

# 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 Bohemian National Cemetery in local, national, and international audiences*



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## Friends of BNC Embarks on a Major Project: A Preservation Plan for the Crematorium/Columbarium Building

Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery is pleased to announce that we have hired Charles Pipal, an experienced and well-respected preservation architect, to create an overall plan for repairing and preserving the crematorium/columbarium building. He has partnered with Dan Ruzic of Chicago Project Management, Inc., to develop the preservation plan. Dan will be in charge of implementing the plan, identifying, coordinating and supervising the expert tradesmen who will be working on the crematorium/columbarium building in the coming years.

After being forced to suspend further restoration of the Ceremony Hall when we noticed new leaks in the interior, Friends of BNC realized we

*(Continued on page 4)*



*Dan Ruzic inspects some of the gutters on the crematorium/columbarium building.*

## Live from BNC

Restoration of the crematorium/columbarium building continues. **Charles Pipal**, a preservation architect, surveyed the building on March 19th to get an idea of what the total needs to restore it would be. He returned on June 10th with project manager **Dan Ruzic** and **Ed Scaggs** from **Knickerbocker Roofing and Paving Co., Inc.**, to conduct a thorough inspection of the building's roof system, using a 125-foot articulating boom lift (cherry-picker). Please see the article above for more details. **Tony Kartsonas**

and his employee **Andy** are almost done with the entrance way to the crematorium/columbarium building.

Volunteers continue to make improvements at Bohemian National Cemetery. **Jerry Gaydusek** and **Chuck Michalek** have cleaned and painted the room in back of the elevator in the crematorium/columbarium building. It will be used to store tools and other items. **Chuck Betzold**, **Jim Miller**, Jerry Gaydusek, Chuck Michalek and **Andy**

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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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### Officers of Friends of BNC

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### *from the editor's laptop*

The breadth and depth of the accomplishments of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery during its first ten years of existence are amazing, especially when you realize that we are an all-volunteer organization. When you consider Friends' mission statement and vision, there is no question that Friends' projects are serving our goals. And now Friends of BNC is going to start work on the restoration of the most unique structure at the cemetery, the crematorium/columbarium building. I hope our cover story sparks your enthusiasm. Let me know if you have any questions or comments.

One of our members, Victor Havel from Ennis, Texas, contacted me with an offer to do research in the online Czech archives for members of Friends. He has some proficiency in locating and translating the Czech baptismal, marriage and death records that are available on-line. Although he doesn't speak Czech, he is fluent in German and practiced in reading old German scripts, which is useful in trying to translate the handwriting in the Czech records. If you are ready to search for baptismal, marriage, and death records of your ancestors in the homeland, Victor is offering to research the Matriky (parish registers) in any of the eight Czech archives. He needs a) the full name of the oldest family member who immigrated to the US; b) the village from which he or she came; and c) his/her birthdate or age upon arrival in the US. Victor writes, "As this is my hobby, no charge, but also no guarantee of useful results." If you are interested, you can contact Victor at [omi-opi-havel@sbcglobal.net](mailto:omi-opi-havel@sbcglobal.net).

And remember, I am always looking for subjects for "Stories of the Stones." If you would like us to research your ancestor at BNC, let me know.

*Na shledanou!*  
 carol jean smetana

## Welcome to Our New Members!

**Pastor Sue Ellen Gram Grudt** ... Island Lake, IL  
**Bruce Janda** ... Livonia, MI  
**Dr. Susan Mikula** ... Chicago, IL  
**Pamela A. Morong** ... Elk Grove Village, IL  
**Robert D. Smith** ... Colorado Springs, CO  
**Charmaine Zahlmann** ... Chicago, IL

## Out & About With Friends

On **Sunday, July 27th**, join Friends at the annual **Czechoslovak American Congress Picnic** from 11 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. There will be Czech food and beer, live music, Moravian dancers, and of course our Friends book table. **NEW LOCATION:** Elhert Park, Park & Elm Avenues, Brookfield, IL. No RSVP necessary. Bring your family, friends, and lawn chairs!

## What's New with Friends of BNC

Watch out when you enter your usual grocery store! Unfortunately, I did not take that advice and tripped, fell, and shattered my left knee and part of my femur (thigh bone) in March. Surgery and four weeks of rehab, plus then a case of pneumonia and another week in the hospital meant I have not been present for our spring activities.

I am on the mend, now, and cannot wait to be well enough to drive, but am totally grateful to my husband who has shown skill as a nurse. Couldn't have

come home without his help!

My grateful thanks to all the board members who have kept everything running just fine in my absence. This explains why I didn't write my usual article this quarter. I will see everyone at the BNC picnic and our August 3rd meeting, however!!

**Marge Sladek Stueckemann**  
**President**

## Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery



**Sunday, July 13th ~ BNC Annual Picnic ~ noon to 4 pm**  
in the open area opposite the crematorium/columbarium.  
Enjoy yourself under the big oak trees listening to live music!  
Czech food available for purchase.  
Friends will sponsor a bakery table  
(donations of baked goods welcome)  
& set up our book table as well.

**Sunday, August 3rd ~ Friends 10th Anniversary  
Celebration from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm** at the gatehouse.  
Complimentary refreshments, with music by  
the Junior Dixieland Band  
from Mariánské Lázně, Czech Republic!  
Includes election of officers  
and brief membership meeting.  
FREE! Come celebrate with us!

**Saturday, October 4th ~ Tours of the Tombstones  
at 10 am and 1 pm**  
**Albert Walavich** leads  
our two-hour long walking tours of BNC.  
Same-day registration in the gatehouse.  
\$10 for Friends members, \$15 for non-members  
Refreshments in the gatehouse after/between the tours.

## Project: A Preservation Plan for the Crematorium/Columbarium Building

*(Continued from page 1)*

needed to work with licensed experts to assess the condition of the entire crematorium/columbarium building – interior and exterior. Such an assessment is the first step in putting together a master plan for the rehabilitation of the crematorium/columbarium building

cemetery, immediately recognized the value of the c/c building and expressed interest in the project. Charlie brought on board his colleague Dan Ruzic as project manager, and after they visited the cemetery to conduct an overview of the crematorium/columbarium building, Charlie put together a

endangered. The two major aspects of the plan will be 1) prioritizing the building's needs, and 2) developing a budget for each phase of the plan. The final report will specifically define and prioritize the restoration work required and give project budgets for each phase. Charlie and Dan will also help identify potential grant sources and assist Friends in obtaining grants.

The contract has been signed and work has begun. Project manager Dan Ruzic asked Knickerbocker Roofing and Paving Co. Inc., to assess the roof. On June 10th, Ed Scaggs, from Knickerbocker's tile and slate division, joined Dan and Charlie to inspect the building. Using a 125-foot crane, they inspected many facets of the roof and identified weaknesses and failures in the roof system. Knickerbocker submitted a report

**“What a treasure not only for the Czech community here, but also for Chicago and the nation.”**  
~ *Charles Pipal*

that would allow us to move forward with the restoration of the interior. Readers may recall our article in the Winter 2014 issue about Anne Sullivan's Art Institute class using the building for preservation projects (“Art Institute Grad Students Assess Preservation Needs of Crematorium/Columbarium Building” – read it online at our website). Anne met with Friends president Marge Sladek Stueckemann and fundraising co-chair Kathryn

proposal for architectural and project management services for the development of a master plan for the building: “This important structure from Chicago's history will hopefully continue to play an active role in its future. To help achieve that, our assembled team has extensive historic preservation and construction management experience to bear on this project. We look forward to working with the Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery to achieve our common goal of a solution that ensures a bright future for this unique historic resource.”

Friends board voted to accept Charlie's proposal. The building will undergo a series of inspections by various specialists to review and assess its current condition. Charlie will use the resultant reports to identify and prioritize needed work on the c/c building, with the goal of renewing its structural integrity so further restoration work in the Ceremony Hall and throughout the building will not be



Lorenz to discuss who might perform a complete assessment of the building and recommended Charles Pipal, an expert in the field of historic preservation architecture. Charles Pipal visited the



*Up on the roof: (left to right) Charles Pipal, Ed Scaggs, and Dan Ruzic*

on the roof's present condition and what is needed to correct the roof problems. The report noted that much of the Ludowici French red clay tile used for the roof appeared to be original, installed when the building was constructed a century ago. It identified several areas where structural failures—gutters, underlayment, copper linings, broken and missing tiles—allow moisture to penetrate and leak

inside the building.

It is important to remember that the crematorium/columbarium building has a very complex roof, making the repairs and restoration unusually complicated. Much of the roof is not visible from the ground, but the reality is, this is not at all like putting a new roof on a family home or a garage. The work involved is much more intricate, due to the various materials, shapes, angles, curves, the tower, dome and chimney elements, the flat and angled roof areas, the different roof levels, and above all, the huge number of seams and joints where sections and elements meet. Each seam or joint is susceptible to water penetration, not just through the roof but through the walls as well.

At this stage, no budget has been developed for the roof repairs. More importantly, the roof repairs have to be put in the context of the other parts of the building preservation plan. Subsequent inspections and reports will provide those parts. Charlie will then present us with prioritized recommendations for the repair and restoration of the crematorium/columbarium building. This will lead to a series of projects, big and small, short-, medium- and long-term, for Friends. It is an exciting time for all of us!

by  
carol jean smetana



## Donations

### Sponsors (\$100—\$499)

Czech and Slovak American  
Genealogy Society of Illinois  
Pamela Morang in memory of her great-  
grandparents Anna Holoubek Fryml  
& Vaclav Fryml

### Donors (\$25—\$99)

Malich and Freitag  
families  
Lili Nemec  
Barb Pechota

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

## Friends' Accomplishments Over the Past Ten Years

- ⇒ Friends of BNC worked to get BNC listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**, which came to fruition in 2006
- ⇒ We supported BNCA efforts to receive a grant to restore the **wooden water tower** from the National Trust's Partner in Preservation program and another from the Czech Republic government; helped raise matching money and also funded new lining for water tower
- ⇒ We funded restoration of a test section of the walls and domed ceiling in the **Ceremony Hall**; included obtaining a Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a grant from the Czech Republic government (2012-13)
- ⇒ We helped raise money to restore the art glass windows of the **Ceremony Hall**, including a grant from the Czech Republic government
- ⇒ We funded restoration of the **entryway** to the crematorium/columbarium (2014)
- ⇒ We contracted with a historic preservation architect to develop a preservation plan for the **crematorium/columbarium building** (2014)
- ⇒ Through coordinated volunteer efforts, Friends has completed a variety of projects in the **crematorium/columbarium building**, e.g., sewer repair (partial funding from a Czech Republic grant), rewired electrical fixtures, replaced pipes, and repaired the elevator;
- ⇒ We raised funds for **gatehouse renovation** – tuckpointing tower & strengthening connection between bell tower and gatehouse, window repair and replacement (funded partially by grants we obtained from the Czech government); roof repair, repair of water fountains, electrical improvements
- ⇒ We raised money for rebinding the cemetery's seven **burial books**
- ⇒ We purchased **utility vehicle** for cemetery use
- ⇒ We participate in annual **Mother's Day** ceremonies
- ⇒ For **Memorial Day**, Friends coordinates the **placement of flags** at cemetery
- ⇒ After major storms, Friends helps **clear broken branches and limbs**; volunteers also help **plant and tend flowers and plants** throughout the cemetery
- ⇒ Friends volunteers placed **water barrels** at strategic locations around cemetery for visitors to use watering gravesites
- ⇒ We sponsor **cemetery tours** open to the public twice a year
- ⇒ We organize special **cemetery tours for visitors from the Czech Republic**, including government officials
- ⇒ We offer **private group cemetery tours**
- ⇒ We sponsored a **cemetery tour** for attendees at the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) conference (2013)
- ⇒ We hold meetings twice a year that focus on **programs related to the cemetery and to Czech and Slovak heritage**
- ⇒ We **bring the story of BNC to the larger community at events** such as the annual Czechoslovak American Congress picnic **and through articles** in publications such as the CSA Fraternal Life journal, and *Nase rodina*, the journal of CGSI
- ⇒ We **present the story of BNC to various organizations**, such as the Dobrovsky Masons, the Czech and Slovak American Genealogy Society of Illinois, the Tabor Hills Retirement Community, and the Bohemian Lawyers Association of Chicago; Marge and Evelyn spoke about BNC at the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Science Congress in Ceske Budejovice, and they represented Friends of BNC at a Czech government conference in Prague celebrating Czechs abroad; Carol gave presentations on the cemetery and on Freethinkers at the CGSI conference (2013)
- ⇒ We maintain a **website** and a **Facebook page**
- ⇒ **"Heritage Happenings," our quarterly newsletter**, presents family stories, history of the cemetery, as well as news of upcoming events
- ⇒ We wrote and published a 24-page booklet **Introduction to Bohemian National Cemetery Crematorium/Columbarium**, honored with a special award by Illinois State Historical Society (2004)
- ⇒ We wrote and published **A Dear and Precious Heritage**, a history of the cemetery, with grant support from the Czech Republic (2012)
- ⇒ We developed an **educator's guide for class field trips to the cemetery**
- ⇒ We **respond to requests** by members and others for family history information, information about cemetery history, photos of graves and the cemetery, etc.



## Live from BNC

(continued from first page)

**Bultas** have been removing fallen branches from the grounds and taking them to the mulch area. Chuck Michalek and Jerry made a temporary concrete fix to the broken stairs in front of the crematorium/columbarium building, using forms made by Chuck with the help of Jim and Chuck Betzold.

The cemetery sustained another catastrophe when about 120 feet of the wall along the Chicago River collapsed and fell into the river.

**Duro Excavators** removed the fallen wall and debris from the Chicago River and the bank. A ditch was dug about 50 feet long, 10 feet wide and 20 feet deep. A base of rock was constructed along with a wall created by using some concrete boxes. Work will continue on repairing the whole 120 feet of the collapsed wall.

The month of May has been very active around the cemetery. The Flower Contest is being held again this year. Among the participants are the children of **T.G. Masaryk Czech School** in Cicero, who are being sponsored by **CSA Lodge Sokol Plzen #434**. On May 3rd the children from the school, along with their teachers and some mothers,

enjoyed a field trip to Bohemian National Cemetery. They began at **Gethsemane Gardens** where **Gwen Maneke** gave a tour of the green houses and showed them how plants are started from seeds. Next the group picnicked on the porch of the gatehouse. The teachers held a quiz and gave cemetery maps to the children and parents to find historical places such as the Cermak mausoleum. At the crematorium/columbarium, the group marveled at the interior paintings and the niche areas. Then it was off to Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum where they turned over the ground for the planting contest.

The annual Mother's Day ceremony on May 11th started at the gatehouse and concluded at the Mother Statue in front of the crematorium/columbarium. Everyone then returned to the gatehouse for refreshments.

On May 26th the annual Memorial Day services were held. The parade assembled at the gatehouse and marched to the crematorium/columbarium. **Ed Slavik** played the accordion, and the **CSA Half and Half Singers** sang. **Stanley Loula** was the speaker. **Klara Moldova** performed a violin solo, and Czech poems were read by

**Veronika Bukac** and **Sebastian Hanulik**; all three are from the TGM Czech school. **Frank Zakrocky** played taps, and the Colors were retired by the **Sokol Spirit Youth**. The **Odd Fellows and Rebekahs** then held a service at the Odd Fellows Monument.

On June 1st, approximately 50 people participated in the **Friends of BNC** cemetery tour, enjoying refreshments afterwards in the gatehouse.

On Friday evening, June 13th, **Empty Bottle Productions** staged a concert on the grounds by the Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum, featuring **Silver Apples** and **Wrekmeister Harmonies**. Over 100 people were in attendance, and the enjoyable event was conducted in an orderly fashion.

So you can see that the cemetery encounters problems and works through them, but there are also enjoyable times at the cemetery. Many events are being held at the cemetery that give it a positive atmosphere. Come and join us on July 13th for the **Annual Bohemian National Cemetery Picnic**.

**Andy Bultas**  
**Vice-President**

## Děkuji Vám!

**Rob Charlemagne** for guiding the 6th grade Palmer Students through the crematorium/columbarium building during their visit in May

**Chuck Betzold** for organizing the flag placement, and **Henrietta Bartizal Pons, John Jacobs** and **CIT Rail volunteers** for placing over 400 flags on the cemetery grounds on May 23rd for Memorial Day weekend

**Andy Bultas** for ordering and picking up baked goods donated by Friends for Memorial Day, May 26th  
**Chuck and Martha Cervenka** for set up and clean up of food on Memorial Day, May 26th  
**Juli Nelson** for flowers on Memorial Day, May 26th

**Gloria Adamek, Bob and Mary Syrup, Helen and Jerry Gaydusek, Chuck and Martha Cervenka, Juli Nelson** and **Andy Bultas**, who all helped with food, check-in, greeting our guests, etc., on our Tour of the Tombstones on June 1st

*Friends of Bohemian  
National Cemetery*

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*Heritage Happenings*

we're on the web  
[www.friendsofbnc.org](http://www.friendsofbnc.org)



*Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery  
Tenth Anniversary Celebration*

*Sunday, August 3, 2014, 1:00 to 4:00 pm*

*featuring the*

*Junior Dixieland Band*

*from Mariánské Lázně, Czech Republic*



**Enjoy:** historic setting, great music,  
complimentary beverages and food

**Where:** Bohemian National Cemetery,  
5255 N. Pulaski Road, Chicago, Illinois 60630

**For more information:** [www.friendsofbnc.org](http://www.friendsofbnc.org)  
or call 847-362-9036

Join us and help us celebrate our tenth birthday!  
We'll gather at the gatehouse. Bring your lawn chairs!