasCzechHCC*

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We are currently taking 2020 memberships  
and donations online.



**FLAG SPONSORSHIP**  
**Bill and Debby Schovajsa**



**President's Letter**

January 2020

Dear Members and Supporters,

There are no words that will adequately express my gratitude to all of you. First of all, to the American Friends of the Czech Republic for recognizing me with such an award. I hope that I can live up to the acclaim. Secondly, to all of our volunteers who have worked so hard in this last quarter of the year to make the Heritage Fest and the 10th Annual Gala such a success. Thirdly, my continued thanks to all our supporters, both in your unflinching work and in your financial support. This Center is an excellent example of your support that keeps the Czech traditions and culture alive in Texas. I dare not name you as I would be afraid that I might forget a name.

A special thanks goes out to Jennifer Klanika, photographer, for sharing the pictures of the events of November 16 and the visit of the American Friends of the Czech Republic.

When we express a need, our supporters seem to answer. We were in need of a new tractor to help with maintenance of the TCHCC grounds. The Dickson-Allen Foundation provided a grant that answered the need. We are so grateful.

Although much has been accomplished, we are currently working on several projects. We have a **\$50,000 Matching Endowment Challenge** from Bill and Betty Melnar. No deadline has been set, so, please consider a donation - no matter how large or small.

Our patrons may also want to consider a **Monthly Recurring Donation** as a way to contribute. If a person cannot contribute a large amount to TCHCC annually, a smaller monthly donation can be a solution. Contact us for details.

A new **Archival Storage Building** is in the planning stages. The funds raised to build this facility will help us keep and preserve the items that you, our members and patrons, have donated.

A **church** is currently under construction west of the main building. This church will be a replica of the Catholic church that is in the village of Mnisi, Czech Republic. The village is the ancestral village of Ben Koliba and we hope to have it completed in a few months.

Again, we thank all of you for your support both financially and in your prayers.

*S Panem Bohem.*

Thanks to a grant from the Dickson-Allen Foundation of Hallettsville, Texas, a new John Deere Tractor was recently added to the ever-growing need of grounds keeping and maintenance.



*TCHCC President  
Retta Slavik Chandler*



While in the Melnar Library, the AFoCR delegation viewed the current exhibit on the Velvet Revolution which includes photographs by Lenka Hatasova taken during the Velvet Revolution 30 years ago. The photos were donated to TCHCC many years ago by the late Jerry Elzner. The exhibit will run until the end of February. Pictured above is Czech Ambassador Hynek Kmoníček.

We continue to receive words of encouragement from our members and patrons. We so appreciate hearing from them. Recently two comments were sent:

*“You are doing a great job keeping our culture in the forefront - Keep up your good efforts.”  
Sincerely Norma Kovar Littlefield*

*“Thank you so much for the opportunity to honor the City Polka Boys. My father was the drummer ever since I was six months old, until his passing. Thank you for working to keep the Czech heritage and culture alive for all of us.”  
Sincerely, Diane Macik Blaschke*



**The American Friends of the Czech Republic**, of Washington, D. C. celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in La Grange, Texas. The Officers and Board of the organization traveled to Texas for a conference in Austin and Houston and saved November 16, 2019 to hold an Award Reception in La Grange's Historic Casino Hall. Before the Gala, they visited TCHCC. The group was given a presentation on the History of TCHCC and then toured the many buildings on the complex. Photographs are courtesy of Jennifer Klanika.



Top left: the AFoCR Delegation arrive. Top right: Zdenek and Michaela Bakala and family receive a welcome from AFoCR Director Phil Kasik and TCHCC President Retta Slavik Chandler. Center left: Clarice Marik Snokhous, AFoCR Secretary Robert Doubek, Mary Kasik, AFoCR Director Phil Kasik, AFoCR Vice President Patricia Stack, and Joan Vanicek. Center right: TCHCC Board Members Walter Stoever, J. G. Hrnir, Retta Chandler, Barbara Stratton Hruby, and Manager Mark Hermes. Bottom left: Rudy and Bea Patek greet AFoCR Director Dr. Jiri Maly. Bottom right: Tom Dine and Retta Slavik Chandler.





Top left: AFoCR Vice Presidents Kristyna Pellouchoud Driehaus and Treasurer Barbara Gibian. Top right: Zdenek Bakala and Retta Chandler in the museum. Row 2: The delegation toured the library and the 30th Anniversary of the Velvet Revolution Photo Exhibit. Row 3 left: The delegation toured the SPJST Lodge Velehrad. Row 3 right: Ambassador Hynek Kmoniček visits the country store. Row 4 left: The Bakala family walk under the centuries old live oak tree on their way to the Sanford Schmid Amphitheater. Row 4 right: Mark Hermes demonstrates the old printing press.





The event included music by pianist Dr. Karolina Syrovátková, a presentation on the Velvet Revolution, and the award presentation honoring Retta Slavik Chandler, President of TCHCC, and Bill and Rosene Sojak Rosene, founders of the Czech Center Museum Houston. Special guests include the Czech Ambassador Hynek Kmoníček and wife Indira Gumarova, American Friends of the Czech Republic benefactors Zdenek and Michaela Bakala and their family, and Astronaut Andrew and Indira Feustel. Pictured: Top left: AFoCR Director Michelle Olson, Indira Feustel, Michaela Bakala, Astronaut Andrew Feustel. Top center left to right: AFoCR President Tom Dine, Ambassador Hynek Kmoníček, AFoCR Secretary Robert Doubek. Center left: Michaela Bakala, Jerusha Brown, Miss Czech-Slovak US First Runner Up 2019-1010, Indira Gumarova and Ambassador Hynek Kmoníček. Center right: AFoCR Director Phil Kasik. Bottom left: Dr. Karolina Syrovátková entertained. Bottom right: Marlene Malik.

**24 YEARS OF AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

NATO Enlargement & Gratias Agit Award • Masaryk Memorial in Washington 2002 • Wilson Monument in Prague • Sokol Gymnasium in West, TX in 2014 • Vaclav Havel Bust in U.S. Capitol • Vaclav Havel Place at Georgetown University • Galas: Chicago, Houston, New York, Washington, Prague • Flood relief in Czech Republic • Visa free travel • U.S. Embassy liaison • AFoCR Director visits • Czech Parliamentary visits • CODELs • Newsletter U.S. Congress and Administration.

New AFoCR Focus: Protecting and Advancing Freedom and Democracy in Central Europe: Advocating actions to promote mutual U.S./Czech security goals. Sponsoring exchanges with Czech Parliamentarians and U.S. Congress Representatives, supporting Czech civil society based upon democratic ideals, creating programs to promote contact in trade, education, culture, and governance. Discover more about their efforts and consider supporting them at [www.afocr.org](http://www.afocr.org).





Top left and center: Retta Slavik Chandler and Bill Rosene receive their Civil Society Vision Award. Row 2 left: Jerusha Brown, Miss Czech-Slovak US First Runner-Up 2019-2020 (Miss Oklahoma Czech-Slovak Queen). Row 2 right: Chef Pavla Van Bibber with assistants. Row 3 right: Becky Garlick of Blinn College, Ambassador Hynek Kmoníček, Thadious Polasek. Row 4 left: Bernice Vrazel was among many of TCHCC's members who also enjoyed the event.



# HERITAGE FEST 2019

RVOS Octoberfest on the Deck with music by the Dujka Brothers, Sponsored by PolkaBeat.com



**HERITAGE FEST AND MUZYKY**  
**JOIN US ANNUALLY ON THE THIRD WEEKEND OF OCTOBER.**















**Top:** The day began with the 5th Annual KJT Sponsored Tarock Tournament in the Hanslik Hall.  
**Right:** The winners were: 1st Place Jerry Brezina (560 points), 2nd place Eugene Kucera (557 points), 3rd place Wilbert Cernosek (555 points), and fourth place Paul Schlesinger (547 points). The tournament ran smoothly under the direction of score keeper Kay Cernoch, Registration was under the supervision of Honza Cernosek and Stanley Jo Cernoch.



**Below:** A new Beer Tasting Competition was held. The winner was Timothy Kleihege of Moulton.









# The Kolačé Eating Contest Was Sponsored by SPJST.

CONGRATULATIONS WINNERS!







**The Praha Brothers Band and the Round Top Brass Band entertained throughout the day. Various food and activity booths dotted the grounds. Antique cars and tractors held everyone's attention. Demonstration booths and tours of the Czech Village buildings rounded out the day.**

**Heritage Fest Photos courtesy of Terry Svrcek Brooks and Jacqueline Hrcir**



## MUZYKY, MUZYKY at the Heritage Fest

The evening entertainment at Muziky was provided by a folklore ensemble from the Czech Republic. Mužátske Sborny Charvačané a Valtičané. The group was given a tour of the State Capitol in Austin and the Colorado River Winery in Bastrop during their visit to La Grange. A big "Thank You" goes to our volunteer Marilyn Cernoch for providing the tour and to Brian Vanicek for making the groups' tour through Texas possible.





## FALL VISITORS

**Right: The Zocher-Jirku Family from Prague visited Texas while spending Christmas with Alice Adam, our Czech Language Teacher.**

**Below: Holiday visitors to TCHCC enjoyed the Christmas displays.**





**10th Annual TCHCC Gala 2019 recognized Judge Ed Janecka, Tony Janak Orchestra, and City Polka Boys.**  
The Tenth Annual Gala was held on December 7, 2019 in the Pavilion Hall. Celebrations Events and Catering catered the buffet meal. The music was provided by the Czechaholics. Underwriters for the event were Clarice Snokhous and Yoakum C B Club.









## Honoree Judge Ed Janecka

**Ed Janecka, wife Margie, and son Charlie receive a memorial brick from TCHCC Board Members Walter Stoever, Barbara Stratton Hruby, Dennis Vanek, J. G. Hrnecir, Bill Schovajsa, and Clarice Marik Snokhous**

Edward Janecka was born on a farm in Dubina, in the eastern part of Fayette County. Edward (Ed) was the great, great, grandson of one of the founders of the first Czech community of Texas: Dubina. He attended Bishop Forest High School in Schulenburg and has two degrees from Sam Houston University. Ed served his country in Vietnam and afterward began working in Houston and starting a family with his wife, Margie. They have five children and six grandchildren.



In the late 1970s, he and his family returned to his roots in Dubina to raise his family. Ed's focus on keeping his Czech ancestor's traditions alive was at first centered around the Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church in Dubina, where he literally grew up next to and still worships and resides nearby.

The first Czech settlers, after arriving in Galveston, traveled inland and found shelter under the large oaks just north of the Navidad River in present-day eastern Fayette County. The immigrants decided to stay in the area and founded a community they called Dubina; "dub" in Czech is oak.

Ed relates that "They brought their faith with them and founded a church. Atop their first church, built in 1877, was an iron cross made by a freed slave and blacksmith named Tom Lee. That church was destroyed by a hurricane in 1909. Lee's cross still tops the present church, completed in 1911, with brilliant colors and beautiful artwork adorning the walls".

In the mid-1900s, it was decided to paint over the joyful decorations with white paint. As an altar boy, Ed Janecka noticed that there seemed to be shapes and possibly colors beneath the sterile white walls and asked his Dad about it; who told him what had happened. After Ed's return from the city life, he successfully led the restoration efforts to return the church to its former beauty and personally painted the angels on the ceiling. This triggered restoration efforts of other churches in the area resulting in the famed Painted Churches of Fayette County.

Ed Janecka has always been one of those people that step up to the plate when leadership is needed. Seeing a need for local leadership in the county, Ed successfully ran for Fayette County Judge in 1990, began serving in 1991 and retired on December 31, 2018.

Most people do not understand that being a County Judge involves more, a lot more, than sitting on a bench and dispensing justice to people who have run afoul of the law. During his tenure as "Judge Ed" he was instrumental in modernizing the county's infrastructure and attracting economic development, while maintaining its quality of life. He successfully worked hard in bringing a Blinn College Extension campus to Schulenburg. Like his Church, he initiated the process of renovating and restoring the historic Fayette County courthouse and the placement of service flags at the Veterans' Memorial on the courthouse grounds. In addition to a listing of fallen Fayette County men on display in the courthouse, he compiled and published a book documenting local WWII veterans. His further efforts to help the servicemen resulted in a Veterans Clinic being established in La Grange.

Ed's upbringing taught him to never destroy anything that can be reused which led to the first countywide recycling program in the state of Texas. When the famous Piano Bridge over the East Navidad River was threatened to be replaced, Ed initiated the efforts to have it restored. He played an important role in establishing a groundwater conservation district in addition and helped block the Trans-Texas Corridor. When the 9-1-1 technology became available, he oversaw the implementation of this life saving advancement. This resulted in new signage for the country roads; hating to discard the many old county road signs, he instituted a program to identify the location of the old one room schoolhouses (over 100) and have them marked using the back side of the county road signs. Ed's rural upbringing led him in assisting in the founding of an animal shelter. The founding of the Fayette Regional Air Center was another accomplishment. As County Judge he exercised excellent leadership during multiple natural disasters in protecting the county.

Ed, always proud of and touting the many contributions of the Czech culture to Texas, played an important role in locating the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center in La Grange.



This all came about in 1995 during a meeting of the Texans of Czech Ancestry (TOCA). They met in Temple to address the need for preserving Czech heritage and culture by establishing a statewide cultural center. TOCA is an umbrella organization with members that represented Czech-related groups, namely, the KJT, KJZT, SPJST, RVOS, SOKOL, CESAT, CEFT, CHS, Bexar County CHS, Travis-Williamson County CHS, and McLennan-Hiil CHS.

Judge Ed and Carolyn Heinsohn, President of the Czech Heritage Society of Texas, attended the meeting. At the meeting Robert Janak and Eugene Labay presented proposals for a Texas Czech Library/Archives/ Cultural Center. Judge Ed proposed that in addition to a library and archives, there should also be a museum and Czech village.

The Texans of Czech Ancestry voted to spearhead a project to build a center. The scope and location were to be decided by their representatives. After a year of planning, press releases were sent out for a call to communities that would assist in developing a Czech Center that would preserve the heritage, culture, traditions, artifacts, architecture, fine arts, and artisan skills of the Czechs. A center that would have a library, a museum, a meeting center, and land for restored buildings. Four cities, Caldwell, Ennis, La Grange and Temple responded. Judge Ed began working with La Grange's city government leaders, Mayor Don Chovanec, the Chamber of Commerce, and business leaders to present the best offer.

Through his efforts, La Grange was selected as the location of the proposed Czech center. Following the selection, he remained a behind-the-scene supporter of the efforts to raise the money to develop the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center in La Grange, Texas, into this shining tribute to the thirteen families that suffered through the winter of 1856 under some oak trees in Central Texas.



**Honoree Tony Janak Orchestra**  
**Tony Janak's wife Alice and sons Mark and Wayne receive a memorial brick from TCH-CC Board Members Dennis Vanek, J. G. Hrn-cir, Bill Schovajsa, Clarice Marik Snokhous, Barbara Stratton Hruby, and Walter Stoever**

Tony Janak, who led the Tony Janak Orchestra for over 50 years, was a main stay in the southern Central Texas polka music arena. He not only played music for six decades, but managed the Sweet Home Community Center, which, thanks to him and his wife Alice, is still providing a weekly great dance experience.

Tony got his start playing drums in his early teens with the Janak Family Band. In high school and beyond, Tony and two of his buddies, Lynnwood Berger and Raymond Bordovsky were the Sweet Home Playboys, whose gigs were playing for tips at the seven beer joints around Sweet Home. In 1958, Tony and some of his Playboys began playing with the George Machart Band of Hallettsville which traveled around the Victoria, Fayette, and Lavaca Counties.

In 1963, Tony formed his own band, the Tony Janak Orchestra. Original band members were Tony, Joe Jansky, Rudy Petru, Harlan Hasse, and Bobby Dornak. Hubert Janak joined his brother to play country and dance music for many years. Other local musicians, such as Leroy Rybak, passed through Tony's Orchestra and went on to form or play in other bands. Members of the band over its span included Elroy Sternadel, Doc Darilek, Darryl Neubauer, Harry Macik, Ronnie Bruns, Betty Chumchal, Dennis Chumchal, Edward Malik, David Hickle, Paul Janak, James Honish, Ronnie Riske, Donnie Riske, Joe Martinez, Charlie Welfl, Victor Welfl, Albert Koether, Larry Mayer, and Bobby Fajkus.

The Tony Janak Orchestra celebrated their 50th anniversary and retirement on New Year's Eve 2008 at Sweet Home Hall. The Tony Janak Orchestra made five records through the years, one of which was On the Road Again that describes their playing schedule across the state. The final was a compilation of formerly recorded songs and entitled 40 Year Anniversary 2003.

Those attending dances at Sweet Home Community Center over the years have seen Tony, and his wife, Alice, selling tickets and welcoming everyone. Tony's son, Mark, continued the family tradition of booking the bands for this "Music City" and recently sold the hall to four local young men, keeping the tradition local and alive.



**Honoree City Polka Boys represented by original members Dennis Fajkus and Wesley Matus receive a memorial brick from TCHCC Board Members Dennis Vanek, Clarice Marik Snokhous, Barbara Stratton Hruby, Bill Schovajsa, J. G. Hrnecir and Walter Stoever.**

The probability of keeping a group of musicians playing music for five decades is challenging, however, Benny Okruhlik, with the help of his wife, Earline, have made it so. This musical journey began in 1970. At a family reunion, Benny Okruhlik, James Ohnheiser, Harry Macik and E. J. Macik were sitting around jamming with a few other members with instruments. This was the tail-end of a time period when Czech musicians were plentiful and family reunions well attended.

The aforementioned thought that they had the seeds of a band, and realizing they needed a few more members to fill out their sound, they reached out to Hubert Janak, E.J. Macik,

Wesley Matus, and Dennis Fajkus. As they all lived in Houston at the time, they named themselves the City Polka Boys. The members were Benny Okruhlik on Accordion and Vocals, Hubert Janak on Rhythm Guitar and Vocals, James Ohnheiser on Trumpet and Vocals, Harry Macik on Tuba, Bass Guitar and Vocals, Dennis Fajkus on Saxophones and Vocals, Wesley Matus on Trumpet and Lead Guitar.

Brothers E. J. and Harry Macik and first cousin Wesley Matus, grew up on neighboring farms in Baylor County (West Texas) and all played in the Seymour School Band System. Benny Okruhlik, James Ohnheiser and Dennis Fajkus grew up in Fayette County while Hubert Janak was from Lavaca County. As young men in their 20s, all had landed jobs in Houston.

E. J., Hubert and Wesley lived together in the same two bedroom rent house for a period of time in Houston. Polka records were frequently on the stereo as was attendance at the Saturday night polka dances at the Bill Mraz Ballroom on 835 West 34th Street in North Houston.

The Maciks had family ties to Fayette County and as was common in Central Texas, family relationships were frequent. Harry's brother-in-law was James Ohnheiser. James' sister Vernell and Benny's wife were first cousins. James Ohnheiser and Dennis Fajkus played together as teen-agers in Schulenburg with a group of musicians that in time formed into the well-known Telstars Band which has reached its 50th anniversary and are still playing.

After the family reunion jam session, the young energetic guys got to know each other's love of playing polka music and their ability to each play a combination of instruments; it just all fell into place. There were a lot of practice sessions in someone's garage. The St. Theresa Catholic Church was looking for a band to play at the church fundraiser and someone mentioned this group of guys who are getting pretty good, yet never had played in public before. The guys were hired for the princely amount of all their refreshments and food furnished, no cash. They were a big hit with the crowd which led to bookings at family related events.

The name (City Polka Boys) originated just as the Jimmy Brosch and his Happy Country Boys band was getting very popular. Since all seven musicians were from the country, but now living in the city (Houston), they called themselves the City Polka Boys. The big break came when Mr. Bill Mraz had the young band audition at his hall. He was pleased and offered two bookings. The Mraz bookings continued for several years at usually ten or so jobs per year. That was definitely the best and most fun place to play as it was a gathering place for their friends and relatives. After Bill Mraz passed away, his son Gene took over.

One particular night when handing over the pay, he made a comment that whenever the City Polka Boys play there, he sells more beer!

Two LP records were recorded with the original seven members. The first in 1971 with the title of the lead song "Long Road to Houston" (polka). This was a new song that received a lot of air play over the polka radio shows. A second original song was "The Gifted Ring" (waltz). The Moravians band of Ennis has just recently released a recording with this song on it.

The second recording was produced in Dallas at a live performance in 1973. A period of time later, Dennis Fajkus went through a job transfer and no longer performed with the band. Another recording was made in Schulenburg in 1977, but only as an 8-track tape. It included an original song written by Hubert Janak titled "Joe Patek Is Still The King". It was a remake of the Waylon Jennings song "Bob Wills Is Still The King". The Vrazels produced a recording with a great version of the song with added lyrics.





## City Polka Boys, continued

A fourth recording was done in 1981 at a Studio in Houston "Cookin' Texas Music". On it was a recreation of the Joe Patek Orchestra original song titled "Hills of Shiner" (polka). This song is still very popular to this date. The Czechaholics have recorded a very similar version of the song. Another favorite on that recording is the ever-popular song "It Took Me All Night (To Get Home Last Night)".

The remaining six members performed until the mid-1980s when changes then occurred. The City Polka Boys kept the original line-up intact for over thirty years with only a few changes. Bennie's brother, Ernie, joined the band on trumpet, sax, and keyboards and strengthened the family sound.

Around the year 2000, the band decided to change their name for business reasons, a sign of the times of polka music popularity. Texas Sound Check was the new name for the same guys playing basically the same music for thirty years. The Band continues to be a favorite dance band in Central Texas.

## A WELCOME DONATION

St. Anne's KJZT Society #4 Praha, Texas Officers presented a check for \$1,012.50 to TCHCC on Friday, November 15, 2019. The money was raised through a no bake sale held on August 31, 2019 and from matching funds received from the State KJZT Office in Austin, as a Community Fund Raiser under the Fraternal Program. L-R: TCHCC President Retta Slavik Chandler, KJZT Members: President Georgia Cerny, Treasurer Pat Masek, and Betty Patalik. Secretary Nancy Jasek was not present.



### HELP! WHERE DO I BEGIN IN RESEARCHING MY ANCESTORS?

1. Begin with your parents and trace your lineage backwards to find the names and birth/death dates of your earliest relatives.
2. All records are by counties, so find out what county your ancestors lived in. A visit to the county seat or county library will result in early tax records, marriage records, wills, etc.
3. The census contains great information. All censuses are online at [www.libraryoftexas.org](http://www.libraryoftexas.org) through their Tex-Share Database. Become a patron of your local library and obtain your TexShare Login ID. Once on the site, choose Heritage Quest, select the year and browse the collection by state and counties, then precinct numbers or town names.
4. If you do not know or cannot find your ancestors' village of origin, our Melnar Library resources can help you.

Free Website: [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) - this will help you find where your ancestors are buried.

If you run into a brick wall - contact us by phone or email.



## DONATIONS

August 1 – December 31, 2019

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Family and Tony Janak Orchestra

### MAYFEST 2019

SPJST, Temple

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 ber - Wharton Chapter CHS*  
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*In Honor of Leroy & Betty Brunner*

*Family* - Bettina Brunner

*In Memory of Loretta Laffere*

Her Hejtmancik Cousins - Ilene Gentry

*In Memory of Willie, Annie & Louis Dusek*

- Sissy Dusek

*In Honor of Stanley & Dorothy Repka on*

*their Wedding Anniversary* - Sissy Dusek

## BELFRY FUND

*In Memory of Frances Kocurek*

*Pollock* - CHS-Ft. Bend Co.

*In Memory of Pauline Sturm* - CHS-

Victoria Co.

## LIBRARY & MUSEUM DONATIONS

**Alice Adam** – Czech children's book

**David Barta** (Harris County CHS) –

Karlstejn Castle Painting

**Jane Campbell** - Salas& Main Museum

items

**Barbara Dybala** – 60 yr. old Hanacka doll

**Carolyn Heinsohn** – items for Museum,

Country Store and Salas House, WWII

books (4 volumns), Vacek Family and

Hostyn School pictures

**Wanda Kusy-Carpenter** – Albums, post

cards, books

**Ludomir Chaputa** - Photographs of Walla-

chia region by Fr. Pavel Stefan

**City of Frenstat, Czech Republic - Jiri**

**Unruh** – 9 Czech books

**Sissy Ducek** - Assorted historical photos of

Sikora, Baron and Cervenka Family

**Mike & Jeff Hellums** - Bible, prayer book,

hmnals, picture of Evangelical Church Hol-

land, Texas

**Dorothy Holub**—books, Czech language

CDs, dictionaries

**Daniel Hrna** – books

**Kathy Hrna** (Harris County CHS) – Pho-

to-Op Board, Fish Pond Board

**Robert Janak** - dictionaries & genealogy

books

**Helen Koudelkova** - Czech books

**Betty Melnar** - Immaculate Conception

Sealy Parish book, Czech Catechism that

belonged to her parents

**Lisa Shockley** – Czech book

**Leon and Emily Maxa c/o Carol Horyja**

– Books

**Ray Novak** – Statue of St. John the Evange-

list, rosary, cross on table

**Marlene Pazderny** - 10" Antique

Bohemian doll

**Kay Potter** - Czech prayerbook of Ludmila

Kallus Schobel

**Charline Schleich** - wedding dress, wick-

er bassinet

**Katherine Svatek** - wet grinder/sharpening

stone on stand made in CZ

25



**Jiri Unruh, City Council Member in Frenstat, Czech Republic and friend of many Texas Czechs**

**donated books to TCHCC for our library. They were entrusted to Vera Matocha Wehring who brought them back safely. Thank you Vera.**

**Frenstat is a Sister City of La Grange.**



### PAINTING OF KARLSTEJN CASTLE DONATED TO TCHCC

In January of 2007, David Barta painted a beautiful mural of Karlstejn Castle from a photo he took on a visit to the Czech Republic. Mr. Barta donated the mural to the Harris County Chapter of Czech Heritage Society of Texas. The mural was enjoyed by the chapter until 2019 when they vacated the building in which it hung. Mr. Barta wished to donate it to TCHCC and it was brought to LaGrange in September. where it now hangs in the Melnar Library. Pictured left to right: Anna Krpec, Frank Svrcek, J.G. Hrcir (Accepting TCHCC Board Member), Artist David Barta, Jeannette Sebesta, Daniel Hrna, Kathy Hrna. Also donated to the center was a whimsical kids Fish Pond and a Photo-Op Board depicting a Moravian couple in their kroje. The boards were used annually at the Chapter's Czech SpringFest and will now be used during TCHCC's festivals.

### Karlstejn Mural History

The mural by David F. Barta was painted on Louan plywood using acrylic water base paints and photos as a guide to replicate the image and surroundings. Many hours were spent in his garage at Deer Park to complete the painting to honor his Czech parents, ancestors and our Czech heritage.

The Barta family is originally from Frenstat pod Radhostem, Moravia, and immigrated to Fayette County in 1870 and settled in Ammansville, Texas. Frantisek, the youngest son, was born in Frenstat lived on their farm in Dubina. In 1919, his family sold the farm and moved to Wallis, Austin County, Texas. The family included ten children. The three older girls were married, four younger ones were still in their youth, and four boys remained at home. Alfons, Joseph, Bohumil and Victor stayed on the farm for a few years and helped with the farm work.

In 1937, Bohumil married Anastasia Rita Jurek, the daughter of Edmund and Frances Chalupa Jurek of Wallis. The Jurek family emigrated in 1880 from Ticha, Moravia and settled in Fayette County.

The Bohumil Barta family had five children – Eugene, David (the artist), Bernice, Charlie and Gloria.



**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.

**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.**

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- Permanent Endowment Fund
- Maintenance and Operations
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- \$500  Corporate
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- \$ 75  Family
- \$ 50  Individual

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- 5,000  Benefactor
- 2,500  President's Circle
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- 1,500  Heritage Friend
- 1,000  Founder
- 750  Steward
- 500  Patron
- 250  Donor
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- 100  Friend

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

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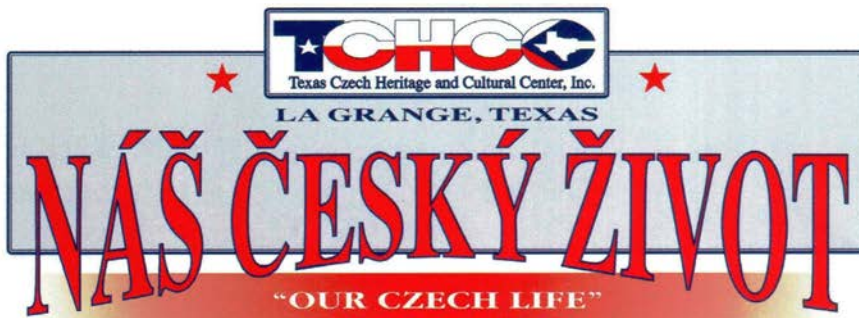
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### UPCOMING EVENTS 2020

- February 15 Valentine's Dinner and Concert**  
A formal event featuring culinary arts, Texas wines and grand piano performance by Professor John Dujka  
4- 6 PM Social. 6 PM Dinner. 7 PM Grand Piano Concert  
Advanced Tickets only.
- May 17 Annual Slavnost "Mayfest" and Tribute to the Czech Immigrants to Texas**  
Recognition of descendants of Czech immigrants of any year, 10:30 AM.  
Meal served at 11:30 AM. Music 11:30-4 PM by the Czech Harvesters (Ennis).  
Czech Founded Organizations Booths, Classic Car Show, Village Open, Pastries,  
May Pole Dance + More.
- June 20 TCHCC/CHS Youth and Family Day - details coming**
- October 16 Heritage Fest & Muziky**  
Octoberfest On The Deck 4-10 PM. Music by the Dujka Brothers 6-9:30 PM  
Chicken & Dumplings served at 5:30 PM.
- October 17 10 AM - 6 PM Hospoda (Beer Garden) Music Bands TBA**  
Saw Mill, Kolačé Eating Contest, Antique Car Show, Antique Farm Show,  
Demonstrations, Children Activities, Newspaper Museum Operation, Tarock  
Tournament, Beer Tasting Competition and much more  
Muziky Muziky - Amphitheater 7-9:30 PM -Show TBA  
H-E-B Fireworks Finale 9:30 PM