

Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

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April 2018

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 very sad to report that Bill Hosna, another of our early founders, has passed away. Bill was instrumental in drafting the by-laws for Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery, along with Juli Nelson, Mary Ellen Panoch-Zuro and myself. Bill was our first treasurer and later served as vice president. He didn't take an office after that but continued to be a very loyal member. He always had a big smile, was energetic about



*William R. Hosna
1945—2018
(photo from Jeff Tucek)*

everything he did, and sported a banner on his truck telling the world that he was "Proud to be Czech." Asked how he was, he always beamed and replied, "Terrific!" Bill was active in many Czech organizations, serving as a long-time delegate to the Bohemian National Cemetery Association, as a director for the CSAGSI genealogy society, and as treasurer of both the Czech American Congress and the T. G. Masaryk Czech School in Cicero. His

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Columbarium Project Update

BNC's historic Columbarium building was constructed between 1913 and 1919. If you are counting, that means 100 years ago today, this impressive Renaissance Revival style building was in the final phase of its old-world craftsman construction. Perhaps the outside wall's last limestone block was being crafted and shaped by an expert stonemason. Imagine one of the

large, classic, stained-glass windows being installed a century ago, infusing for the first time a golden glow of light into the Ceremony Hall. One may also visualize the final stroke of paint and gold leafing being applied by Moravian-born artist John Mallin, whose glorious ornamental patterns and emblems adorn the interior and can be admired to this

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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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Gaydusek, Chuck Michalek

Webmaster: carol jean smetana



from the editor's laptop

I'm sure you all know that 1918 marks the centennial of the founding of Czechoslovakia. Czech organizations throughout the United States will be commemorating the event, and those of you living in Chicago will be able to participate in events hosted by the Czech Consulate General.

Reminders of the birth of Czechoslovakia can be found throughout Bohemian National Cemetery. Perhaps the most obvious is the Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum with its Benes and Stefanik wings. One side of the base of the World Wars I and II Memorial features a map depicting the surrender of the Central Powers in World War. Inside the crematorium/columbarium building, the Ceremony Hall decorations includes a painted medallion representing Czechoslovakia.

But it is the Czechoslovak Legionnaires who perhaps are the greatest connection between our cemetery and the birth of the Czechoslovak nation. Their service is acknowledged in several places in the cemetery. The World Wars I and II Memorial makes special mention of them. One of the painted insignia in the Ceremony Hall specifically honors the Czechoslovak Legionnaires. Most importantly, the remains of several Legionnaires are at rest at Bohemian National Cemetery, some in urns in the columbarium itself, others interred in different sections of the cemetery.

Many Chicago-area Bohemian immigrants or their descendants answered T. G. Masaryk's call and joined the Legionnaires to realize their shared dream of an independent country. We are trying to compile a list of those heroes who are now at rest at Bohemian National Cemetery. I know some the Legionnaires at BNC are ancestors of our members: Vaclav Cibera, Josef Matejka, Sr., Joseph Ruzicka, Jack Syrup, Bohumil Kuchynka, Joseph Dobias, Frank Kutman, Vincent and Anton Vrdsky. If you have a relative at rest at BNC who fought with the Czechoslovak Legionnaires, please contact me so we can add his name to our list and honor him this October during the centennial celebrations. Email me at editor@friendsofbnc.org or write me at 167 County Road A4A, Sapello, NM 87745. I hope to hear from you!

Na shledanou!
carol

Děkuji Vám!

Lili Nemec for distributing flyers in the Berwyn/Cicero area for our events

Dave Pimm and the BNCA board for producing a large photograph of the current delegates with names to hang in the board room of the office, just like the one from the 1930's, continuing a tradition preserving BNCA's history for future

John Pritasil for entertaining us at our winter meeting with his tales of growing up Czech

Juli Nelson for handling winter meeting reservations

Helen and Jerry Gaydusek for updating the big posters illustrating Friends' accomplishments - the posters can be seen in the museum area of the cemetery office building

What's New with Friends of BNC

(continued from first page)

passing on January 30th, 2018, leaves a big hole in all the groups he worked with. Rest in peace, Bill. You will be greatly missed.

John Pritasil's musings about "Growing Up Czech," our program for the February 11th winter meeting, were most interesting and at times quite funny. Sawa's Old Warsaw buffet meal was delicious, especially the potato pancakes, which are the closest to the Klas pancakes of any I have had since Klas closed. Despite a really nasty, snowy day, over 20 people came for a most

enjoyable afternoon. Helen and Jerry Gaydusek updated the big posters showing our recent accomplishments including the dome repair, then taking the posters to the office.

Please join us after the Memorial Day service in the area by the Eastland monument to dedicate the brick honoring Evelyn Fergle, our former director who died in April 2017. We will lay flowers and release a balloon, plus have a short program to remember all her work to get Friends started.

There are so many wonderful events coming up

this spring, beginning with our tour on April 29th at 1:00 p.m. Be among those who place flags along the main roads to decorate for Memorial Day on Friday, May 25th at 10:00 a.m. Don't miss one of our biggest days of the year - Memorial Day services on Monday May 28th beginning in the gatehouse at 9:00 a.m. with a parade to the crematorium/ columbarium building, culminating in services in the Ceremony Hall. We hope to see you at one or more of these events.

Marge Sladek Stueckemann
President

Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery



Sunday, April 29th at 1:00 pm ~
Tour of the Tombstones guided by Albert Walavich

Saturday, May 12th at 9:00 am ~ Join Hands Day
Meet in gatehouse for donuts & cemetery clean-up for Mother's Day

Sunday, May 13th at 11:00 am ~ Mother's Day
Meet at gatehouse for refreshments,
followed by wreath-laying at Mother statue

Friday, May 25th at 10:00 am ~
Flag placement and planting to decorate cemetery for Memorial Day

Monday, May 28th ~ Memorial Day Commemoration
See back page for details

July 8th, noon until 4 pm ~ Annual BNC picnic
Czech food to purchase, Friends book table, music

Saturday, September 22nd at 10:00 am and 1:00 pm ~
Tours of the Tombstones guided by Albert Walavich

Stories of the Stones

by carol jean smetana

This is the story of a brick building in Cicero, Illinois, and a granite marker at Bohemian National Cemetery. The building is familiar to many. The name on the marker, Julius Kinst, is not. But the legacy of Julius Kinst can be seen today in the T. G. Masaryk Czech School at 5701 West 22nd Place.



Opening day celebration at Thomas G. Masaryk Freethought School, September 4, 1921 (photo from Zlatá Kniha, published 1926 by August Geringer)

Contemporaneous articles published in the *Denní Hlasatel*, Chicago's Czech-language newspaper, tell much of the story. The Bohemian Freethought School began offering Saturday Czech language classes in the Cicero public schools in 1912. But on October 23, 1919, the Cicero School Board voted to no longer allow the Saturday Czech classes in their schools, despite the fact that the population of Cicero at the time was reportedly 70% Czech. Three months later, in January 1920, Frank J. Petrů, one of three ethnic Czechs on the school board, offered a

motion to reconsider the decision. It was defeated.

This led to two campaigns among the Czech-American community: a concerted effort to elect more Czechs to Cicero political offices including the school board; and a decision by the Bohemian Freethought School in Cicero to build their own facility so the teaching of the Czech language would not be subject to political vagaries.

By March 1920 fundraising was underway. When the Cicero School Board, now led by a new president Frank J. Petrů (!), unanimously resolved to once again allow the

use of public schools for Saturday Czech classes in **September, it didn't matter.** The project would not be stopped.

The Bohemian National Cemetery Board made its first \$100 donation to the building fund in October. (The Board would make another donation of \$500 in April 1921, followed by annual donations of \$100 for several years running.)

By December 1920, a lot had been purchased at the southwest corner of 57th Avenue and 22nd Place. Karel Teplan, a compatriot employed as an architectural

draftsman by the Santa Fe Railroad in Chicago, donated his services. He designed a two-story building with three classrooms, small and large meeting halls, a three-room apartment for the janitor, two bathrooms, and a dining room in the basement. (Karel would die in 1932, and following his funeral at the Sokol Slavsky Hall in Berwyn, his body was cremated at Bohemian National Cemetery. There is no record of the disposition of his ashes.)

The contract for the construction of the school building was awarded to Julius Kinst. In addition to his

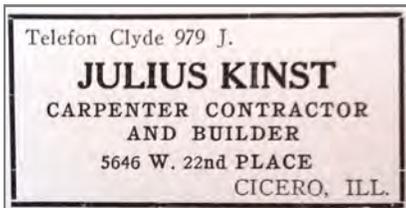


Julius Kinst photo from Zlatá Kniha; the caption read "Builder, National Worker"

crew, he put out a call for carpenters and bricklayers willing to donate work on the building, and by early March 1921, construction had begun—there was less than eight inches of snow that winter of 1920-21!

On May 8, 1921, the cornerstone was laid for what

was already being called the Thomas G. Masaryk Free Thought School. The new **president of Cicero's Board of Trustees**, Joseph Z. Klenha, a second-generation Czech, attended the celebration.



The building was completed in August, and on September 4, 1921, the Thomas G. Masaryk Free Thought School was officially opened. The total cost, including interior furnishings and decoration, was \$35,399.

Julius Kinst, the general contractor for the project, was born in 1887 in the central Bohemian village of Pochvalov, 60 km west-northwest of Prague, the youngest of five boys. A year later his oldest brother Vaclav, at the age of 16, immigrated to Chicago. Vaclav would pay the passage for three of his brothers to **join him: Vojtěch in 1904**, Frantisek in 1905, and Julius in 1906. The next year Julius married Anna Sramek and in 1908 their son William was born.

The brothers' father and grandfather were carpenters in Bohemia, and the brothers carried on the family trade in the U.S. Within four years of his arrival, Julius learned English. In 1913 he began work as a self-employed contractor, and advertised his business in the 1915 *Directory and Almanac of the*

Bohemian Population of Chicago (Adresář).

The contract to build the school capped three years of **dramatic change in Julius's** life. On March 9, 1917, when she was only 29 years old, his wife Anna died. The following year, on Christmas Eve 1918, Julius married Lillian Papp. In 1919 the family moved into a brand new bungalow at 2213 S. 59th Ave., most likely built by Julius himself, and on December 19th their daughter Violet was born.

The year after the Masaryk School was finished, Julius traveled alone to Czechoslovakia and spent two and a half months visiting family. He returned on July 8, 1922, just in time for the birth of his second daughter Olga on the 31st. One more daughter, Helen, was born three years later. William would be a carpenter like his father.

Active in the social life of the Czech-American community, Julius was a member of two IOOF lodges, chairman of the county committee of the Czechoslovak National Alliance of America. In 1927 he was elected the mayor of Sokol Slavský.

The Thomas G. Masaryk Czech School is still in operation today, offering Czech classes for all ages, as well as programs on Czech history, culture and current events. Please check their website czechschoolchicago.org for more information.

That same year Julius developed an intestinal ulcer. After putting off surgery in the futile hope he would get better, he finally underwent an operation on January 23, 1928. For three weeks, he steadily improved, but suddenly Julius took a turn for the worse. His wife and son, and his brother Frank and his wife rushed to his bedside at Presbyterian Hospital, but Julius never regained consciousness and died on February 21 at 5 a.m.



The Kinst monument: Julius Kinst's inscription is on the left, his wife Lillian's is to the right and her second husband's below hers.

Julius's funeral was held at Sokol Slavsky on 22nd Street, and he was buried at Bohemian National Cemetery. Anna later remarried; after their deaths, she and her second husband were buried in the lot with Julius.

Donations

Benefactors

(\$1000—\$9999)

Joseph and Dawn Calek

Patrons

(\$500—\$999)

Henrietta Pons

Sponsors

(\$100—\$499)

CSA Fraternal Life

Kathy Mallin *in honor of*

Randolph Mallin

Donors

(\$25—\$99)

William and Crystal

Kerins

Mary Ng

Marge Sladek

Stueckemann *in*

memory of Bill Hosna

Dien Ziegler *in memory*

of Bill Hosna

Thank You

(\$1—\$24)

Mary Syrup

Thank you all for your generosity.

Your donations help preserve and restore Bohemian National Cemetery.

Live from BNC

Chicago's lingering cold weather limits outdoor volunteer activities, but there are always numerous indoor projects to tackle.

Indoor projects often involve working "behind the scenes" in places such as the administration building's attic, where old and interesting artifacts and pictures can be found.

Recently a dusty old box was discovered by Chuck Betzold, Jerry Gaydusek and Chuck Michalek. Inside the box were several dozen rolled-up, well-preserved professional photos. Printing on the photographs enabled a Friends member and volunteer to make an inventory of the find:

- ◇ photo of 1937 delegates in front of crematorium/columbarium building
- ◇ photo of 1946 delegates

in front of crematorium/columbarium building

- ◇ photo of 1947 reception for Sokols from

Czechoslovakia in front of crematorium/columbarium building

- ◇ photo of 1952 head table at BNCA 75th anniversary banquet
- ◇ photo of 1952 delegates in front of World Wars I and II Memorial
- ◇ 1979 advertising wall calendar from Trinity Bronze Inc.

between the crematorium/columbarium's Ceremony Hall and the east niche hallway. This small room is the planned location for the new donor wall that will recognize contributors to the Columbarium Restoration Project.

As the weather warms up, the volunteers look forward to putting to use some of the tree-trimming items purchased late last year by grant money Friends received from the Czech Republic. Other activities will involve installing and rehangng new location signs throughout the cemetery to help visitors identify section and lot locations.

***Are you interested in volunteering?
Please contact Chuck Michalek at
michalekchas@aol.com
No special skills needed: Just an
ability to enjoy working with others
and a desire to help our cemetery!***

In February, volunteers worked with a professional painter to help scrape walls, repair plaster, and paint the small vestibule room

***Chuck Michalek
Volunteer***

Live from BNC

(continued from first page)
day.

The goal of Friends of BNC's Columbarium Restoration Project is to help ensure this building survives well into the future. The ravages of time and Chicago's brutal weather patterns have already taken their toll. According to architectural preservationists, now is the time to act.

Perhaps your interest is keeping alive the spirit of your Bohemian, Moravian or Slovak ancestors who dedicated their time, talent and resources to create a monument to their heritage

and to keep alive a remembrance of their loved ones. The building as well as the countless family stories represented in the unique niches is unlike any other columbarium.

Or, if you admire old-world craftsmanship, you can help support the building's preservation so it can be admired for generations to come.

Friends of BNC has already raised funds to pay for first-step improvements. Friend's Columbarium Restoration committee is currently discussing with BNC's Board of Directors the establishment

of an on-going fundraising campaign. Organizations, families and individuals can play a vital by contributing to this fund. Plans are now underway to install a crafted donor wall to recognize different levels of contributors. Watch for information on how you can contribute Friends of BNC's Columbarium Restoration campaign.

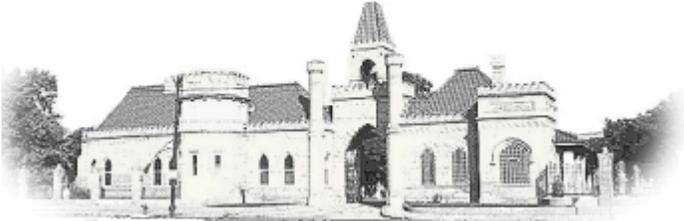
Chuck Michalek
Chair,
Columbarium Restoration
Committee



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Heritage Happenings

we're on the web
www.friendsofbnc.org



Memorial Day at Bohemian National Cemetery

Join us at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, May 28th, to commemorate the women and men who died while in military service. After light refreshments at the gatehouse, we will parade to the crematorium/columbarium building, accompanied by the Sokol Honor Guard. The program will include music and feature Deputy Consul General Jan Kubišta, from the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago, as the main speaker.

Following the service, we will reconvene at the *Eastland* Disaster Memorial to dedicate the brick honoring Friends founder and board member Evelyn Fergle with the placing of flowers, a short eulogy, and release of a balloon.

We also invite you to help us decorate the cemetery for Memorial Day on the Friday before, May 25th. We will meet at the gatehouse at 10 a.m. to place flags and plant some flowers. Join us!

