



# Brazos Valley Czech Heritage Society

P.O. Box 3383 – Bryan, TX 77805

Website: [bvchs.webnode.com](http://bvchs.webnode.com)

## July 2021

### **BVCHS Officers**

**President:**

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**Vice-President:**

Rich Fayman  
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**Secretary:**

Cheryl Wenck  
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**Treasurer:**

Jo Ann Zaeske  
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**Reporter:**

Kelly Sandhop  
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### **Appointed Positions**

**Bylaws/Nominations:**

John Moravec  
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**Concernments:**

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**Genealogy**

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**Historian/Membership:**

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**Newsletter:**

Jeannine Koll  
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**Scholarship:**

Cheryl Wenck  
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**Wishing you a Safe and Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!**

**Look forward to seeing you at the September meeting.**

### **Our President's Thoughts**

What a year it has been and now moving forward to normalcy, I hope to see many of you at upcoming Brazos Valley Czech Heritage Society (BVCHS) events. As your new BVCHS president I first would like to give thanks to E. J. Biskup for serving as your president for the past eight years. During those eight years our chapter has been involved in hosting several successful State Czech Heritage Society (CHS) events, as well as, Czech Heritage celebrations, Czech language classes and, baking classes. We wish E. J. continued success as a State CHS officer and having him attend our chapter meetings. Your newly elected officers are preparing the calendar for the remainder of the year with programs at our Fall meetings and then into 2022.

We know everyone has busy lives but BVCHS is your chapter. We appreciate any ideas you have, and your participation in events helps make our chapter stronger.

Look forward to seeing you at our first meeting after summer break on September 19, 2021.

Na zdraví!

Marie



## Chapter News:

### April 2021 Meeting

BVCHS held its membership meeting on April 18, 2021 at C&J Barbeque in Bryan, Texas. President E. J. Biskup called the meeting to order at 1:22 p.m. There were 25 members and 6 guests in attendance. The opening prayer "Our Czech Heritage"/Naše české dědictví was recited by the members followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. President E. J. Biskup introduced Lauren Gerik, the 2020 Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Queen, who gave a short presentation about her experiences representing the State Czech Heritage Society as queen. She will be competing at the Miss Czech/Slovak U.S. Pageant in August at Wilber, Nebraska.



Lauren Gerik  
2020 Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Queen

After Lauren's talk the business meeting continued with officers and committee chair reports given. Membership chair, Jo Ann Zaeske, reported we had 64 membership renewals to date. John Moravec, Nominations Chair, presented a slate of officers to serve BVCHS for a two-year term, 2021-2022. The following officers were elected: President: Marie Dulak; Vice-President: Richard (Rich) Fayman; Secretary: Cheryl Wenck; Treasurer: Jo Ann Zaeske; and Reporter: Kelly Sandhop. Following the election, the officers were installed by John Moravec.



2021-2022 Officers  
Marie Dulak, Rich Fayman, Cheryl Wenck, Jo Ann Zaeske  
and Kelly Sandhop

Following the election of officers Cheryl Wenck, Scholarship Chair, presented the 2021 Novak-Zaeske Memorial Scholarships to Alena and Kamila Vitha, the daughters of Stanislav (Stan) Vitha and Tanya Wagner. They are graduating seniors from Bryan High School and both will be attending Texas A&M University in the Fall.



Alena Vitha, Cheryl Wenck and Kamila Vitha

As there was no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m. followed by a 50/50 drawing and socializing of members.

### Membership:

Please welcome the following new and returning members for 2021:

Sharon Clements  
Mary Ann Gantt  
Tara Jirinec  
Diana Kohring  
Sharon Mena (Returning)  
Sharon Merka  
Mary Ann Novosad  
Riley Sandhop (Youth)  
Kevin Shimek  
Donna Stetz  
Charles (C.J.) Zapalac Jr. (Youth)

BVCHS has a membership total of 105 (91 Adults and 14 Youth) as of June 2021.

### Member News:

On January 28, 2021 A&M Consolidated High School Juniors, Riley Sandhop and Faith Wenck were inducted into the National Honor Society. Riley is the daughter of Kelly and David Sandhop and Faith is the daughter of Cheryl and Fred Wenck.

Alena Vitha, Bryan High School senior, entered the international Picasso Sparking Imagination Contest with her artwork "Through the Lens" and was notified in March that her piece was one of 16 chosen in the 15-19 age range of the world competition. Alena was the only entry selected from Texas. The competition reaches more than 69 countries and receives more than 19,000 entries. Great work, Alena.



## Member News (cont):

Besides being an artist, Alena Vitha was the student organizer for the annual Walk for Water event held May 8, 2021 at Merrill Green Stadium in Bryan, Texas. The event raises money to build cisterns in Guatemalan villages where residents do not have access to safe, clean water.

On May 6, 2021, Stanislav (Stan) Vitha took the Oath of Allegiance to become a United States citizen at a naturalization ceremony held in San Antonio, Texas. We welcome our Czech Republic born citizen as a U.S. citizen.



Leading the A&M Consolidated Tiger Band this fall as Head Drum Major will be BVCHS Youth member Faith Wenck. She is the daughter of Fred & Cheryl Wenck and the granddaughter of Jo Ann Zaeske. We know she will do an excellent job leading the Tiger band.

Congratulations to Rich and Toni Fayman who will be celebrating their Golden Anniversary on August 21, 2021. May God bless you with many years to come.

## Graduations:

### A&M Consolidated High School

Brook Elizabeth Bennett, granddaughter of E. J. and Kay Biskup and daughter of Robert and Melissa Bennett, graduated Magna Cum Laude on May 29, 2021. She will be attending Texas A&M University to study computer science. Some of her accomplishments include earning a \$2500 scholarship from The National Cyber Scholarship Foundation and earning academic all-state honors in soccer from the Texas Association of Soccer Coaches.

### Bryan High School

Alena Vitha, daughter of Stan Vitha and Tanya Wagner graduated on May 29, 2021. She ranked sixth in her class of 516 students and will be attending Texas A&M University to pursue a degree in Aerospace Engineering.

Kamila Vitha, daughter of Stan Vitha and Tanya Wagner, graduated on May 29, 2021. She ranked tenth in the class of 516 students and will be attending Texas A&M University to pursue a degree in Chemical Engineering.

### Madison County High School, Georgia

Sophia Merka, daughter of John Merka and granddaughter of Bill & Sharon Merka graduated from Madison County High School in Georgia on May 29, 2021. She will further her education at a local community college.

### Texas A&M University

Madaleine Merka, daughter of Bill and Amy Merka and granddaughter of Bill and Sharon Merka graduated Magna Cum Laude from Texas A&M University on May 20, 2021 from Mays Business School with emphasis in supply chain management.

## Concernments and Condolences:

Speedy recovery wishes to Willie & Josie Milberger, Raymond and Janice Sis, Lauren Koll and any members who have been ill.

Sincere sympathy to the following:

The family of Paulene Roeder Mooney, long time BVCHS member, who we recently learned passed away on June 23, 2020 in Lufkin.

Bruno & Christine Shimek, Wesley, Emily, Charlotte & Andrew Shimek and Kevin Shimek on the passing of their father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Lawrence Shimek on April 3, 2021.

Please submit any announcements or news articles for the BVCHS Newsletter to Jeannine Koll, email [jeannine.koll@mygrande.net](mailto:jeannine.koll@mygrande.net), 214-924-8230.

## 2021 Upcoming Events

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|---------------|--|
| July 24       | Summer State CHS Meeting and<br>Genealogy Conference<br>Sacred Heart Parish Center<br>Hallettsville, Texas |
| September 19  | BVCHS Membership Meeting   |
| October 15-16 | Annual Heritage Fest & Muziky<br>Texas Czech Heritage & Cultural Center<br>La Grange, Texas                |
| November 7    | BVCHS Membership Meeting   |
| December 4    | BVCHS Christmas Party  |