

CZECH HERITAGE SOCIETY OF TEXAS
State Membership Meeting
Chapter Report

Chapter Name: Brazos Valley

Report Given By: Andrew Juranek, Reporter

Date Prepared: January 30, 2015

Please record below your Chapter's past accomplishments, events, and activities since the last State Membership Meeting (i.e., from Spring meeting to Summer meeting; Summer meeting to Fall meeting; and Fall meeting to Spring meeting):

September 2014 Chapter Meeting

On September 11, 2014 a chapter meeting occurred at C&J Barbeque located in Bryan, Texas. Multiple topics were discussed including the Fall Czech Celebration, BVCHS Kolache Baking Class, Brazos Valley Worldfest, BVCHS Christmas Party, and the BVCHS hosting of CHS State Meeting & Queen Pageant.

A cultural presentation was also provided by Marketa Byrtusova, the 2014 Czech Language Class teacher. Marketa, an instructor from the Czech Republic, is the current holder of the CEFT William J. Hlavinka Czech Fellowship at Texas A&M University.

Fall 2014 Czech Language Class

The weekly fall Czech Language Class began on Tuesday, September 23, 2014 at the St. Joseph Catholic Church Parish Activity Center [PAC] Annex.

The course is taught by Marketa Byrtusova, an instructor from the Czech Republic. Marketa is the current holder of the CEFT William J. Hlavinka Czech Fellowship at Texas A&M University. Marketa grew up in Bukovec, the easternmost village in the Czech Republic, and attended grammar high school in Cesky Tesin from which she graduated with a baccalaureate in 2010. She then started undergraduate studies at Palacky University, Olomouc, in the field of English Philology and graduated in June 2013. Marketa was raised in a family with a strong teaching tradition. She is very happy to be in Texas and attending Texas A&M University.

The class is structured to accommodate both beginners and more advanced speakers of Czech. The class cost was \$35 for the semester and the classes concentrated on conversational Czech.

2014 Polka Mass, Dinner, and Dance

The second Annual Polka Mass, Meal, and Dance occurred on October 12, 2014. The masses were celebrated at the St. Joseph Catholic Church at 10:00 AM and 11:30 AM and the Taylor Czech Chorus performed during the mass. Dinner was served at 1:00 PM at the St. Joseph Catholic Church Parish Activity Center (600 E 26th Street, Bryan, TX 77803) followed by the dance at 1:30 PM. The Praha Brothers performed for the dance.

2014 Kolache and Christmas Bread Baking Class

The 2014 Kolache and Christmas Bread Baking Class occurred on October 25, 2014 at the St. Joseph Catholic Church Parish Activity Center. The class provided a wonderful opportunity to learn how to make genuine Czech Kolache and Vanocka (braided Christmas Bread). The class was taught by Mr. Stanislav Vitha.

November 2014 Executive Committee Meeting

On November 18, 2014 an executive committee meeting occurred at Carter's Burgers in Bryan, Texas. Final details were ironed out for the upcoming Chapter meeting and other events in 2014. The April 2015 CHS State Meeting and Queen Pageant was also discussed.

November 2014 Chapter Meeting

On November 20, 2014 a chapter meeting occurred at The Feed Barn in Bryan, Texas. Topics of discussion included several upcoming events as well as the election of 2015-2016 Officers. All of the current officers were voted in to continue their term for 2015-2016. A vote also took place concerning the Valentine's Day Dance and the result was that it will not be held in 2015 but will look to be continued in 2016.

2014 Brazos Valley Worldfest

On November 22, 2014, the annual Brazos Valley Worldfest took place. The event opened at 10:00 AM but was cut short and cancelled around 11:00 AM due to threatening weather in the area. There were around 20-30 visitors to the booth before the event was cancelled.

This year there was an activity for the visitors centered on one of the Czech Christmas traditions. It involved floating a boat made from walnut shells with a small lit candle. The longer the boat floats and the candle burns, the longer you will live. This seemed to be a popular activity with our visitors. In addition, Tanya Wagner made a nice poster about end of the year Czech traditions which was also very well received by our visitors and Jo Ann Zaeske and Lynette Urbanovsky provided pictures from BVCHS past activities that were used at the event.

Many BVCHS members contributed to the festivities. Frank and Marie Dulak baked apple strudels. Loraine Roessler baked apple strudels and helped at the booth. Jo Ann Zaeske baked cookies. EJ Biskup volunteered at the booth and helped pack up when the event was cancelled. Tanya Wagner, Alena, Kamila and Erika Vitha helped with set-up and packing during the event. Stan Vitha baked kolaches (10 large ones, one medium), Christmas breads (10 large braided breads, two non-braided loaves) and four poppy seed strudels. Josie Millberger made a number of decorative floral head pieces to be sold at the booth. Josie also had polka T-shirts for sale. Sheryl Wenck, Charles and Regina Opersteny, and Lynette Urbanovsky signed up to volunteer at the booth, but the show was shut down before their time slot arrived.



2014 BVCHS Christmas Party

The annual BVCHS Christmas Party was held on December 5, 2014 at St. Joseph Catholic Church PAC in Bryan, Texas. A catered dinner was served featuring turkey and dressing with all the trimmings. Several special presentations were made during the evening. Marketa Byrtusova, Hlavinka Fellowship recipient and BVCHS Czech language class instructor presented on Ceske Vanoce/Czech Christmas. A Christmas Advent demonstration was held. A Czech and American Christmas Carol sing-a-long was lead by Tomas Pansky and Lynette Urbanovsky. A special piano performance was delivered by Kamila and Alena Vitha. A Czech ornament exchange and door prize drawings also occurred to help brighten the holiday spirit.

January 2015 Chapter Meeting

On January 22, 2015 a chapter meeting occurred at C&J Barbeque located in Bryan, Texas. Dining began at 6:30 PM and the meeting kicked off around 7:00 PM. The main agenda items included the installation of officers, the upcoming CHS State meeting which will be hosted by the BVCHS, the Spring Kolache Baking Class, the Spring Czech Language Classes, and a going away party for Marketa Byrtusova (Czech Language Teacher for the fall 2014 semester). During the meeting, an outline of the responsibilities and items needed for the State meeting was discussed. A committee was formed to handle these responsibilities in hosting the state meeting. The Chapter voted to cancel the 2015 Easter Egg Decorating class but will look to reinstate for 2016. Another topic of discussion was about LISTOPAD, a movie covering the velvet revolution in 1989, which is tentatively scheduled to be shown free of charge at Texas A&M University on February 26. The Chapter voted to help sponsor the showing as well as assist in

communicating about the event in order to gain publicity. Creating a chapter scholarship was also discussed and the Chapter voted to move forward with this initiative.

Going Away Party for Marketa Byrtusova

A going away party for Marketa Byrtusova (Czech Language Class Teacher for the fall semester of 2014) occurred at 7:00 PM on Monday, January 26 at J Codys Steak and Barbeque Restaurant in Bryan.

Upcoming Events

- The Spring Czech Language Class will be held on Mondays at 7:00 PM beginning on February 2, 2015. The course will be taught in the spring by Tomas Pansky.
- The 2015 Easter Baking Class will occur on March 21, 2015.
- The next Chapter Meeting will take place on April 2, 2015.
- The CHS Spring State Meeting and Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Pageant will be hosted by the BVCHS on April 25, 2015

For more information and to stay up to date on Chapter events, please visit the chapter web-site at bvchs.webnode.com.