



BCCHS Members

Annual Christmas Party
with Lunch

Sunday, December 12, 2021

Doors open at 11:30 am

Schertz Civic Center
Bluebonnet Hall
1400 Schertz Parkway
Schertz, TX 78154

Bring a side dish and/or dessert
enough for 8-12 people. Meat and
drinks provided.

RSVP--Please let Kay Vajdos
(kayvajdos@gmail.com) know the
number of adults and children
attending by Dec. 1, 2021.

** 2022 Membership Dues- \$5
or \$15 can be paid at the party.

(If not attending, please send membership
dues and membership form with check
payable to BCCHS to:

Mike Vajdos – 3805 Arroyo Seco – Schertz,
TX 78154

Veselé Vánoce-CZ / Veselé Vianoce-SK

Merry Christmas!

BEXAR COUNTY CZECH HERITAGE SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2021



NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

If you missed the November Meeting, then you may not be aware of the change in officers. Robert Trampota was elected as our new President, Monika Prochazkova – Vice President, Alice Vida – Reporter, and I was elected as the new Treasurer. Barbara Hruby, and Monika Prochazkova were re-elected as directors, and we have one new director, Joseph Topinka. Two of our long standing, and hard-working members, Rose Thorsky and Mike Vajdos have stepped down from their positions. I wish to thank them for all the time and talent they have given to our Chapter. The new officers will take over in January.

Please see the attached Christmas Party Invitation. It has the details of our party. We hope to see you there. Our State Queen is scheduled to attend, and this will give you an opportunity to meet her.



Emily Stone, owner of Bexar Kolache Co. joined us via Zoom for our meeting. If you get a chance “Czech” out her shop at 205 E. Hildebrand Ave – San Antonio. She has also been invited to our Christmas party.



Once again this is a gentle reminder that our Chapter and State dues are up for renewal. We hope you will consider joining us again for 2022. Our Chapter dues are only \$5. If you want to continue to receive the State publication you must pay the State dues, which are \$10, but you can be a member of our Chapter for just \$5. I am attaching a Membership Application to this Newsletter. If at all possible, please submit your dues by January 1, 2022, or the latest is the end of February to ensure you will receive all the issues of the Cesky Hlas (State Membership Magazine).

Speaking of Czech Culture

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On October 27, Texas State University’s Division of Institutional Inclusive Excellence sponsored a virtual event about Czech influences on Texas. Through a coordinated Zoom webinar, Bexar County Czech Heritage Society member, Associate Professor Joseph Baar Topinka, moderated a discussion between three guest speakers: Fayette County Judge Edward Janecka, Professor Joseph Kotarba of Texas State University, and Honorary Council to the Czech Republic Brian Vanicek. All three shared their

perspectives of Czech culture, and its influences on Texas. What they expressed was incredibly informative and was the kind of information that parents would want to use to help in passing down cultural knowledge and understanding from generation to generation about Czech heritage in Texas. They described what future generations should experience and cherish about their Czech backgrounds.

Judge Janecka first focused on why Czechs left their homeland in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Czechs came to Texas and started communities and came to enjoy freedoms previously unknown to them-the right to own land, to speak their own language instead of German, and to be able to vote. As their communities grew, parish churches had parish feasts which drew in Czechs to enjoy a day of celebrating their culture: to dance to polka and waltz music, to share their stories, and to enjoy Czech food. Such activities allowed for Czech language, food, and traditions to survive over 150 years to this day.

Professor Joseph Kotarba from Texas State University felt that music brought Czechs together, and the music helped them integrate with the other cultures in Texas. The Czech accordion music helped internationalize Czech music. Dr. Kotarba provided the example of the Beer Barrel Polka. This song has many international versions, but the music was Czech in origin. Dr. Kotarba feels that when Czechs gathered in Texas and throughout America, they had pride in their hard work on the land as farmers. That pride inspired Antonin Dvorak's New World Symphony. Dr. Kotarba told the audience that the piece was used by Astronaut Neil Armstrong when he was traveling to the Moon.

Counsel (Honorary) Brian Vanicek felt that the many festivals helped Czechs radiate their Czech nationalism and heritage while celebrating how they prospered. Consul Vanicek's hosted former Mayor of Praha Tomas Hudacek, after visiting many Texas cultural

celebrations for six days. Consul Vanicek noted that Mayor Hudacek observed that Texas Czechs have a common bond. Consul Vanicek also remembered a comment from the US ambassador Hynek Kmonicek that he has observed throughout the United States that descendants of Czech immigrants seem to enjoy celebrating their culture.

The moderator and facilitator, Professor Topinka, asked the participants how young people can be inspired to learn more about their heritage. The participants shared the importance of Czech descendants personally sharing family stories. The fraternal organizations and parishes can also help the youths to embrace the fun of their ancestral culture (listening and playing music, preparing and eating food, practicing some holiday traditions, learning the language). Through it all, the youths will learn of their ancestors' hard work ethic. We all realized that having Zoom or Live presentations to Czechs descendants like this one and other presentations we have had during 2020 can help young people learn more and appreciate their heritage. The event was recorded and can be viewed at <https://inclusion.txstate.edu/students/programs/cultural-celebrations/TxCzechHeritage.html>.



Change in Events

Monika Prochazkova had planned to host a gingerbread cookie decorating class in her home in December, but her husband, and one of our members, Diego, was in a serious car accident so she will not be hosting this event. Please keep Diego and Monika in prayer for a full recovery.

President Kay Vajdos



(wooden mold)

Gingerbread Cookies

Pernik na Figurky by D. Kucera

I found this article on the gingerbread cookies from a 1983 “Nase Dejiny” publication and thought I would share it with you.

The Czech gingerbread cookie was much more than just a delicacy. They were artistic treasures often being used to decorate tables at medieval banquets and as hand-decorated wall reliefs.

In 1419, there were approximately 18 bakers of gingerbread in Prague. At this time, gingerbread was baked most always for higher society. After the reign of Mary Thereze, the Austrian Empress, the business expanded greatly and became very popular. Gingerbread was baked on a large scale commercially for sale during local village pilgrimages, fairs, feasts and Thanksgiving. During this time, ingredients were carefully selected and recipes were secretly guarded. Special ground flour, honey and syrup were used. Eventually, sugar replaced the honey and syrup was replaced by dark molasses.

Naturally, the most important ingredients were the spices, mainly ginger, and ancient tropical Asiatic spices were imported at great expense during the earlier years. Some bakers also added more domestic spices such as nutmeg, cloves and cinnamon.

The cookie molds or cutters were of beautifully carved wood in great variety as they were adapted to each season, holiday or celebration: from queens, knights and kings to children, heroes, animals and some of comical nature. (see picture above) This folk art dates back to the 15th century and has been preserved by being lovingly brought to this country. Today, these molds are prized by collectors as no two reliefs are ever alike. One of the most popular recipes for gingerbread is:

Gingerbread Cookies – From the Czechoslovak Cookbook by Joza Brizova

2 ½ cups flour	2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 ¼ cups sugar	1 tablespoon rum
8 teaspoons Gingerbread Spice*	1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
½ teaspoon baking soda	1 egg, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons honey heated to lukewarm	

Sift all dry ingredients except single egg, and work into a firm dough. Let stand overnight in a cool place. Next day, roll out ¼ inch thick. Cut out gingerbread men or any other shapes. Brush

with remaining egg. Place on a baking sheet lined with wax paper and bake in a preheated 325 degree oven for 20 to 30 minutes. Decorate with icing.

***Gingerbread Spice**

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons ground cloves
2 teaspoons ground allspice

4 teaspoons ground anise
4 teaspoons ground star anise
1 vanilla bean, ground

Ornamental Icing

1 lb. powdered sugar
3 egg whites at room temperature
½ teaspoon cream of tartar

Beat the egg whites stiff, adding sugar and cream of tartar, beating stiff until a knife drawn through leaves a path. Makes about 2 cups. This icing dries very fast so should be used immediately or covered tightly with a damp cloth or Saran wrap. Mix in food colors of choice and let your imagination do the rest.

Gingerbread from the old city of Pardubice, Bohemia has always been the most prized in the Old Country and even today, foreign visitors recognize the superb quality.

I have not personally made this gingerbread recipe, but for those of you who like to cook you may want to give it a try.

I hope to see all of you at the Christmas Party on December 12, and maybe we will be able to meet in person for our next General Membership Meeting.

Thank you for all the support you have provided me during my term of office as your President. I know this has been a difficult time as we have struggled to stay together as a Chapter, and I hope you have learned a bit from our Zoom Events. Again I want to thank Joe Topinka and his foundation for sponsoring all those events on the Zoom platform!

Kay Vajdos
Alice Vida





**The Czech Heritage Society of Texas
Membership Application and or Renewal
Change of Address, etc.**

Date: _____

Application of membership for BEXAR COUNTY Chapter and State Membership Included. (State-MBR# _____)

New ___ Renewal ___ Returning ___ Multi-chapter ___; Home Chapter _____; Address change _____

NAME: _____
First Middle Maiden Name Last Name

Address: _____
Number and Street City and State ZIP + four (Postal Requirement)

Ph: (_____) _____ Cell (_____) _____

E-mail: _____

What skills or expertise would you be willing to volunteer to the Organization?

Spouse's Name (If applicable) (including wife's maiden Name): _____

AREAS OF INTEREST: Genealogy ___; Music ___; Customs ___; History ___; Costumes ___; Language ___

Other: _____

Family names, ancestral villages and locations in USA that you are researching or like to research:

Family Name and Date. Ancestral Village Immigrate to what USA area and date.

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

State Dues: \$10; Includes 3 issues of Český Hlas Chapter Dues \$5; Includes Chapter newsletters Total \$15

Members, who have an e-mail address listed, will receive the local chapter newsletter and information electronically.

Bexar CHS: Five local meetings. Web page: <https://www.bexarcountyczechheritagesociety.com/>

State CHS Society (15 Local chapters): Three state meetings per year. Web page: <https://czechheritage-texas.org/>

Membership period Jan-Dec of the given year.

ALL Dues are due January 1, 2022.

Dues payable to: Bexar County Czech Heritage Society

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