

24th CZECH HERITAGE FESTIVAL

The 24th Annual Victoria Czech Heritage Festival is getting organized and plans are for another big celebration on Sunday, September 27, 2009, at the Victoria Community Center, 2905 E. North St. The festival is sponsored by the Victoria County Czech Heritage Society (VCCHS) and has drawn well over a thousand people consistently for more than a decade.

As usual, the festival's first event is a televised Czech-English Mass celebrated at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral in Victoria by Rev. Joseph Hybner from the Flatonia Catholic Parish. The public is invited to attend the Mass starting at 9 a.m. Once the Mass is celebrated, events really kick off at the festival site.

Events at the Community Center begin promptly at 10 a.m. with five musical events held throughout the day. Local accordionist Pat Matula will perform first engaging the crowd in traditional Czech entertainment. The Shiner Hobo Band takes over at 11 a.m. and entertains all until 1 p.m. followed by the Czechaholics, a fairly new, young and popular band. Then the Red Ravens Band will join the Czechaholics at 4:00 p.m. for a one-half hour concert. The Red Ravens follow solo continuing with good dancing music until 7:30 p.m.

Special attraction for this year is Michelle Jenee Barak – 2009 Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Queen. Miss Barak is daughter of Alan and Marita (Novak) Barak of Ennis, Texas and belongs to the Ellis County Czech Heritage Society.

The 4th Annual Homemade Beer and Wine Show, and the Czech Cultural Demonstrations are back again due to high interest. Nearly 100 entries have been entered in the past, brought in from home and small backyard brewers and vineyards from throughout the state. The show was added several years ago as many people including Czechs do still enjoy and participate in this art and tradition.

Several classes in the show are set in each division including: BEER – Light, Amber, Dark and Novelty; and WINE – Dry and Sweet classes of Red, White, Novelty, and Kit wines plus a Dessert wine and due high number of entries a special class for red wine made from the Texas wild Mustang grapes. Entry forms submitted by September 18 qualify for a discounted entry fee of only \$6 per entry with rules and regulations posted at VCCHS's website: <http://victoriaczechs.org>. Due to popular demand, there is even a time being planned after judging for public to taste many of the entries!

Czechs are long in tradition and as a result have added several cultural demonstrations to this year's festival again. Attendees in the past have learned how to make: Poppyseed Kolaches, Czech Style Cheese Rolls, Homemade Beer, Wine, and Noodles. Similar programs are planned for 2009 including: Churning Cream into Butter; (others demonstrations yet to be announced).

The festival will continue to serve its famous Czech Stew and Sausage lunch plate for \$7.00 each which starts at 11 a.m. Various fruit and sausage kolaches and homemade chicken noodle soup will also be available throughout the day. Sausage wraps are available after lunch.

Other activities include an auction, children games, pastry wheel, arts & crafts, numerous exhibit booths and a Czech Heritage Museum with antique and unique items brought in by area members for all to view. Last but not least, the 24th Texas State Tarok (card) Tournament will be held on site as card players come from throughout the state to compete for prize money shuffling these unique cards that Czechs have played for centuries.

Come join in the fun! There is something for everyone! And, you don't have to be Czech to attend!

Admission is only \$5.00 per person for all four bands and all activities - with youth under 15 years old free. For information call Marjorie Matula 361-575-0820, or email her at marjoriematula@aol.com. For other information contact the following: Tarok Tournament - Joe Pustka 361-578-2507, Homemade Beer and Wine Show – Patrick Janak 361-575-3857 email: patrickjanak@yahoo.com (wine) or Greg Johnson 361-485-9708 email: gregjohnson37@msn.com (beer). For Exhibit Booth information contact Donald Dusek at 361-578-6730 email: d-dusek@sbcglobal.net.

For full information, see the Victoria County Czech Heritage Society Web site: <http://victoriaczechs.org>.