



# Brazos Valley Czech Heritage Society

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

## Summer 2025

### **BVCHS Officers**

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### President's Farewell

Serving as BVCHS President for the past four years has been an honor to work with such a wonderful group of people who are always willing to volunteer their time, ideas and help to make the chapter proud of its Czech heritage. The support and volunteerism of the officers, committee persons and members meant a great deal to me. You are the best and thank you for being there.

Congratulations to Bruno, Pete, Cheryl, Sharon and Jeannine in accepting to serve BVCHS as your new officers. With their leadership our chapter will continue being a very active group. Look forward to working with everyone at upcoming events.

Marie

### President's Ahoj

First, I would like to thank Marie Dulak and Rich Fayman for their service as President and Vice President respectively of the Brazos County Czech Heritage Society. I know a lot of our members, but not everyone, so by way of introduction, I have practiced law in Brazos County since 1987. My wife and I have become active in the society over about the last 10 years. We feel that it is important to continue to preserve our Czech Heritage which is why I decided to accept the President's position. My wife Christine is very involved in the Czech Heritage Society at the State level. She hosts the website and other social media.

I think it is important that we continue to promote and preserve our heritage. To that order I would like to encourage everyone to reach out to our youth to get involved. I hope that we could also have presentations from any of our members who are willing to share their family's Czech traditions that have carried on throughout the generations from our ancestors. I look forward to working with all members in sharing our Czech heritage.

Bruno



## Chapter News:

**Editors' Note:** Both the 2024 and 2025 Scholarship Presentation are covered in this 2025 Summer Newsletter as there was no Spring Newsletter.

### April 2024 Scholarship Presentation and Meeting

BVCHS held its 2024 scholarship presentation and membership meeting on April 13, 2024 at the St. Joseph Parish Activity Center (PAC) in Bryan, Texas. President Marie Dulak called the meeting to order at 1:14 p.m. There were 37 members in attendance. Stan Vitha led the opening Czech prayer and then members recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Members enjoyed a delicious meal with roasted chicken provided by the chapter along with side dishes and desserts the members provided. Following the meal, officer and committee chair reports were given. Treasurer and Membership Chair, Sharon Clements, reported we have 100 adult members and 13 youth members as of March 2024. Marie recognized new multi chapter member Madelyn Karstedt, Miss Fayette County Czech Slovak Queen 2024-2025. Madelyn made a few comments about her Czech heritage and background. Plans are underway for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Summer Social to be held Sunday, June 2, 2024, 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the St. Joseph PAC. Hot dogs and trimmings will be served like last year. Members are encouraged to bring games again; Barbara Simmons also offered to set up cornhole. The October Czech Celebration has also been set to be held at the St. Joseph PAC on Saturday, October 12, 2024, 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. There was agreement the DJ last year did a nice job, and it was decided to have a DJ again this year. It was also decided to follow the same basic meal as last year ... sandwiches, pinwheels, chips, desserts, and kolaches. The Scholarship Presentation followed. The Matush Czech Heritage Scholarship was awarded to Kamila Vitha this year, daughter of Stan Vitha and Tanya Wagner. Kamila is a Junior Chemical Engineer major at Texas A&M. The meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m. and then door prizes and a 50/50 drawing were held.



Scholarship recipient Kamila Vitha with Donors John and Sandra Matush



Scholarship recipient Kamila Vitha with Donors John and Sandra Matush, President Marie Dulak and Scholarship Chair Cheryl Wenck





Kamila Vitha with parents Stan Vitha and Tanya Wagner and sister Erika Vitha



Miss Texas Czech Slovak Junior Queen 2023-2024 Grace Moravec, Miss Fayette County Czech Slovak Queen 2024-2025 Madelyn Karstedt, and Kamila Vitha

## September 2024 Meeting

The next BVCHS chapter meeting was held on September 7, 2024. President Marie Dulak called the meeting to order at 1:14p.m. There were 21 members in attendance. Madelyn Karstedt, the new Texas Czech-Slovak Queen 2024-2025, gave a short presentation explaining the events and some of her activities at the recent State Pageant where she won the Queen title. Madelyn also shared some of her recent experiences at the Wilbur Czech Festival she attended with her family ... she will be attending again next year to represent Texas as the 2024-2025 Czech-Slovak Queen! Included in the officer reports and business portion of the chapter meeting was a review by Vice President Rich Fayman of the meeting and event dates for 2025. Also discussed was the success of the summer social. Stan Vitha, Baking Class/Czech Language Class Committee Chair, reported the Fall Baking Class will happen on Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, and that the class will make Christmas Bread and one other item that has not yet been decided. Details for the upcoming BVCHS October Czech Celebration were reviewed and finalized. For the Celebration, the chapter will be providing sandwiches and wraps with chips along with small kolaches and will ask members to bring a dessert if they are able. Finally, plans for the annual BVCHS Christmas Party were discussed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m. After door prize and 50/50 drawings, members enjoyed refreshments and fellowship.



Madelyn Karstedt, Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Queen - 2024-2025, at the BVCHS September 2024 Meeting

## October 2024 Czech Heritage Celebration

BVCHS held its annual Czech Heritage Month Celebration on October 12, 2024 with food, fellowship, and dancing at the St. Joseph Parish Activity Center (PAC). Music was provided by Ruby Slippers Entertainment with DJ Missee Mora. Members came together to put on a wonderful celebration of our heritage! Rich Fayman and Jeannine Koll arranged for order and pick up of all the lunch items and along with Barbara Simmons, Toni Fayman and Joshua Eisele led the kitchen and lunch set up. Linda Stetz and Erika Vitha handled the decorations with the help of other members. Sharon Clements, Amanda Eisele and Gladys Beasley took care of registration. Jo Ann Zaeske and Cheryl Wenck sold corporate table sponsorships. A Bucket Raffle was added this year led by Cheryl Wenck and Toni Fayman and was enjoyed by members to be a great success!



Members enjoying food, fellowship, and fun at the October Czech Heritage Celebration





## October 2024 Czech Heritage Celebration (cont'd.)



Members enjoying food and fellowship at the October Czech Heritage Celebration

### November 2024 Meeting

BVCHS held its next chapter meeting on November 2, 2024. President Marie Dulak called the meeting to order at 1:11p.m. Stan Vitha led the opening prayer, "Our Czech Heritage"/ " Nase ceske dedictvi". There were 14 members and 3 guests in attendance. One of the guests attending was Czech Exchange Student, Matyas Minar, from the greater Prague area. He is 15 years old and a Sophomore at College Station High School. Included in the officer reports and business portion of the meeting was a review of the October Celebration. Sharon Clements, Treasurer, reported proceeds from ticket sales, corporate sponsorships and the bucket raffle, and then detailed chapter expenses to host the Celebration. Sharon also reported currently we have 118 members, 105 adults and 13 youth. Stan Vitha, Baking Class Committee Chair, reported on preparations for the upcoming Fall Christmas Baking class. Marie mentioned that the Christmas Party is set for December 7<sup>th</sup> in the same room at the St. Joseph PAC as last year, and plans were finalized. The meeting was adjourned at 1:49 p.m. Following, members enjoyed refreshments and fellowship and played Czech Bingo.

### November 2024 CHS State Meeting

Many BVCHS members attended the State CHS Meeting on November 9, 2024 to support of our own BVCHS member, Jo Ann Zaeske, as she was honored to receive the Texas Czech Heritage Award for her involvement and work supporting our Czech Heritage. We also honored BVCHS member Charlene Lusk in the Memorial Candle Lighting Service. It was a memorable day.



Jo Ann Zaeske receiving Texas Czech Heritage Award



## November 2024 CHS State Meeting (cont'd.)



Jo Ann Zaeske with family @ State CHS Meeting



BVCHS members @ State CHS Meeting

## December 2024 Christmas Party

The BVCHS Christmas Party was held on December 7, 2024 at the St. Joseph Parish Activity Center with 54 attending! A traditional Czech meal of roasted pork and potato dumplings and cabbage was served. BVCHS member Stan Vitha led the meal prep group. In addition, members brought a variety of delicious side dishes and desserts to complement the meal. A big thanks to Barbara Simmons for all her work taking care of drinks. And thanks too to Lydia Mousner and Helen Metzger who were in charge of RSVP details and sign in. So many members helped make the event festive with decorations! In addition to the 12 Days of Christmas sing-along, members enjoyed singing several other carols with Tomas Pansky on guitar. Following the meal, members enjoyed the annual Christmas Ornament Exchange and then door prize drawings. What a blessing to celebrate this time of year with so many involved members!



Members @ the BVCHS Christmas Party





## December 2024 Christmas Party (cont'd.)



BVCHS members enjoying food and fellowship at the Christmas Party



## February 2025 Meeting

BVCHS started 2025 with a meeting on February 8, 2025 with 23 members and 1 guest present. President Marie Dulak called the meeting to order at 1:14p.m. Officer and committee chair reports were given. Scholarship chair, Cheryl Wenck, reported that the 2025 Scholarship applications have been emailed to the membership and copies were also available today at the sign-in table. Sharon Clements, Treasurer and Membership Chair, reported that membership so far for 2025 stood at 100 members, 90 adults and 10 youth. Vice President, Rich Fayman, reported that all 2025 dates are set and the St. Joseph PAC has been reserved. Stan Vitha, Baking Class and Czech Language Class Committee Chair, reminded all of the upcoming Spring Baking Class on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and that there were already 9 people signed up. Also, the Spring Czech Language Class continues on Monday nights. There are currently 12 registered students, half being new students. The business portion of the meeting concluded as Jo Ann Zaeske, Nominating Committee Chair, presented the 2025-2026 slate of officers. Bruno Shimek – President, Pete Vanecek – Vice President, Cheryl Wenck – Secretary, Sharon Clements – Treasurer and Jeannine Koll – Reporter were approved by the membership and installed for a 2-year term. The meeting was adjourned at 2:04p.m. Following, members took part in door prizes and a 50/50 drawing and enjoyed refreshments.



2025-2026 BVCHS Officers  
Bruno Shimek, Pete Vanecek, Cheryl Wenck,  
Sharon Clements, and Jeannine Koll

## Spring 2025 Baking Class

BVCHS offered its Spring Baking Class on March 22, 2025 at the St. Joseph Parish Activity Center (PAC). It was a full class with 12 participants. The class first made a batch of dough, and then had a demonstration on how to make yogurt cheese, prune, and poppyseed fillings. The large Southwestern Bohemia style kolache was made as well as the regular- sized Czech/Moravia kolache. Thanks to Stan's daughter, Erika Vitha, who helped with preparations and during the class.

## Spring 2025 Baking Class (cont'd.)



Participants @ BVCHS Spring 2025 Kolache Baking Class

## April 2025 Scholarship Presentation and Meeting

BVCHS held its 2025 Membership Meeting and Annual Scholarship Presentation on April 12, 2025 at the St. Joseph Parish Activity Center (PAC) in Bryan, Texas. President Bruno Shimek called the meeting to order at 12:23 p.m. There were 20 members and 1 guest in attendance. Father Joy led the opening prayer followed by Stan Vitha with the Czech prayer. And then members recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Officer and committee chair reports were given. Treasurer and Membership Chair, Sharon Clements, reported we have 108 members as of today! Bruno mentioned plans are underway for our 3<sup>rd</sup> Summer Social to be held Sunday, June 8, 2024, 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the St. Joseph PAC. Once again, KJZT will be joining us and will provide the hamburgers with BVCHS providing the hot dogs. There will be various games – cornhole, dominoes, and others. The Scholarship Presentation followed. The 2025 Novak-Zaeske Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Josh Eisele. Josh is a graduating senior at St Joseph High School and has been accepted into the Mays Business School at Texas A&M. Josh is the son of Bill and Amanda Eisele and the grandson of Rita Vanek. He makes his Czech heritage a regular part of his life. Congratulations Josh! The meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m. Then members enjoyed a delicious meal of roasted pork and chicken made by the Bruno Shimek and Stan Vitha, along with side dishes and desserts the members provided.



Scholarship recipient Josh Eisele with President Bruno Shimek, Scholarship Chair Cheryl Wenck, Treasurer Sharon Clements, and Vice President Pete Vanecek





Scholarship recipient Josh Eisele



Josh Eisele with mother Amanda Eisele and grandmother Rita Vanek



Members enjoying a meal and fellowship at the April, 2025 Meeting after Scholarship Presentation

## June 2024 and 2025 Summer Socials

BVCHS organized its 3<sup>rd</sup> Summer Social on June 8, 2025, 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the St. Joseph PAC. And in a repeat from 2024, KJZT Family Life joined the BVCHS event again. Several BVCHS members are a member of both organizations! KJZT provided the hamburgers with BVCHS providing the hot dogs and trimmings and members bringing desserts. Members and guests enjoyed visiting, and playing dominoes as well as various other games. A great time was had by all!



Members and guests at the BVCHS June 2024 Social



BVCHS June 2025 Social

## Fall Semester 2025 Czech Language Class

BVCHS continues to offer its Czech Language Class for the Fall Semester beginning September 8, 2025 to be held Monday nights 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the St. Joseph PAC. Anyone interested should contact Tanya Wagner ([tanya.wagner@aol.com](mailto:tanya.wagner@aol.com); 979-776-2152).

## Membership

Please welcome the following members to our chapter for 2025:

Dennis Gregurek  
Elizabeth Gregurek  
Shirley McCowen  
Amy Merka  
Madaliene Merka  
John Merka  
Daniel Merka  
Sophia Merka  
Lauren Reitmayer  
Theresa Sanders  
Alisa Zubik

BVCHS has a membership total of 108 (96 Adults and 12 Youth) as of August 2025.

## Member News:

News from the Fred and Cheryl Wenck family... In a small ceremony, member Adam Wenck married Kaitlyn Delaney on January 17, 2025. They are expecting the arrival of Baby Wenck this October! Congrats Adam and Kaitlyn!  
On December 21, 2024, member Fallon Wenck received her Master's Degree from SMU in Applied Science. Congratulations, Fallon! She is working for Boston Scientific and is based out of Dallas.  
Member Faith Wenck, class of '26 received her Aggie Ring on April 5th! Gig'em Aggie!

Congratulations to members Kody and Jennifer Chambers on the birth of their daughter, Kacie Noelle Chambers, on July 7, 2025. Big brother and sister Josh and Kinsley welcome baby sister too! Proud grandparents are Chris and Jeannine Koll and great-grandmother Jo Ann Zaeske.

## Concernments and Condolences

Sincere sympathy to the families of the following members for their passing. Rest in peace.

Charlene Matejka Lusk, age 82, passing on July 15, 2024.

Milton Gaas, age 88, passing on December 30, 2024.

Rita Frnka Vanek, age 88, passing on June 2, 2025.

Charles Opersteny, age 95, passing on July 14, 2025

Frank Kocman, Jr., age 99, passing on August 27, 2025.

## 2025 Upcoming Events

September 6 BVCHS Membership Meeting  
1:00-4:00 p.m. St. Joseph PAC, Bryan, Texas

September 8 Fall Language Class  
7:00-8:30 p.m. St. Joseph PAC, Bryan, Texas

October 11 BVCHS Czech Heritage Celebration  
12:00-4:00 p.m. St. Joseph PAC, Bryan, Texas

November 1 BVCHS Membership Meeting  
1:00-4:00 p.m. St. Joseph PAC, Bryan, Texas

December 6 BVCHS Christmas Party  
12:00-4:00 p.m. St. Joseph PAC, Bryan, Texas

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