



Culturally diverse students speak out

Kena Bocek: Reporter

The town of Beecher may be small, but that does not mean its people are not unique. Beecher High School alone contains culturally diverse students.

Gabi Bachis (So), age 15, was born in the state of Michigan. She may seem like your everyday U.S. citizen, but Gabi happens to be ethnically 100% Romanian.

"My grandmother cooks Romanian dishes," Gabi said.

One dish in particular is samala, or stuffed cabbage. Gabi plans to go to Romania when high school finishes. Hopefully, she will get a chance to see the country that so greatly shapes her heritage.

Some students, such as Janette Barraza (So), have lived in a foreign country for a period of time. Jeanette, age 16, was born in Illinois, but moved to Mexico at the young age of 8. Just 6 months ago, she moved back to the U.S. Consequently, Janette has experienced both the culture of the U.S. and Mexico.

"Everything is different in Mexico," Janette said.

The education in the U.S. and Mexico are two different worlds. In Mexico, the classrooms are all located outside, surrounding a patio displaying the Mexican flag. Whereas in America, most schools are tightly packed, with an American flag in every classroom. Festivities differ in Mexico as well. A common Mexican festivity is a quinceanera. A quinceanera is an elaborate celebration for a girl turning 15 years old.

"There are a lot of parties," Janette said "I miss it a lot." It is natural for her to miss the fun atmosphere back in Mexico.

America is a temporary home for some students. Such is the case for Michal Janda, a foreign exchange student from the Czech Republic. Michal (Jr),

age 17, was born in Prague. Prague is the capital of the Czech Republic. In August, the ASSE Organization gave Michal the opportunity to come to America. The ASSE Organization allows deserving students to receive a host family in America.

"I was a little bit scared," he admits.

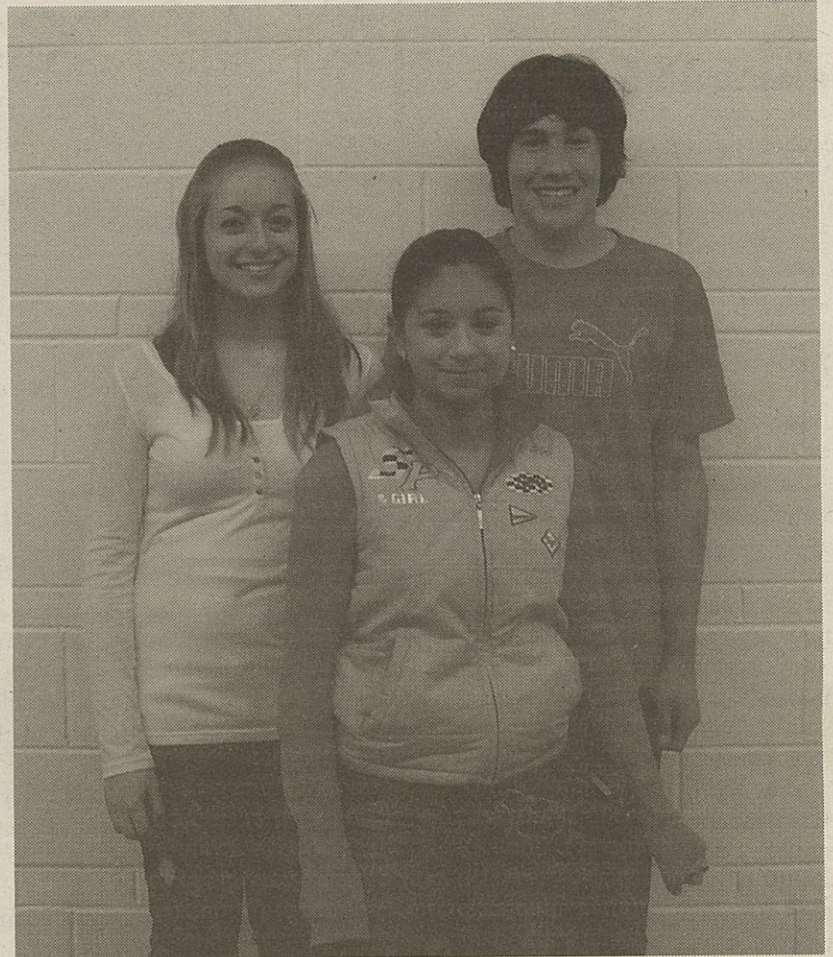
American and Czech culture have similarities, which can make Michal feel at home. In both America and the Czech Republic, the average person is seen wearing a t-shirt and jeans. Pop culture is alike as well. Rock, pop, and hip-hop are just as popular in the Czech Republic as they are in America.

American movies are translated, or "dubbed," so people in Michal's country can enjoy them. However, there are some aspects of American and Czech culture that clash.

In the Czech Republic, a school day begins at 8:00 a.m., but ends at a different time each day. The classes vary day by day as well. Food differs in the Czech Republic too. There are a lot of soups. Some soups include sauerkraut, potatoes, garlic, and dill.

"It is healthier in the Czech Republic," Michal said.

Understanding different cultures can help people appreciate and respect each others differences. It is important to understand where people came from to truly appreciate who that person is. The diversity in our school is amazing and it should be celebrated by the students at Beecher High School.



Diversity at its best : (pictured from left to right) Gabi Bachis, Jeanette Barraza, and Michal Janda

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Thanksgiving is not the same for everyone

Mary Tucker: Reporter

Every fourth Thursday in November, Americans gather around the table for Thanksgiving. It is a time to give thanks and a time to spend with family and friends. Native born Americans are not the only ones who celebrate Thanksgiving.

Some immigrants, who live in America, celebrate Thanksgiving; some do not.

Katherine Bonnan, a Beecher High School Spanish teacher, is half Italian, but still chooses to celebrate Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is not like any Italian holiday. Bonnan's family, on her mother's side, get together for a Thanksgiving dinner and it is a unique tradition.

They gather in a circle holding hands and pass around a toy chick which has two magnets on the bottom of its feet. When the magnets are put together, the toy chick chirps. This toy chick signifies a bond between the family members. Upon passing the chick, they all say what they are thankful for.

"I am thankful for my health, family, and friends," said Bonnan.

She believes Thanksgiving is important because it is the only holiday that is not marketed, so it is a time to express

thankfulness, which is very important to remember.

Janette Barraza, (So), moved to America six months ago. She was born in America and moved to Mexico when she was eight.

"I do not really celebrate Thanksgiving, my family and I just get together to have a bunch of food," said Barraza.

There is no Mexican holiday that is like Thanksgiving, so her family celebrates America's Thanksgiving in a simpler way. She does believe Thanksgiving is important because Americans are lucky to have good food. Barraza is also thankful that she was able to come to America.

Michal Janda (Jr) is another culturally diverse student here at BHS. He is a foreign exchange student from the Czech Republic. Janda does not celebrate Thanksgiving at all. This is sort of expected considering that he is a citizen of the Czech Republic. There are no holidays in Czech Republic that are like Thanksgiving. Janda does believe Thanksgiving is important for Ameri-

cans because it is a part of America's culture.

"I would not celebrate Thanksgiving in my country because if every country had the same holidays it would be boring. Different cultures would not

be interesting," said Janda. Even though Janda does not celebrate Thanksgiving, he is still very thankful.

"I am thankful that I can be here, that I am alive, for my friends, family, and my host family," said Janda.

Thanksgiving may not be celebrated by every American resident, but it is very important to many different culturally diverse individuals. Those individuals may not celebrate this holiday like the typical American family or even at all. It just goes to show that even though America lives together in one country, it can be diverse in different ways of life, even with something simple, like Thanksgiving.

"I am thankful that I can be here, that I am alive, for my friends, family, and my host family," said Janda.

What are some BHS students thankful for?

"I am thankful that I have food every day, when others do not"
-Dan Knuth, Senior

"I'm thankful that I have all of my family." -Cecilia Carr, Junior

"I am thankful for school, the health of my family, and both of my parents' jobs." -Erin Feret, Sophomore

"I'm thankful for my courageous brother who is sacrificing his life for his country." -Mollie Tucker, Sophomore