Monthly Newsletter – March, 2017

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**Mission:**

The Mission of the Cultural Heritage Center is to promote, inform and explore the multi-ethnic, diverse nature of Southwest Florida through educational programs, outreach efforts and celebrations of culture. We are developing a plan for a permanent facility which would allow for the programming noted later in this newsletter.

Ethnic, religious and affiliate groups that form the core advisory board for the Cultural Heritage Center include but are not limited to:

- African Americans
- Ukrainians
- Indians
- Latinos
- Irish
- Slovaks
- Haitians
- Jews
- Native Americans
- Germans
- Greeks
- Filipinos

**Partners:**

Partners in the development of the plan for the Cultural Heritage Center include: TEAM Punta Gorda; Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor and Convention Bureau; Blanchard House Museum; Florida Gulf Coast University at Herald Court Centre.
Proposed Programming:

Proposed programming includes but not limited to:

Inclusionary multi-faceted, rotating exhibits

Annual Cultural Heritage Festival

Cooking classes

Language classes

Cultural/language immersion classes

Summer language/culture camps for children and teens

Cultural lending library

Art exhibits

Partnership with Rotary Exchange Programs

Ethnic Food Festivals

February Cultural Focus: African American

African Americans are a “culturally distinct group of people bound by an ideological unity and a functional system of values and beliefs.” According to Butler (1992), “despite enslavement, psychological disorientation, social, cultural, and environmental displacement, old cultural patterns have persisted, some have been reinterpreted, others have been syncretized and adapted to fit the environment.

Below are examples of African cultural elements that survived the Middle Passage. Although a specific practice or custom might have long been abandoned, in various ways these elements have impacted the culture of African Americans in the United States:

- Funerals
- Magical practices
- Folklore
- Dance
- Song
- Motor habits (walking, speaking, laughing, sitting, postures, burden-carrying, on heads and hips, hoeing, and movements made in many agricultural activities)
- Ways of dressing hair (cornrowing, braiding, wrapping)
- Wearing of head kerchiefs and scarves
• Etiquette (the use of titles of respect, respect for elders, the practice of turning the head when laughing, placing the hand over the mouth, and averting the eyes or turning the face when speaking to respected persons)
• Cooperation and sharing (orientation towards collective responsibility and interdependence)
• Collectivism versus individualism orientation
• Kinship and extended family bonds
• Informal adoption of children
• Child-naming practices
• Not “word” dependent, proficiency in nonverbal communication
• Expressive religious and spiritually styles

The culture of African American families is influenced by residuals from Africa, identification with mainstream America, and adaptations and responses to a caste minority status.

A Traditional African American Recipe

Sweet Potato Pie

2 ½ to 3 pounds sweet potatoes ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
3 eggs lightly beaten ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
1 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon salt ¼ cup evaporated milk
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon 2 9-inch partially baked pie shells
1 teaspoon ground ginger

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. In a medium saucepan, boil potatoes in lightly salted water until tender, approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Drain water from pot and shake pot over low heat to dry potatoes. Mash the potatoes and then beat them smooth with an electric beater. Stir in beaten eggs, brown sugar, salt, spices, vanilla, evaporated milk, and sweet potatoes. Pour into pie shells. Bake at 425 degrees F. for 5 minutes, then reduce heat to 325 degrees F. for 40 minutes, until center is almost set but still soft.

Two 9-inch pies.

Sweet potato pie is traditionally served for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner and is a typical dessert made and served by African Americans.

Image courtesy of SoulfoodandSouthernCooking.com
**Greek Fest 2017:**

Greek Fest was held from February 24th - 26th at 8210 Cypress Lake Drive in Ft. Myers.

It featured: Authentic Greek Food, Orthodox Church Tours, Dance Performances, Vendors for Shopping, Carnival Rides and Games, and Car Raffle. [www.greekfestfortmyers.com](http://www.greekfestfortmyers.com)

**Upcoming Events:**

**American Czech and Slovak Club of Southwest Florida**

**Annual Picnic - Wednesday March 15, 2017, 11:30 am**

Ponce de Leon Park, Punta Gorda

Located at the very west end of Marion Avenue (3400 Ponce de Leon Parkway)

The picnic honors Vince Caudy, a Michigan “transplant,” who was a longtime accordionist with the club. We will also pay tribute to Skip Danner & Chuck Drasser who were very involved in many activities over the years. Cost is $5 for nonmembers and guests.

Chicken will be served at noon. EVERYONE is asked to bring a dish to share. (salad, vegetable or dessert) Plates, napkins and tableware will be provided. We hope to have live music! Everyone is welcome but please let us know how many are coming so we can order enough chicken. Be ready to sing and dance as well.

Call: Mary Ellen 941-286-3467 or Jim 941-769-8723

**Czech and Slovak Heritage Dinner - Sunday, April 2, 2017  1 – 4 pm**

Historic Punta Gorda Women’s Club

118 Sullivan Street (downtown / lots of parking)
Chef Vladimir Lesko, Sarasota, has agreed to make a traditional dinner which will include a soup, entrée and pastry. We will also include coffee, tea and soft drinks. There will be live music as well and we have asked Eva and Vacek to be with us. It is a beautiful building with a stage and dance floor as well. Vladimir has cooked for the Czech and Slovak Club in Miami so this will be a real treat. We can accommodate up to 100 people so let’s make our heritage come alive! **Cost $20** More information will follow and volunteers are needed!

**Florida Snowbird Polka Band – Tuesdays in February and March, 2017**

Paradise Tiki Hut Bar & Grill, Cape Coral, FL 12:30 – 3:30 pm
1502 Miramar Street (south end of Del Prado Blvd)

It’s the largest Tiki Hut in the U.S. and a great place for lunch, with good food & cold beer. Join friends, old and new, dance and listen to Cleveland-style polkas and waltzes. They will not play in Punta Gorda this year because of the Gilchrest Park renovations. [www.mysqueezeklap.com](http://www.mysqueezeklap.com)

**Blanchard House Museum**

May 20, 2017 - Come join the celebration of Emancipation Day at the Blanchard House Museum, 2-5 PM. Last chance to visit the Jim Crow exhibit. Panel of residents who participated in the Jim Crow oral history project, refreshments. Free to the public.

Tel. (941) 575-7518 406 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Punta Gorda, Florida 33950
The Museum is open Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 4pm until May, 20th. It reopens with a new exhibit in September.

**German-American Social Club of Cape Coral**

March 4 - Musik in den Frühling/German Spring Music Show
March 17 - Spring Concert featuring Edelweiss Chorus
March 19 - Gartenfest
March 25 - Harbor Lights/Dan Witucki
April 9-10 - Heritage Day Weekend in Lantana
April 22-23 – International Festival/International Night
April 29 - Country Night featuring Tru Kountry
May/June - Karaoke

[www.gasc-capecoral.com](http://www.gasc-capecoral.com)

**Chabad of Charlotte County**

**Purim Party**
Date: Sunday, March 12th
Time: 5:00 pm
Details: Full feast/ Kosher Deli, Live Music, Crafts, Children’s Entertainment
Dress-up – Come in your favorite costume, Megilla Reading
Fun for the Entire Family – Come and Bring a friend
For more info call 941 258 0177
Suggested Donation $15 per Adult/ $8 per Child; Sponsor $180
The Celtic Ray Public House

Saint Patrick's Day!!
Starts: 11:00 am
Ends: March 17, 2017 - 11:59 pm
Location: Celtic Ray Public House, 145 E Marion Ave, Punta Gorda, FL 33950, USA

Description:
Bobby Vesey 12-3PM
Stephen's Green
6 Volt Rodeo 8PM
more bands TBA....

Sandra’s Authentic German & European Cuisine
May - Maibock Festival

111 West Olympia Ave
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
Phone: 941-575-0177
E-mail: info@sandras-restaurant.com

Ukrainian American Club of Southwest Florida

Ukrainian Dinners and Kitchen
Traditional dinners are served every Friday through May 29th 4:00 - 6pm.
Take out of Pierogies, Cabbage Rolls and Borsch also available 1-6pm.
Call 941-423-2427 for more information.

Ukrainian Easter Bazar
Ukrainian Easter Bazar on Saturday, April 1 from 10 till 5 at the Ukrainian Cultural Center at 4100 S. Biscayne Drive in North Port. Exhibition and sale of cultural items, demonstration of pysanka (egg) writing and decorating, eat in or take out home cooked goodies, etc. At 2:30 PM there will be a performance by Ukrainian dancers.