

# BEXAR COUNTY CZECH HERITAGE SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I wish I could be on the beach and have released the bottle to carry this message, but thanks to COVID19 I am staying home instead of visiting the beach.

Who would have thought 6 months ago we would still not be able to meet in person. I sure did not, but it seems we will have to continue to depend on the generosity of the Judy Barr Topinka Charitable Foundation to host our upcoming Zoom General Membership Meeting. I hope a good number of you will be able to join us at **1:30 pm on Sunday – September 13, 2020.**

We have several items to address at our meeting. At the moment St. Anthony de Padua has told me we will not be able to meet in their classrooms until after the first of the year. I would like to discuss some options for the remainder of the year.

I will also be appointing a Nominating Committee for the upcoming election in November. We have only the Secretarial Position up for election this year. If you might be interested in running, please let me know and I can

pass your name onto the Nominating Committee.

Our deepest sympathy to the families of

- Jerry Jurena,
- Loretta Valenta,
- Sister Bernadette Hajovsky, and
- Al Ludwig (husband of member Mary Ludwig).

These were long time members who contributed a great deal to our Society, and passed away since our last meeting in June.

We had a very successful Zoom Presentation on Czech Baking presented by Jasmine Kirby, and Joseph Topinka. They did a great job, and the event attracted several people from around the state who were not members. Jasmine showed us how to make a Poppy Seed Roll (Makovy Zavin).



There is a Slovak businessman Viktor Krizma in town! He will open his bakery called LAIKA later in September. It will be located across from HEB Central Market on Broadway. He is a cheesecake and pastry baker. We will send an official flyer when he is open for business. When you visit, introduce yourself as a Czech society member. He has been here for 4 years now. If you are in that area "Czech" it out!



The planned program as part of the meeting will be two slide

presentations; Jasmine Kirby is sharing her family's trip to the Czech Republic a few years ago with slides and narration. Joseph Topinka will have a brief slide show and narrative of the importance of TG Masaryk. You will discover why Masaryk is featured in the CZ/SK Hall of Fame in the National Museum in Prague.

Our goal is to keep in touch with our members but also provide presentations for you all. We want to share experiences, history, and culture with you. I sincerely hope you will drop in on the Zoom meeting next Sunday.

Thank you!

President Kay Vajdos  
September 2020



## **BACKGROUND OF CZECHS WHO IMMIGRATED TO TEXAS**

### **Who are the Czech people?**

- **Originally Czech people came into Western Europe from Central Asia and southern Russia where they lived a monadic life until the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. By the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD Celtic tribes arrived, organized towns, and called the land Cechy (land of the Czechs). The Czechs are of a Slavic people who lived in provinces now called Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia and are West Slavic people along with the Slovaks, Wends, and Poles.**

### **Brief history of the Czech lands:**

- The Czech people were part of many empires throughout history.
- The last empire was the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, which was divided after World War II. Czechoslovakia was formed in 1918. Large waves of immigration from the Czech lands slowed after the formation of Czechoslovakia. There are many Czech Heritage Day celebrations in October to celebrate when the nation was formed.
- After being liberated from the Nazis after World War II, Czechs experienced democracy for a few years before being taken over by the Soviet communists.
- After many years of Soviet communist control, Czechoslovakia once again became a democratic nation in 1989. This was known as the Velvet Revolution.
- In 1993 the Czechs and Slovaks decided to form their own separate countries and became known as the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. This is referred to as the Velvet Divorce in some history books. They are both now members of NATO and the European Union. Even though they are now two countries, each country still celebrates at the end of October the beginning of the independence they had in 1918.

**Why did Czechs emigrate from the Austrian Hungarian Empire?**

- Escape European Wars
- Escape persecution - political, religious
- Obtain freedom and low-cost land for themselves

**Where did Czechs settle in Texas?**

- The first 16 families arrived in Galveston in 1852 settling near the Colorado and Brazos rivers in established German settlements in Austin and Fayette counties. Letters from these immigrants to their relatives in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire caused newer waves of immigrants to gravitate to Texas. Many who came then and later were farmers who raised grain and cotton.

We hope you enjoyed the above information about our heritage. Come to the Zoom Meeting and find out more about **“Famous Czechs.”**