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Chris Visconti  
Editor

## Heritage Happenings Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

### *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*

### **What's New with FOBNC** By Marge Sladek Stueckemann, Chairperson

Implementing our mission: over 130 people attended our tours on May 1, 2004. Our guide, Albert Walavich, did a wonderful job, rain or not. His explanations of the unique features of the cemetery promote a greater appreciation of the funerary art, especially that of Albin Polasek, famous Czech sculptor of the statue, "The Mother". Participants from the Chicago Architectural Foundation remarked about the historical significance of our main gate and columbarium. Thanks to Marie Jensen, Juli Nelson, Evelyn Krenek Fergle, Chris Repa Visconti, Martha & Chuck Cervenka and Colleen & Randy Kadlec for all their help that day. Special thanks to Lillian Picha; whose folk art beautified the signs.

We participated in the traditional Memorial Day activities at the cemetery by purchasing carnations and presenting each woman with a flower on behalf of the Friends. Wearing our new member nametags and displaying our membership material, we were a presence at the event. Our membership is nationwide and totals over 100

Czech historian and author, Paul Nemecek presented a slide show at our August 20<sup>th</sup> meeting that was well received by an audience of 50 people.

FoBNC donated a printer to BNC. The staff said, "This will be a big help to us as far as genealogy is concerned".

Our solicitation campaign has resulted in more than \$12,000 being given directly to support the cemetery. We could use help with this task. Sending letters can be done by anyone, in any part of the country. If you are willing, please let us know! Email [fobnc@yahoo.com](mailto:fobnc@yahoo.com) or call 847-362-9036. It is a pleasure to work with all the wonderful people who have done so much already to get this new organization off the ground. Thank you!

## Family History at BNC

By Bob Kukla, New Charter Member

About all I knew of my grandparents' ancestry was that they came from Czechoslovakia and had lived in the Berwyn/Cicero area. It wasn't until my father died in 2000, that I got interested in genealogy and started digging. I had difficulty at first finding immigration records at Ellis Island because my grandfather Robert was known as Rupert in Bohemia and my grandmother Antonie Blazek's last name was Blazkova.

Grampa Robert Kukla, born 1893, came to the US in 1907 with his parents Josef (b: 1852) and Marie (b: 1856). Grandpa's two brothers, Anton and Frank, came over two years earlier. I could not find graves for Josef and Marie in Woodlawn Cemetery, where Grampa was buried in 1950. Dolores Duy from CSAGSI suggested I try BNC and sure enough that's where they were buried. As is the case with many rather poor families, photographs were scarce. I had one shadowy picture of Marie and none of Josef.

I decided to drive from Texas to Chicago to do further research and visit my newfound relative, Gene Lepic from Lisle. It was a sunny day and I was

stunned with the beauty of the place -- beautifully kept grounds and lovely varied architecture all around. We went to the front desk where a nice lady told me where Josef and Marie were buried. Then we found their headstone -- much larger than I had expected, and to my amazement, crystal clear oval pictures of Josef and Marie! I had never seen gravestones with pictures on them.

Genealogy has opened a whole new perspective on the past, on Bohemia, and on finding and getting to know relatives I never knew about. I went to the Czech Republic in 2002 and found my Grandmother's homestead and met relatives still living there. I contracted with a researcher from Prague (who has already located the Kukla's back to the early 1700's). I talked with another newfound relative and FoBNC member, Ray Capek, about how to get involved with FoBNC to make it easier for others to dig into their ancestral past. (See our box on volunteer activities and contact Marge for more information).



## Letters from our members

*I read with interest the family history of Josefa Pancnerova, as my Grandparents on my Mother's side, Joseph and Emma Lazansky, and Great-Grandma Elizabeth Hejny are all buried in the family plot purchased by my Grandpa Lazansky in BNC. Also buried there is my Mother's younger sister Vlasta, who died at the age of 12 from heart failure. Grandpa had a stone angel placed there for Vlasta.*

*I am very proud of my Czech heritage and speak of it often to my children and grandchildren*

*Sincerely,*

*Carole M. Blazek-Woodham*



those influences and musical elements that are uniquely American, including Negro spirituals and Native American traditions. The result was a magnificent symphonic work that proudly and deservedly bears the subtitle "From the New World," one of the most popular- in the orchestral repertoire." Welz Kauffman, Ravinia Festival President

"It is a famously American work that reflects the optimism and rich history that makes our culture and our city so unique. Dvořák himself visited the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, the year this piece was written and premiered, and was greatly moved by our city"

Mayor Richard M. Daley



### Welcome all of our new members

Katherine J. Babcock	Waukegan, IL
Emily Brose	Schaumburg, IL
Joseph Calek	Albuquerque, NM
Pamela Carlson	La Grange Park, IL
Carol Celthamf	Sawyer, MI
Diane Chmelik	Okatie, SC
Frank Chmelik	Okatie, SC
Vera Chysky	Lombard, IL
Anne Cicmanec	Chicago, IL
John Cicmanec	Chicago, IL
William Davis	Lombard, IL
Rosemary Davis	Lombard, IL
Donna Desai	Westchester, IL
Dolores Benes Duy	Aurora, IL
Helen Dvorsky	Berwyn, IL
Ken Dvorsky	Lyons, IL
Eastland Disaster	
Historical Society	Arlington Heights, IL
Veronica H. Frost	Enon, OH
Anton G. Hanuska	Broadview, IL
Helen Hanzalek	Lombard, IL
Paul T. Hohe	Orcutt, CA
Matt Hucke	Chicago, IL
John R. Jacobs	
Marilyn W. John	Shorewood, MI
Joan Jurenka	Santa Monica, CA
Georgia Kadlec	Chicago, IL
William A. Kerins	Lemont, IL
Elaine G. Kovarik	Forest Park, IL
Robert H. Krejcl	San Diego, CA
Libbie Krivanek	Riverside, IL
Robert W. Kukla	Frisco, TX
Caryl L. Larkins	Bisbee, AZ
Harold Lindahl	Riverside, IL
Yvonne Lindahl	Riverside, IL
Juanita Spirek LoGiudice	Berwyn, IL

Jeanne J. Loitz	Chicago, IL
Ray Malecek	Wood Dale, IL
Thelma Malecek	Wood Dale, IL
June Malina	Germantown, MD
Katherine Mallin	Glenview, IL
Joanne P. Manasco	La Quinta, CA
Vera Rohozka McGulre	Long Beach, CA
George Mrkvicka	Glen Ellyn, IL
Dorothy Mrkvicka	Glen Ellyn, IL
Jacqueline T. Mulac	Chicago, IL
Raymond C. Mulac	Chicago, IL
Lili Nemec	Berwyn, IL
Don Nemec	Berwyn, IL
Henrietta B. Pons	Winnetka, IL
Marc-Andre' Pons	
Jane N. Pugh	Tampa, FL
Thomas J. Ruzicka	Lafayette, IN
Judith P. Ruzicka	Lafayette, IN
Vlasta Schiehofer	La Grange Park, IL
Wesley E. Sedlacek	Downers Grove, IL
Edwin Sirovy	Darien, IL
Charlotte Sirovy	Darien, IL
Anna Spirek	Berwyn, IL
Nan C. Stanek	Libertyville, IL
Andrew Stika	Eden Prairie, MN
Sylvia Sykora	Oakland, CA
Lorraine S. Szabo	Chagrin Falls, OH
Linda Tassin	Chicago, IL
Teri K. Thorpe	Phoenix, AZ
Cathleen Dyer Trechter	Houston, TX
Sharon Sladek Triffon	Macedonia, OH
Paul Triffon	Macedonia, OH
Karen Hlavka Welch	Bella Vista, AR
David C. Westen	Itasca, IL
Mila Wilk	Hickory Hills, IL
Carole M.(Blazek) Woodham	Morris, IL
Mildred Zamis-Potas	Lombard, IL
Joe Zima	Tinley Park, IL
Elaine M Zitko	Willowbrook, IL
Jerry Zitko	Willowbrook, IL
Jerry R. Zitko	Burr Ridge, IL



### SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, November 20 will be a **Columbarium tour** at Bohemian National Cemetery at 1pm Albert Walavich will be our speaker. Details will follow.  
**\$10 Members, \$15 Non-members**  
 If you would like to volunteer as a docent please call Marge at 847/362-9036.