

Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Summer Issue ~ Vol. 10 No. 1

July 2013

carol jean smetana, editor

Mission Statement:

Promote the historical significance, enhance the beauty, and preserve the artistic heritage of Bohemian National Cemetery

Vision:

Create an appreciation of BNC in local, national, and international audiences



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What's New with Friends of BNC

Flag day for Friends of BNC wasn't June 14th - it was May 24th this year when a few of us came to decorate but were outnumbered by the **C.I.T. Rail volunteers**, as well as teacher **Leticia Aldama** and her class of 25 sixth-graders from nearby **Palmer Elementary School!** It was delightful to have this kind of a workforce, and the 1440 flags were placed along the main road leading to the crematorium/columbarium in record time!



Our Friends of BNC letters, spelled out in red vinca flowers, are outlined by blue ageratum. Dusty miller plants line the plot edges, with red geraniums providing a background and mulch spread as ground cover.

All the plant material was donated by Gethsemane Gardens on Clark Street a few miles east of BNC. Stop by to see our planting and pull any weeds that might have taken root!

So how were we going to get the Friends' plot by Cermak's mausoleum ready for the BNC flower display contest? Some of the C.I.T. Rail volunteers said they would be happy to help instead of planting flags, so

with scratchers, spades, rakes, diggers, and lots of elbow grease, we went over there and dug and chopped! Later I went to get the flowers with a master gardener friend, **Randi Long** – our cars were both filled to the brim with all of these plants! –and we began to plant,

(Continued on page 5)

Live from BNC

The April 18th rainstorm caused the Chicago River to overflow its banks, closed Pulaski Road and Foster Avenue, and flooded the cemetery. The basements of the cemetery's three bungalows were flooded, and river water covered the garage floor. The waters receded by April 24th. Despite the severe storm, the dome on the crematorium building didn't leak.

The last week of April, **John Radu** repaired a break in the pipe carrying city water to the crematorium/columbarium building. John also noted that the wall on the cemetery's side of the Chicago River is starting to crumble, and the concrete is falling into the river. Since the wall is the

cemetery's responsibility, a structural engineer will be contacted to identify the cause of the problem.

The water intake at the river was blocked with silt, so there wasn't any water in the cistern and nothing could be pumped up into the tower. Radu dug away the silt from both the intake area and the 12-inch feed pipe to the cistern, enabling the water to flow again into the cistern.

Now for some pleasant information about the cemetery! On April 24th, **Ken Dvorsky** brought **Klára Moldová**, the T.G. Masaryk School teacher from the Czech Republic, and **Lenka Prochásková**,

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Heritage Happenings

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Manuscripts, articles, photographs, and advertisements for *Heritage Happenings* may be submitted to carol jean smetana, 167 County Road A4A, Sapello, NM 87745-5026 or emailed to her at editor@friendsofbnc.org

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from the editor's laptop

I had hoped to get this newsletter to the printer a week ago so you would receive it in time to read the details about the cemetery's picnic and make your plans to enjoy the festivities there on July 7th. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to make my deadline, so I did the next best thing. I posted the information on our website and our Facebook page. Are you familiar with Facebook? It's one of those free social networking sites available through the internet. It's a fun way to keep up with friends -- and Friends! If you're on it, please "like" our page Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery. If you don't use Facebook yourself, I bet someone you know does - and they would be happy to show you our page - and "like" us in the process!

Have you visited our website recently? There are some wonderful photo galleries that have recently been added. Click on "Gallery" on the top of our home page and enjoy a virtual stroll through the cemetery: you're sure to see something new!

I'll be in Chicago in August and hope to see many of you at our August program. I first discovered Bohumir Kryl, the subject of our August program, when I was researching the Kryl family for the "Stories of the Stones" article in our Fall 2011 issue. That was a follow-up piece to the wonderful article Diane Minarik wrote for our Summer 2011 issue. You might enjoy reading both articles before our August meeting. All past issues of our quarterly newsletter are posted on our website: on our home page, click on "Newsletters" at the top of the page. To read the latest issue, posted the day it's delivered to the printer, go to <http://www.friendsofbnc.org/currentnewsletters.htm>

Na shledanou!
 carol jean smetana

Děkuji vám!

To the Spachman family for designating Friends as a recipient of memorial gifts honoring Rose J. (Sebek) Spachman Slaninka.

Memorial Day flag placement: Friends members Gloria Adamek, Al and Mary Avery, Lili Nemeck; Teacher Leticia Aldama and 25 sixth-graders from local Palmer Elementary School

CIT Rail members who placed flags and helped prepare our Friends plot at the cemetery for planting: Rachel Anderson, Mike Berkowitz, Marty Ewing, Jeff Haden, Jaccoba Hendersen, John, Amy, Wendy and Daniel Michalec, Matt Miedlar, Ciera Simmons, Jim Verani

Bakers for Memorial Day and our June tour: Kathryn Lorenz, Mary Syrup

Planters of our Friends garden plot: Chuck Cervenka, Jerry Gaydusek, Randi Long, Mary Syrup, Arlene Artist, Marge Sladek Stueckemann

Flowers for our Friends garden plot: Gethsemane Gardens

Banner for tour, sign for garden plot: Chuck Betzold

Flyers for our upcoming August meeting and for Tours of the Tombstones: Joel Tassin

Serving as our Publicity Chair until August 2013: Samantha Chmelik – great job!



SpringFest

by Marjorie Sladek Stueckemann

Pots of fresh geraniums decorated with signs picturing beautiful artwork from the cemetery, Dvorak's music playing during the appetizer hour, a delicious dinner, interesting and exciting items (over 100) on the silent

auction tables, and the energy of the **Egerlander Dancers** for our entertainment –SpringFest was a wonderful afternoon for the 75 people



who attended! We were honored to have Illinois' most well-known Czech-American, **Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka**, attend, as well as **Milana Ličková, Deputy Head of Mission of the Czech Consulate General in Chicago; Rosemary Macko Wisnosky, Slovak Honorary Consul in Chicago; and Jason Wright** from the **National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library** in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

As the diners entered, they could examine a trifold display, created by **Chuck Betzold**, showing the need for restoration of the entryway to the crematorium/columbarium building. The proceeds of the day were over

with enthusiastic applause.

If the diners had a chance to glance up at the stage area, they could enjoy pictures of the beauty of BNC not only currently but also views from many years ago. This was a

continuous slide show thanks to **Joel Tassin**, who put it together, and to **Art and Kathryn Lorenz**, who provided tech support. Small, slim flashlights imprinted with "Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery" were the favors. As the diners

\$8,500 with the grant monies we received from the **Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Tony Kartsonas**, the restorer who did such a great job on Phase One, will start this Phase Two work in September. At the dinner, member **Glenn Spachman's** announcement that a legacy of \$15,000 will be donated to Friends' restoration funds from the estate of his mother **Rose Spachman Slaninka** was greeted

left, each received a bottle of Staropramen beer decorated with a special tag and ribbons.

Thank you so very much to EVERYONE who worked so hard to make this a marvelous event, especially the committee members, **Helen Gaydusek, Barbara Hoffman, Kathryn Lorenz, Thelma Malecek, Juli Nelson, Gerri Romanelli** and **Carol Jean Smetana**.

SpringFest Donations

Patrons

(\$500—\$999)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

Sponsors

(\$100—\$499)

CSA Fraternal Life

~ favors co-sponsor

Duke Dellin

~ entertainment co-sponsor

Beth & George Drost

~ entertainment co-sponsor

Helen & Jerry Gaydusek

~ favors co-sponsor

Gethsemane Garden Center

~ flowers

Superior Beverage Co.

~ Staropramen Premium Lager Beer

Donors

(\$25—\$99)

Ian & Sheila Chin

Yvonne Faggi

Evelyn Fergle

Lillian Hahn

Shirley Kenney

Cecilia & Daniel Kumarich

Mildred Potas

Tom & Judy Ruzicka

Shirley Stegner

Dien Zeigler

Barbara Ziembra

Thank You

(\$1—\$24)

Shirley Esenther

Norman Hurd

Roger & Barbara Liska

by carol jean smetana



The Freethinker founders of Bohemian National Cemetery sought to establish a “free national cemetery, where any Bohemian could be buried without regard to religion.” Although the Freethinkers generally did not believe in the existence of a god, and some were adamantly anti-religious, the “dear and precious heritage” we have inherited in Bohemian National Cemetery is one of welcoming tolerance. In this avowedly nonsectarian cemetery, religious symbols – including Catholic crucifixes – abound. Indeed, even men of the cloth are buried here. One of them is the Reverend Václav Vaněk.

“One of the best known and best liked and at the same time most democratic of Bohemian divines in America is the Rev. Václav Vaněk,”



Václav Vaněk
from the book
These Help Build America

wrote Emil F. Prantner in his book *These Help Build America* (1922). “It may truly be said of him that he has hosts of friends and not a single enemy. This may be explained by the fact that he has helped, literally, thousands of countrymen throughout his eventful career.”

Václav Vaněk immigrated to America in 1887 when he was 25, an educated man who had studied theology and law in Prague. He settled in Chicago, where he worked as a reporter on the *Chicagské Listy* daily newspaper and enrolled in Northwestern University to continue his study of theology. He became a Methodist minister in

1890, then switched to Presbyterian and moved to Baltimore in 1894, and finally returned to Chicago in 1910, ministering for 35 years to Bohemian congregations. Under his leadership, three churches were built: Jan Hus Methodist Episcopal

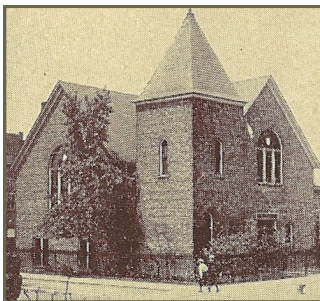


Photo of Jan Hus M.E. Church from an early 20th century postcard from the collection of Frank S. Magallon. The building, at 2356 S. Sawyer in the Little Village neighborhood, is today the Amor de Dios United Methodist Church.

Church in Chicago (1894, said to be the first Bohemian Methodist church in the U.S.); Bohemian-Moravian Presbyterian Church in Baltimore (1898); and Hubbard Memorial Bohemian Presbyterian Church in Chicago (1914). But Vaněk was responsible for much more than the construction of buildings. He constantly sought to promote the church and broaden its mission. While a minister at the Jan Hus church, he edited the *Křesťanský Posel* (Christian Messenger), a Bohemian religious weekly. In Baltimore he edited and published a weekly religious paper *Jednota* (United), reportedly the only Bohemian Presbyterian publication in the U.S. at the time.

Significantly, Reverend Vaněk advanced benevolent institutions for the benefit of the Bohemian people. He founded and administered the nonsectarian Immigrant Home in Baltimore (1906), providing shelter, meals, and employment services to thousands of newly arrived Slavic immigrants;

for this work, Emperor Franz Josef awarded him the Golden Cross of Merit in 1909. Vaněk was instrumental in the development of the Bohemian Settlement House on Racine Avenue in Chicago. He organized kindergartens for children, cooking schools for women, and affordable concerts; he hosted classes in singing, sewing and citizenship in his home at 2324 S. Central Park Avenue, in the neighborhood then known as Česká Kalifornie (Czech California - today's Little Village). He served as the secretary for the Bohemian Charitable Association in Chicago, helping in 1915, under the chairmanship of Anton Cermak, to disperse funds to Bohemian victims of the Eastland Disaster.

Vaněk married Marie Říha, also a Bohemian immigrant, on January 7, 1889, in Chicago. They had six children. The first three were born in Chicago: a daughter Rose in 1890, a son James in 1892, and a daughter Mary in 1894. Three more children were born in Baltimore: Jere in



The Hubbard Memorial Church at 2520 S. Lawndale in Little Village is today home to the Lawndale Mennonite Church.

Photo from the collection of Frank S. Magallon.

1896, John in 1901, and Virginia in 1903.

In 1910 their oldest daughter Rose married Jaroslav Francis Smetánka. They settled in Chicago where Smetánka received a doctor of law degree from the University of

Chicago. In 1920 Rose and Jaroslav were living with the Vaněk family at 2324 Central Park Avenue, and



Jaroslav F. Smetánka

A photo of Jaroslav and Rose Smetánka from his 1921 application for a passport. Accessed on Ancestry.com 20 June 2013.

Jaroslav worked with his father-in-law Václav in several endeavors.

Vaněk had never forgotten his homeland. In 1888 he had been elected secretary of the Americká Matice pro školy v Čechách (American Association for Schools in Bohemia) in Chicago, a position he held until he moved to Baltimore. In 1907, Vaněk had hosted T. G. Masaryk in his home during the professor's stop in

Baltimore while on a speaking tour in the U.S. Now in Chicago, both Vaněk and his son-in-law Smetánka were officers in the Bohemian National Alliance, generating support for the independence of the Czech and Slovak lands and the Allied cause in World War I. Smetánka edited *The Bohemian Review*, a monthly, official English-language publication of the Alliance. Vaněk was publicity chair for Red Cross and Liberty Bond drives among Bohemians (Anton J. Cermak was the committee chair for the latter), and Vaněk and Smetánka publicized the campaigns to sell war bonds to help finance the war effort.

On April 20, 1920, Dr. Jaroslav F. Smetánka was appointed Consul for Chicago by the new Czechoslovak government. (The telegram announcing his appointment was sent by Jan Garrigue Masaryk, son of liberator-president Tomas G. Masaryk and the charge d'affaires in Washington, DC, at the

time.) In 1922 Václav Vaněk was secretary of a Czech-American commercial expedition to Czechoslovakia, sponsored by the Czechoslovak-American Chamber of Commerce.

Vaněk died November 25, 1926, in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, of pneumonia. His obituary claimed he had performed more than 5000 marriage ceremonies in the previous 15 years. Smetánka died Dec 27, 1937, following an operation. They are buried in a family plot with their wives.



Welcome to Our New Members!

Milada F. Benca ... Madison, WI

Kristina Fredericksen ... Scottsdale, AZ

Carol Krauser ... Thornton, CO

Antonin and Anna Svehla and Jana Svehlova ... McLean, VA

Stanley and Karen Walton ... Willowbrook, IL

Renee Wyrobek ... Villa Park, IL

What's New with Friends of BNC

(Continued from page 1)

thanks to **Chuck Cervenka**, **Jerry Gaydusek**, friend Randi, and **Mary Syrup**. Later Mary and her friend, **Arline Artist**, went back and worked some more, and Chuck and Jerry put on the finishing touches. "Czech" it out – and also look at the two plots by the Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum entrance, the two in front of the gatehouse, and the fish pond located in front of the office!

You can vote for your favorite in the office, with the winning display being announced at the **Bohemian National Cemetery picnic on July 7th**. I look forward to seeing you there!

I also hope to see you at the **Czechoslovak American Congress picnic on July 28th** at Kiwanis Park in Brookfield, and of course at **Friends' August 18th meeting**, which will be a wonderful

tribute to **Bohumir Kryl** presented by a real expert on this famous Czech cornet player. Elections are held at this meeting, and we are pleased that our current board, with the exception of publicity chair **Samantha Chmelik**, are willing to continue and will be up for re-election. We do accept nominations from the floor, too.

Marge Sladek Stueckemann
President

Donations

Benefactors

(\$1000—\$9999)

Carol Krauser *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

Sponsors

(\$100—\$499)

USG Foundation - company match program

Frank & Diane Chmelik

Pat Zach, Dieterich & Jean Zach
Smoke in honor of our aunt Rose Spachman Slaninka

Ronald Borkey, Sr.

CSA Fraternal Life

Mary H. Gram *in memory of my mother Susan Machalek; my brothers John & Gene Hrivnak; my grandmother Suzanna Chlapecka Machalek; my aunt Anne and uncle Adrew Spalek; my aunt Kristina and uncle John Machalek*

Bea Eddings & Jim Spachman, Sr.
Carol May

Donors

(\$25—\$99)

Janet Bohne *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

Richard & Janet Bohne *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

Susan Dowling Reuterskiold *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

Yvonne Faggi

Art & Kathryn Lorenz

Diane Macdonald

Clyde & Nancy Rode

Ronald & Sandra Smetana *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

Kurt & Elizabeth Spooner *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

Charmian Peska

Ludwig Scheuerle

Marjorie Bredehoeft *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

John & Anne Marie Dahleiden *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

Alfred & Marjorie Engel *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

John Persic, Jr.

Curt & Mildred Wolanger *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

Alan & Cheryl Zak

Thank You

(\$1—\$24)

Jane Brown

Frank & Claranne Zielinski *in memory of Rose J. Slaninka*

Thank you all for your generosity. Your donations help preserve and restore Bohemian National Cemetery.

Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery

Sunday, July 7th noon to 4:00 pm ~ Annual Picnic at BNC

in the open field across from the crematorium/columbarium building. We have picnic tables under canopies or just bring a lawn chair and sit under the beautiful, big oak trees. Enjoy live music and Klas Restaurant's famous potato pancakes, plus sausages, pop, water, and bakery items, all for sale, or bring your own picnic lunch. Friends book table, too!

Sunday, August 21st at 1:00 pm ~ Summer meeting of Friends: Bohumir Kryl

Ceremony Hall in the crematorium/columbarium building. See back page for details.

Sunday, October 6th at 1:00 pm ~ Tours of the Tombstones guided by Albert Walavich.

Meet in the Gatehouse for a 2-hour walking tour
\$10 Friends members ~ \$15 non-members



(continued from first page)

a teacher in the Czech Republic who was visiting Klára, to the cemetery for a tour. They were particularly impressed with the crematorium/columbarium building and the Cermak Mausoleum.

Bohemian National Cemetery is conducting a planting contest for cemetery delegate organizations. Participants in the contest are **Friends of Bohemian National**

Cemetery, Svobodná Obec, The Czech & Slovak American Genealogy Society of Illinois, T.G. Masaryk Czech School sponsored by **CSA Lodge Sokol Plzen # 434, CSA Lodge Yankee-Jungmann #77, and First Czechoslovak Garden Club of America.**

On May 27th, Bohemian National Cemetery hosted its annual Memorial Day service in the Ceremony Hall. Participants included **Sokol**

organizations; Klára Moldová, the Czech speaker; **Angie Bultas**, the English speaker; and **Veronika Bukac** and **David Makdah**, students at the Czech school who recited poems in Czech. Music was provided by **Ed Slavik** of **CSA lodge Bila Hora**; Klára Moldová played a violin solo; and taps were played by David Makdah and his uncle. The **Odd Fellows** then went to their monument for their services.

On June 22nd filmmaker and sound artist **JR Robinson** and fellow musicians performed his **Wrekmeister Harmonies** project *You've Always Meant So Much To Me* under the full moon at BNC's Masaryk Mausoleum. The cemetery shared in the ticket proceeds from the show.

As you can see, many people come to Bohemian National Cemetery to enjoy various activities. In closing I invite everyone to attend the picnic on July 7th. Vote for the contest planting: the winner will be announced at the picnic.

Andy Bultas
Vice-President



On May 18th, Students, parents and teachers from T. G. Masaryk Czech School planted their contest plot, in the design of the Czech flag, by the Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum.

Frolic with Friends!

BNC PICNIC ~ July 7th **Bohemian National Cemetery**

Bakery items are needed, homemade or from the store! Please bring individual plates (if possible) of bakery items for the bake table at the BNC picnic on July 7th. Dekuji for your help!

CAC PICNIC ~ July 28th ~ Brookfield, Illinois

The Czech American Congress picnic will be Sunday, July 28th, at Kiwanis Park, 3698 Arden Ave., Brookfield. The picnic is from 11:00 am to 5 pm, although many people stay later. Picnic tables are limited, so bring lawn chairs. There is a playground adjacent for the kids. All the Czech/Slovak organizations in our area usually participate, with dancing by the United Moravian Dancers, live music, and a variety of food available for purchase - pancakes from Klas Restaurant, sausages, corn on the cob, beer, bakery items, and ice cream. Visit the great displays and vendor tables set up by the various organizations, Friends will have a book table. If you can help, stop by, or just come by to say hi!

CGSI CONFERENCE ~ Oct 23-26 **Lombard, Illinois**

Friends of BNC will have a table at the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International's 14th annual Genealogical and Cultural Conference. CGSI conferences are a wonderful blend of how-to genealogy information and cultural explorations. The conference offers several cultural tours, including a tour to Bohemian National Cemetery on Wednesday, October 23. Our editor Carol Jean Smetana will be presenting two sessions at the conference, one on Bohemian National Cemetery and the other on the Freethinker Movement in the U.S. See www.cgsi.org for details about the conference and registration information. If you'd like to help with welcoming tour participants to BNC on Wednesday, Oct. 23, or with staffing our sales table during the conference at the Westin Lombard Yorktown Center, please contact Marge at 847-362-9036.

Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

611 Harvard Lane
Libertyville, IL 60048

Phone: 847-362-9036
Email: mdstueck@aol.com



Heritage Happenings

we're on the web
www.friendsofbnc.org



Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

invites you to a program on

Bohumir Kryl

Bohemian-American sculptor and musician,
presented by

Tim McCormick, President,
International Antique Phonograph Society, and
Larry Paarlberg, Director,
General Lew Wallace Study & Museum.

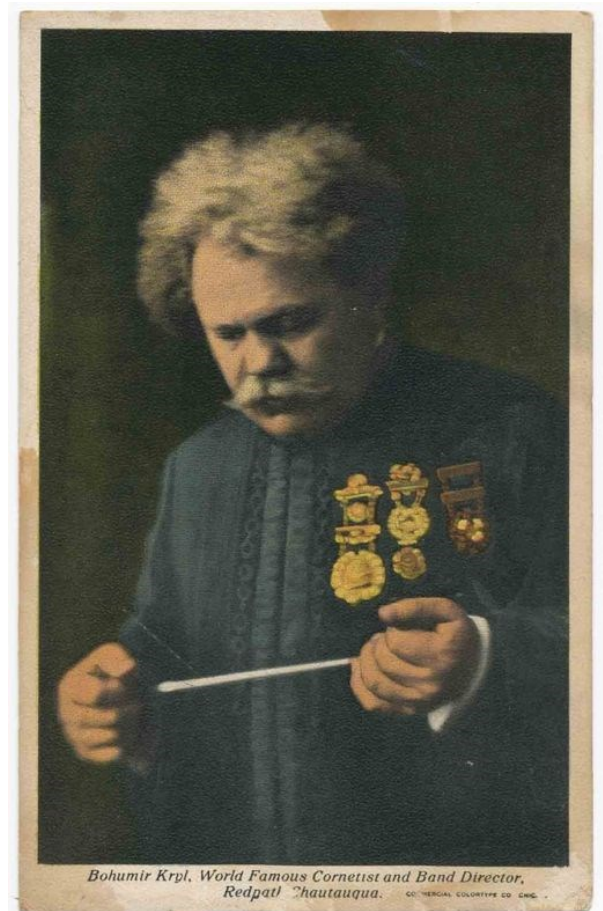
The program will include recordings of Kryl's music
played on historic music machines and slides of Kryl's
beautiful stone carvings, with an optional visit to Kryl's
niche in the Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum.

When: Sunday, August 18th at 1:30 pm

Where: Ceremony Hall in the crematorium/columbarium
building, Bohemian National Cemetery
5255 N. Pulaski Road, Chicago

This is our summer meeting at which we will also elect
officers for the coming year.

For more information visit our website
www.friendsofbnc.org or call Marge 847-362-9036



*Bohumir Kryl, World Famous Cornettist and Band Director,
Redpat' "hautauqua. COMMERCIAL COLLOTYPE CO. CHIC.*