

Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

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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

How exciting it was to board the bus at the Westin Hotel in Lombard on October 23rd and ride with 33 interested people who were attending the **Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International** conference! Off we went into rush-hour traffic. I started to tell a bit about the cemetery history, and as I lurched about with

the microphone, I wondered if maybe I'd do better to be quiet since **Albert Walavich** was meeting us at BNC to do his wonderful tour guiding! However, they encouraged me to continue, so I did!

Warm coffee and Vesecky's bakery items awaited us at the cemetery and were so well received! We also had the complete

book table set up, and took in about \$500 in sales that morning! Some of the participants, who lived all over the U.S., had sent information asking about relatives' grave sites in advance, and they were able to visit them, thanks to **Chuck Michalek, Janet Neal, Carol Jean Smetana** and **Linda Tassin**, who had their cars there to provide transportation and expertise. The tour was very well received - many wonderful comments.

From BNC we went to the **Sokol Community Center** on Elston for a Slovak homemade lunch with special sausage. There we

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The gatehouse was filled with conference visitors browsing our sales table and enjoying refreshments.

Live from BNC

Chuck Michalek and **Jerry Gaydusek** have been working on the gutters on the north side of the north gatehouse, which were wearing thin and had holes forming, causing water to leak onto the inner walls of the north gatehouse. They

applied a couple of coats of sealer and will continue to check the gutters to see if this has corrected the problem.

John Illse cut steel beams and welded them onto parts of the cemetery's entrance gate that were deteriorating

from rust. John has also been making steel posts to hold section signs. **Chuck Betzold** is making signs for these posts, and they will be placed throughout the cemetery where needed.

Duro has started work on the large wood pile. He

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Heritage Happenings

Heritage Happenings is published quarterly by Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

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

New projects for the New Year! I have a whole list of things I'd like to do. Several items involve genealogical research for clients as well as working on my own family. At some point, I'd like to get markers for my ancestors buried in unmarked graves - and for those ancestors whose whereabouts are unknown, I'd like to at least get their names and dates included on the family tombstones.

I start out the new year by transferring important dates - birthdays, anniversaries, etc. - from the previous year's planner to the new one. (I still use a pocket-size planner to keep track of my life, although I also use an electronic to-do list and an electronic calendar as well. None of them is very useful if they aren't looked at daily or at least every other day! Note to self: start each day by reviewing planner and to-do list.) And then I start thinking about what events I might want to attend in the coming year. This year, a good friend is turning 80, another is turning 90 - I hope to attend both birthday celebrations. And Friends of BNC will be celebrating its tenth anniversary on August 3rd - it's already entered in my planner.

I hope you'll include our Friends anniversary celebration in your plans for 2014. For other suggestions, check out the Upcoming Events section in each issue of our newsletter (see page three), and make regular visits to our website.

And while you're thinking about what to do in 2014, do you have time to volunteer for Friends? Thanks to you, our members, we are a growing organization. Our small but wonderful group of active volunteers can no longer do it all. We need your help! The enthusiasm for our cause tells us we can do big things, but we need to effectively organize and direct our enthusiasm to achieve our goals. As our organization matures and we increasingly formalize our practices, we have need of expertise in all areas: communications, fundraising, program management, organization, etc. Your previous professional experience, or your volunteer experience with other nonprofits can help us steer a steady course. And even if "all" you can bring is an eagerness and willingness to learn, that is wonderful. We can teach each other and together we'll save our beloved cemetery.

Email me at editor@friendsofbnc.org or write me at 167 County Road A4A, Sapello, NM 87745-5026.

*Na shledanou!
carol jean smetana*

Děkuji Vám!

Carol Jean Smetana and Linda Tassin for researching requests we received from the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International's BNC tour participants;
Chuck Michalek, Janet Neal, Carol Jean Smetana, and Linda Tassin for driving tour participants to family gravesites;
Juli Nelson, Art Lorenz and Carol Jean Smetana for hosting the book table at BNC for the CGSI tour;
Gloria Adamek, Kathy Mallin, Chuck Michalek, Juli Nelson and Marge Sladek Stueckemann for staffing our table at the CGSI conference in Lombard.

Welcome to Our New Members!

Gloria Adamek ... Chicago, IL
Jim Benes III ... Middleton, WI
Jack and Georgina Ozga Dortch ... Huntley, IL
Virginia A Lesak-Jakoubek ... Granger, IN
Susan Marcinkus ... Oak Park, IL
Valary Ann Mason ... Chicago, IL
Mary Ann Moad ... Maryville, IL
Dan Porter ... Albuquerque, NM
Delphine M Schaefer ... Columbus, WI
Patricia Young ... Davidsonville, MD

What's New with Friends of BNC

(continued from first page)
learned more about the historic Slovak community in that area from the **Pracko** family. They also described what Sokol is and the program they sponsor of gymnastics instruction for children.

A Slovak flag was prominent in the gym as we peeked on our way into and out of the basement where the lunch was served. One comment I heard: "That was the best meal I have ever had at a conference." It really was special, I agree!

Albert stayed with us, then, for an excellent tour of Chicago, and with his background of doing tours for the Chicago History Museum, he also told of the history and architects of the buildings - so fascinating. The group was particularly impressed with Millennium Park, the donations by the Pritzker family that made the pavilion with its totally marvelous sound system so outstanding, and the

Crown family that funded the spitting, glass-block fountain.

There were people at the conference who heard how outstanding our tour was who told me (and others) that they wished they had gone on our tour rather than what they did that day!

Thanks to various helpers, we were able to have our book table open for business most of the three conference days. It was delightful to meet people from all over the U.S. One really interesting note: we sold all four of the Accidental Army DVD's about the Czechoslovak Legion. We have offered that for many years, and I do not think we have had one purchase in almost two years until the conference!

Carol Jean did a fantastic job in her presentations, one on Bohemian National Cemetery and one on the Freethinkers. What depth of research she did to bring the

participants so much information, especially on the Freethinkers! Good job, Carol Jean!

These conferences, which occur every other year, are a wonderful way to network and enjoy meeting people who love their heritage like we do! It was my joy to be there and to show off our beautiful cemetery to those who came. We also have some new members as a result!

Have a most "Šťastný nový rok" or Happy New Year. I surely hope we will see you for our upcoming meeting at Klas on Sunday, January 26th! Milan Hodža is a fascinating person, and our speaker, **Dr. Susan Mikula**, is excellent. I heard her at the National Czech and Slovak Museum in Iowa last summer. See the back page for more details.

Marge Sladek Stueckemann
President

Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery

Sunday, June 1st at 1:00 pm ~
Tour of the Tombstones guided by
Albert Walavich

Sunday, August 3rd ~
Friends of BNC's Tenth Anniversary
celebration with music by the Junior
Dixieland Band from Marianske
Lazne! More details to come!

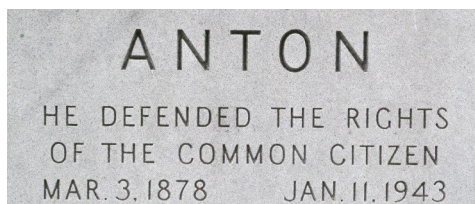
Saturday, October 4th at 10:00 am & 1:00 pm ~
Tours of the Tombstones guided by
Albert Walavich



Stories of the Stones – A Man for the People

by carol jean smetana

Wandering Bohemian National Cemetery last summer, I paused in front of a Moderne-style granite monument. What caught my eye was the inscription beneath the first name:



What is the story behind this epitaph? I figured it must have something to do with his occupation – perhaps he was a lawyer – so I started searching the census records.

In 1910 and 1920, Anton, his wife Bessie and their children lived in the Česká Kalifornie neighborhood of Chicago. Both the 1910 and 1920 census records listed Anton's occupation as a salesman for a coffee company, which was confirmed by Anton's World War I draft registration card from 1918, which listed his occupation as a travelling salesman for Peterman Brothers. No clue there.

By 1930, the family had moved to Berwyn, and Anton was now a real estate salesman. The 1940 census record for Anton was the last one I found (the last name was indexed as Janusa). Here was the clue I was looking for – Anton Janura was the mayor of the City of Berwyn!

Further research indicated that Anton was first elected mayor in 1935, when he ran as a Democrat against a Republican incumbent. During his tenure as mayor, several municipal buildings were constructed, including the 1939 Moderne-style Municipal Building (City Hall) at 6700 West 26th Street. It consolidated for the first time the



various city offices, which up until then had been scattered among several rented locations in Berwyn. The original H-shaped building also contained the city library and garages for police and fire vehicles. When Mayor Janura died in 1943, his body lay in state for a day in the Berwyn City Council chamber in the building and was then buried at Bohemian National Cemetery. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

Anton Janura and Bessie Fencel married on April 23, 1904. They had several children, including a daughter born in early 1918, in the midst of the movement for an independent Czechoslovakia. Her parents named her Liberty Justice!

I found a transcript online of a 2011 interview with Jan Janura, a grandson of Anton, on the Hugh Hewitt radio show. Jan told this family story about his grandfather:

“Well, my father's father, Anton Janura, came over from Czechoslovakia to retrieve his younger brother who was sick and when he arrived in Chicago he found he was dead and he wrote back and said ... I'm going to stay because there's so much opportunity here

and he started off as a coffee bean salesman for Peterman and he had a pushcart and he sold coffee and he worked his way up to a 4-term mayor of a city outside of Chicago named Berwyn and made a lot of money in real estate.”

Some of that money probably came from his development of a block of land he purchased in 1924 at 16th Street and Oak Park Avenue.

I could not confirm the family story of how Anton came to be in America. The census records give varying years for Anton's immigration, with 1890 as the earliest – he would have been 12 years old! – and 1893 and 1894. On his World War II draft registration card, he listed his birthplace as Hartlikov, Czechoslovakia. Hartlikov, today known as Hartvíkov, is a small village southeast of Prague and just east of Tábor. I found birth records for Anton and several siblings, born every couple of years, including a first-born older brother, Josef (born in 1873) and a younger brother František (1885); the youngest found sibling was born in 1900. It is possible that it was the oldest brother Josef whom Anton followed to America. More research to do!

Art Institute Grad Students Assess Preservation Needs of Crematorium/Columbarium Building

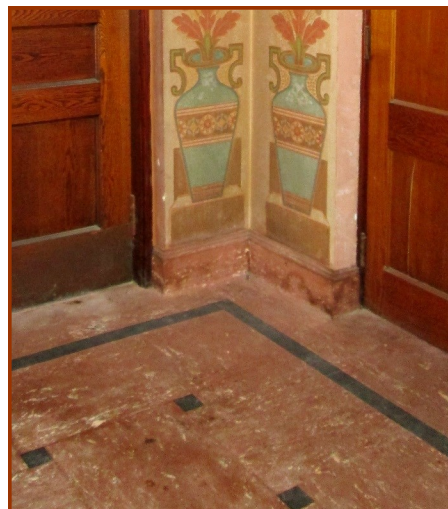
by carol jean smetana

This past fall, Bohemian National Cemetery provided subject matter for eleven students from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago who are studying for their Master of Science degrees in Historic Preservation. The students divided into teams and chose topics to research for their Building Conservation Lab class, taught by Anne T. Sullivan, the director of the degree program. On December 13th, the students presented summaries of their findings. Tony Kartsonas, the historic surfaces expert who designed and carried out Phase One of the Ceremony Hall Art Restoration Project (see Summer 2012 newsletter) as well as some members of Friends of BNC attended the presentations.

The students' areas of inquiry were the decorative painting on the vestibule walls and ceiling (where Tony is currently working); the linoleum in the vestibule; the doors in the northeast columbarium room; the exterior cement terrace and stairs in front of the crematorium/columbarium building; and bronze statuary.

Tony believes the decorative painting of the walls and ceiling in the vestibule was done by John A. Mallin, who also painted the interior of the Ceremony Hall. What is unusual about the painted vestibule is that it apparently was never redone after the original painting. The students conducted an historic paint analysis to try to determine the steps Mallin likely used to create the complex decoration in the vestibule. They discovered that Mallin apparently used stencils to guide layers of colors and then provided additional embellishments freehand.

Tony thinks the linoleum was the original floor in the vestibule. The students explained how linoleum came into use in 1863 and had been made and used in the same way for about 100 years, until the 1960s when vinyl, with its bright colors, became popular. The linoleum product actually consists of three layers – a jute backing; the linoleum itself, which is made of linseed oil, plant residue and wood dust; and a surface treatment. A benefit of linoleum is that as it wears down, the colors aren't lost because the colors permeate the entire linoleum layer. Other benefits of linoleum are that it is a green product, it is waterproof, it doesn't melt, and it is easy to repair. However, it has to be cleaned and resealed regularly. The students tried several different cleaners and methods of cleaning, and determined that Spic 'n Span worked best. They also noted that any damaged



linoleum floor and wall décor in the vestibule

linoleum tiles could be replaced with tiles from the area behind the Ceremony Hall dais, where the linoleum likely was not the original flooring but was added over

terrazzo.

The students examining the doors in the northeast columbarium room were trying to determine if they were original and how they were made. Based on the doors' hardware and degree of wear, the students believe they are probably original. The doors turn out to be examples of metal painting of the 1930s (the niches in this columbarium room date from the 1930s). The doors are most likely wood that has been textured, painted, and decorated with tracery in a darker color, all in an effort to match the brass frames of the columbarium niches. Whoever originally did the doors did a good job: they undoubtedly matched well when first installed and observably match well now after both the doors and the niche frames have aged. The students recreated the color and texture of the doors using metal powders, pigments and a bonding agent. They believe the doors were first painted with silver dust, and then a gold wash was applied to give a faux brass look that would go well with the metal niches. The students noticed that one side of the doors has suffered greater damage, possibly because of higher humidity on that side.

The pair of students who focused on the concrete terrace and stairs at the front of the crematorium/columbarium building noted a significant amount of damage, including cracking, chipping and staining. They also noted that previous patches had failed, due to using inappropriate materials with poor or no preparation. The cement terrace was poured without expansion joints, and its surface

(Continued on page 7)

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Friends is the grateful recipient of a generous gift of \$15,000 from Vincent R. & Rose J. Slaninka

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



Live from BNC

(continued from first page)

has brought the cut trees and branches back toward the area where they belong, thus opening up the cemetery land they were covering. This project will take some time.

Approximately 100 people participated in the Dušičky (Souls) celebration held on November 2, 2013 – All Souls' Day – by the **Češi a Slováci v Chicagu** (Czechs and Slovaks of Chicago). Families arrived at dusk to walk through the cemetery and light candles. The group is considering making it an annual event. (Editor's note: *Dušičky* has been celebrated in the Czech Republic for centuries. Although it is today a Roman Catholic tradition, some believe it was originally a Celtic pagan celebration. Czechs bring candles and flowers to decorate graves of family

members, ancestors, and deceased people who meant a lot to them.)

Tony Kartsonas continues to work on the entrance way vestibule of the crematorium/columbarium building. The outer part of the door has been stripped and sealed, and they are working on the inner doors. Chuck Michalek along with Tony discovered that under the rug there is tile, and under the tile is a terrazzo floor. Tony is going to contact a floor contractor and see what it would cost to tear out the rug and tile and restore the terrazzo floor.

Chicago Art Institute students, some of whom have been assisting Tony with the restoration, gave a presentation at the School of the Art Institute on Friday, December 13th. The presentation covered various aspects of restoration and preservation relevant to work needed at the cemetery.

Topics included the painted decorations in the vestibule, the linoleum, the door in the northeast columbarium room, concrete repair, and bronze statuary. Tony is going to try and get transcripts of these talks for the cemetery so that we will have them for our records. The speeches were regarding the restoration at Bohemian National Cemetery. (See article on page five for more information.)

As you can see there was a lot of activity going on at the cemetery. This helps improve the cemetery so that everyone who comes to visit it enjoys it. Come and visit Bohemian National Cemetery and see firsthand all the improvements that are being accomplished by the volunteers and cemetery personnel.

Andy Bultas
Vice-President

Crematorium/Columbarium Building

(Continued from page 5)

slopes toward the building, so the floor drain is ineffective. Since limestone and concrete react differently to temperature and other weather elements, expansion joints are needed wherever the two materials meet. Unfortunately, there are either incorrect or missing expansion joints. The metal railings were not installed properly so the attachment hardware is rusting.

The final group of students assessed the conditions of the cemetery's two bronze statues by Albín Polášek, *Mother* and *The Pilgrim*. Both are cast bronze with granite bases (note that bronze used for statues has a different chemical composition than architectural bronze). There are two types of corrosion that can affect such statues: chemical corrosion caused by chemical reactions with the air, rain, etc.; and mechanical corrosion due to weather, for example, cracks caused by freeze/thaw cycles. The students noted that rain dripping off the two statues carries dissolved minerals that deposit as tiny stalactites at the bottom edges of the figures. Also at times the statues stand in water that pools on the granite bases. Still, the students reported the statues to be in adequate condition. Ideally they should be cleaned and have a sealer applied every few years.

The day's presentations provided fascinating details about some of the areas of the crematorium/columbarium building in need of restoration and/or repair and/or replacement. It remains for Friends and BNCA to hire experts to assess the building in its entirety and make preservation recommendations.



Tony Kartsonas working on the interior doors of the crematorium/columbarium vestibule

Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

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Heritage Happenings

we're on the web
www.friendsofbnc.org



**Join Friends at our Winter Meeting to hear about
Milan Hodža,
Slovak statesman, journalist and professor
Hodža is one of several Czech and Slovak political
figures who were buried at BNC. Come hear his story,
presented by Dr. Susan Mikula,
Professor of Slovak Studies, Benedictine University**

Where: Klas Restaurant, 5734 W. Cermak Rd, Cicero

When: Sunday, January 26, 2014

12:30 pm ~ Cash Bar

1:30 pm ~ Czech Dinner, \$25 includes tax & tip

3:00 pm ~ Free Program



Reservations for the Czech dinner are required and must be postmarked by January 21, 2014.

For credit card payment (Visa, Master Card,
Discover, American Express), include:

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