

# Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

## Topinka honors BNC designation as National Landmark

Illinois State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka celebrated Bohemian National Cemetery's recent designation on the National Register of Historic Places during a plaque presentation on April 27, 2006. Since May of 2002

Topinka has been collaborating with the Board of Directors of BNC, Alderwoman Margaret Laurino (39th Ward/City of Chicago) and Northeastern Illinois University to begin the necessary steps to achieve landmark status. During a meeting of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency Council, Topinka testified to the importance of the cemetery and its landmark status. Bohemian is only the third Chicago cemetery to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"Bohemian National Cemetery is

a historic treasure that will now be preserved for years to come," said Topinka. "I'm thrilled that we are honoring the history and culture of this cemetery for future generations to embrace and to study."

Bohemian National Cemetery is recognized for its variety of styles of architectural brilliance. The main gatehouse, built in 1893, and added to in 1907, is a Late Gothic Revival. Dedicated in 1919, the Renaissance Revival Crematorium, including a columbarium and chapel on upper levels, is reminiscent of a traditional basilica plan. The Classical Revival Administration Building was dedicated in 1926. Bohemian National Cemetery allows scholars, students, and history buffs to study the history behind Mayor

Anton Cermak of Chicago and his death which historians believe was in protection of President-elect Franklin Roosevelt.

"For myself and the rest of Illinois' Czech community, Bohemian National Cemetery is a place to honor our culture and life as much as it is to grieve," said Topinka.

Joining Topinka at the ceremony were Ald. Margaret Laurino, (39th Ward); Phil Roux, Superintendent of BNC; Angie Bultas, Treasurer of BNC; Salme Harju Steinberg, Ph. D., President of Northeastern Illinois University; and William B. Sieger, Ph. D. of Northeastern Illinois University.

*Press Release from the Office of State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka.*

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July 2006

Sherida Hudak, 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

"We are from Prague and would NEVER have a chance to have lunch with President Klaus," said our Prague neighbors who joined the 40 or more Friends who came to that festive meal at the Chicago Hilton in April! What a thrill to be invited to participate and hear the speech. I hope everyone received the invitation—a truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Another thrill of being in attendance as Judy Baar Topinka

came into the BNC office to present the plaque for National Register status was equally monumental. Uncertainty at when this would occur made it impossible to notify our membership in advance.

Congratulations to our new 2006-07 officers. We thank Ray Capek for his dedicated service as a director and welcome Meribeth Tooke as the

new secretary. Bill Hosna  
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## What's new with Friends of BNC

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now serves as vice-president, with Juli Nelson moving to the treasurer's role. Our newly-appointed publicity chair will be Anna Schnedorf—WELCOME! It is wonderful to have so many willing to serve. Other officers remain the same.

Our tours on May 6th attracted 75 attendees. Our guide, Albert Walavich, did a wonderful job and the weather cooperated with a glorious day. Thanks to Joseph Calek for providing the refreshments, to registrar, Sher Hudak, book table salesperson, Juli Nelson, Cervenkas for

hosting, plus Andy Bultas and Anna Schnedorf for promoting the sale of flower boxes. Total gross receipts were \$1,162. We also thank our promotion team of Lili Nemeč and Helen Hanzalik, who take membership brochures and tour flyers to many Czech-American groups. Later that month several Friends placed flags on graves—Chris Visconti, Juli Nelson and the Maleceks. Memorial Day was most moving and we provided carnations plus the cost of the flowers around the monument and Brada Baby

monument. Thanks to Cervenkas for the floral design and helping with the planting.

Transparencies in hand and hoping to have an overhead to show them on, Evelyn Kreněk Fergle and I will be in Ceske Budejovice in southern Bohemia June 28th to present a talk about Friends. How much we have seen our Friends vision come to fruition with all that is happening lately.

**Marge Sladek Stueckemann, President**

## Lecture on sculptor Albin Polasek

*All are invited—no charge  
Sunday, August 27th, 1:00  
Columbarium Chapel at BNC  
Refreshments in gatehouse  
will follow*

Tony Jandacek will speak on Albin Polasek using a slide presentation to illustrate the sculptor's works.

Albin was born in Moravia and came to the U.S. in the early 1900's. He sculpted the *Mother and Pilgrim* monuments at BNC. Polasek was head of the sculpture department at the Art Institute of Chicago for over 30 years. Other famous Polasek statues include the huge *Blanik Knight* in honor of T.G. Masaryk at the University of Chicago and another in memorial of Theodore Thomas, founder of the Chicago Symphony in Grant Park. His *Sower* was originally in front of the Art Institute, but as a nude man, it caused much consternation. It has recently been in-

stalled at the Chicago Botanic Garden. *Mother Crying Over the World* depicts the horror of WWII, while *Victory of Moral Law* was his direct response to the Hungarian Revolution. Large public commissions brought Polasek world attention.

Albin designed his own home in Winter Park, Florida and retired there at the age of 71. He began gathering much of his life's works and set up a foundation opening his estate to the public. Brochures for the museum and sculpture garden will be available at the meeting.

## Live from BNC

March 2006 began a series of visits to our cemetery from many dignitaries. All were impressed with the cemetery, its historical buildings, and monuments. The Cermak Mausoleum was at the top of the list of monuments to see, for the visitors from the Czech Republic. Many were also pleased with a tour of the Columbarium.

The visits began in early March when the cemetery received a request from the Czech Consul Generals office in Chicago to tour the cemetery. The cemetery was rendered a visit by the Consul General of the Czech Republic the distinguished Marek Skolil, the deputy head of the Czech Consul Bořek Lizék, and

the head of the consular section for the Czech Republic Kateřina Kulhanková, and the manager of the consul generals office Miroslav Kraus. We were next delighted to host Gail Naughton and David Muhlén of the Czech and Slovak Museum and Library, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. An additional visit brought Pavel Svoboda, Milan Ekert, Yona Marrova, and Josef Polaček who are members of the Czech Republic's Parliament.

April continued with more dignitaries walking the grounds of BNC. The Czech Ambassador to the U.S. Petr Kolař and the Czech Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda, who laid a wreath at Cermacks Mausoleum, were duly impressed.

Preceding them was famous Czech photographer Jiří Vřetečka whose exhibition *A Walk Through Prague* was showing at the Czech Consul in Chicago. The Cemetery Board also attended a dinner at the Chicago Hilton honoring President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Klaus.

May saw preparation for Memorial Day Services on the 29th. Over 100 people filled the chapel, listening to Consul Marek Skolil's Czech speech (with a printed English translation). Additional speakers included Alderwoman Margaret Laurino and Robert Baumruk for the Odd Fellows and Rebekah Memorial Association.

The spring was a busy time for BNC.

**Andrew Bultas**

## Donor list

### **Benefactor \$1,000 +**

Arthur Krivanek

### **Sponsor \$100-\$499**

Sylvia Austerlade

Cynthia A. Bueneman\*

Czech & Slovak American Genealogy

CSA Athletic Division\*

Rick Daitchman

George T. Droost

Anne Marie Dusek

Evanston Funeral & Cremation

Evelyn & Don Fergle

Evelyn Krenek Fergle

Elsie Grossman

Helen Hanzalik

James G. Hrouda

Arthur Krivanek

Richard F. & Galen C. Krupka

David J. Mack

Marlene Capek Murray

Paul K. Remias III

Florine Resico & Family

Irene Anne Smith

Andrew & Barbara Stevko

Marjorie Sladek Stueckemann\*

Sharon & Apostol Triffin

Veterans Funeral Service

### **Donor \$25-\$99**

Lorraine Kucera Aichinger

Dr. James F. Arient

James D. Bartusiak

Ruth Bartuska

Karyn E. Bienemann

Arlene M. Borkey

Christopher A. Borman

Patricia J. Brown

Irene Krenek Broyles

Pamela A. Carlson

Lorraine Castelli

Rose P. Cervenka & Family

Vlasta Chmara

Diane Collins

Thomas F. & Patricai E. Croke

CSA Lodge Carter H. Harrison #378

CSA Lodge Thomas Alva Edison #375

CSA Lodge Yankee—Jungmann #77

Marilee Davies

Rosemary Davis

Joseph Domko

Mirka Donner

Anna M. Dupac

Dolores Benes Dury

Eastland Disaster Historical Society

Richard Fialka

Carl & Mary Ellen Flaks

Geraldine A. Foley

Libbian Franta

Howard E. Habenicht

Barbara Kozel Hancock

Anton G. Hanuska

Dorothy D. Hayes

Dolores A. Hologa

Mildred Homolka

M. Hughes

Mr. & Mrs. Roger Hurdlik

Randal J. & Colleen Kadlec\*

Shirley Kenney

LaVerne Kriz

Paul Kubick

Keith & Alice Kubly

Dan & Celcilia Kumarich

Patricia Anderson

Logan

Jeanne Loitz

Charles & Sue Lupinek

Frank J. Macha

June A. Malina

Kathy Mallin

Mary P. Maruna

John & Carol May

Arthur M. Million

Dr. & Mrs. Robert Musil

Julianne L. Nelson

Pat Nelson

Dolores K. Niewinski

Donald & Shirley Novotny

Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Ondrla

Elmer J. & Rita Pavlas

Ruth A. Perry

Donald J. Picha

*Thanks to all who contributed to the 2005 fundraising campaign that will help preserve and enhance our beautiful cemetery.*

Bess & Chuck Prazak

June Ruth

Ludwig P. Scheuerle

Mary D. Sherry

Bryan & Sarah Skoda

Bill Sladek

Don Slavicek

Eunice G. Smith

Donald C. Soukup

Catherine E. Stack

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J. Scott Sykora

Lorraine S. Szabo

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Vivian A. Triska

Alois G. Vana

Lorraine F. Velek

John G. Voss

Karen L. Welch

Glagys Wheeler

Frank Zedeck

Lillian B. Zoufal

\* for Columbarium restoration



## Slovak genealogy film airs on PBS

A film by Susan Marsincus, *Pictures from the Old Country*, will air on Wednesday, August 2, at 10:30 p.m. on PBS, Channel 11. It features Marsincus' search for her family in Slovakia.

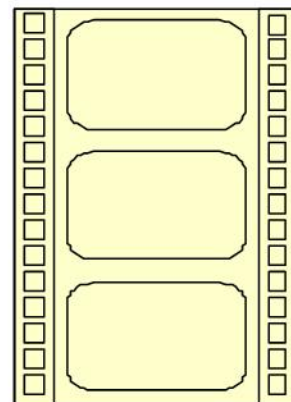
It will also be the focus of the CSAGSI program in January of 2007. CSAGSI is the Czech & Slovak American Genealogy Society of Illinois. For more information write to:

CSAGSI  
PO Box 726  
Warrenville, IL 60555-0726

*Pictures from the Old Country*

*August 2, 10:30 p.m.*

*Channel 11*



## Members notes

*Art Krivanek was our largest donor in 2005. His donation was in memory of James Krupka who is buried at BNC. Art's niece, Fay Byrnes, sent the following letter.*

This is information Art provided me with about James Krupka. Mr. Krupka was born in Chicago in 1912, attended St. Leonard's Catholic Grammar School and Morton High School in Cicero, Illinois. James also attended a junior college.

Mr. Krupka's father was a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and a successful banker in Chicago. The bank closed because of the stock market crash in the 1930's and the family was financially affected by this disaster. James went to work for a manufacturing plant that produced small hardware parts and

retired from that company. He never married and lived most of his adult life in Berwyn, Illinois.

I did not know Jimmy, as he was called, so all this information is from Art's memory. Because he is 92 years old, he isn't too clear on definite details.

Very truly yours,

Fay A. Byrnes

*In another note, Sharon Sladek Triffon wrote regarding the Eastland disaster.*

My mother would have been very interested in the Eastland book since she was closely connected to what happened. Her sister Vlasta

worked for Western Electric and was to go on that picnic but for some reason did not get on the Eastland. Until the family discovered she was O.K. they thought there was a good chance she was on that boat.

Sharon Sladek Triffon

***Do you have a short family history story you would like to share with our readers? Please send your story to Sher Hudak, Editor***

***sheridahudak@msn.com***

## What happened to Heritage Happenings?



As the new editor of *Heritage Happenings*, I must credit the previous editor Chris Visconti for the wonderful and organized files that she provided to me. They were immensely helpful to me in putting together this edition and show the progression, not only of *Heritage Happenings*, but also the growth of Friends of BNC.

Although we have a new format, most of the regular columns will continue but they may appear a little differently. I hope you enjoy our new look.

**Sherida Hudak, Editor**

## Monumental musings

In most instances, whenever I see individuals preparing to drop something on the ground my urge is to stop them and chide them for lacking in consideration and breaking the law. The litterbugs I am thinking of today, however, are a large group of women who I will never chastise as they are littering Bohemian National Cemetery with love.

Whether they are carved from marble, limestone or granite, the “Littering Ladies of Bohemian National Cemetery” as I am fond of calling them, stand guard at family gravesites ready to drop a gentle flower of remembrance on to the graves.

Most of them are figures making their way down a few steps as they prepare to accomplish their mission of love by dropping a flower ( often a lily ) from their right hand

which is stretched out in front of them.

The amazing thing about these often life-sized figures is the gorgeous detail that exists in their gowns. Some of them have exquisite

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lacey neck lines that show the talent of the monument makers who carved them. A quick look would leave the casual observer think that the figures are all alike in design as the pose is copied with exactitude from statue to statue, but a more careful look shows the subtle differences from litterbug to litterbug. The truly casual observer might even fail to note that some of the litterers are angels with grand wings while others are merely earthly personifications of Remembrance.

My usual rule of thumb with the “Littering Ladies” is to take time to smell the roses or at least take time to enjoy the beautiful ladies who have taken up their posts throughout the cemetery so that those who rest in Bohemian National are receiving perpetual floral tributes.

**Albert Walavich**

## Rules and regulations, 1902

The following are excerpts from a 1902 pamphlet titled, *Rules and Regulations of the Bohemian National Cemetery*, which was found in the attic of the gatehouse.

### The Superintendent

The Superintendent or his associates will be found at his office in the Cemetery when the gates are open. It is desired that every lot and

grave owner shall feel free to consult with the Superintendent at all times. His advice and assistance will be given cheerfully, and will often be found of value to those contemplating the purchase of lots or the making of improvements.

### Rules to be Observed by Visitors

1. Every person driving in the Cemetery shall

be responsible for any damage done by him or by the animals in his charge.

2. No vehicle will be allowed to pass through the grounds at a rate exceeding six miles an hour, and no one is permitted to drive on any of the walks. No horses must be left on the grounds unfastened. Drivers must remain on their seats, or by their horses during funeral services.

## Officers

Marjorie Sladek Stueckemann, President

Bill Hosna, Vice-President

Juli Nelson, Treasurer

Meribeth K. Tooke, Secretary

Charles Cervenka, Director

Martha Cervenka, Director

Evelyn Krenek Fergle, Director

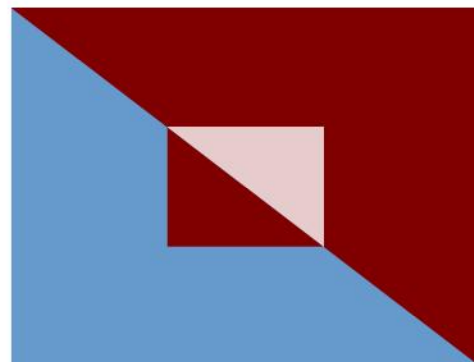
Henrietta Bartizal-Pons, Membership Chair

Andrew Bultas, Grants

Sherida Hudak, Newsletter Editor

Anna Schnedorf, Publicity Chair

Sue Zielinski, Webmaster



# Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

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Email: [mdstueck@aol.com](mailto:mdstueck@aol.com)



## *Heritage Happenings*

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



## Membership renewal reminder

Your membership as a Friend of The Bohemian National Cemetery is important.

Please check the label of this newsletter. If your membership is overdue, you will note that the date it expired is highlighted. If no date appears, your membership was a very early one and has most likely expired.

In these cases, we are unable to continue to provide you with our newsletter, and this will be the last copy you will receive. We hope that you will not let this happen and that you will renew your membership.

We trust you have seen the benefits of being a member over these past few years. Our volunteers have worked hard with the Bohemian National Cemetery Association to undertake projects to enhance and maintain the beauty of this historic cemetery. Having the cemetery's

importance acknowledged by being listed on the National Register of Historic Places is just one thing we have accomplished. We need your help to continue.

Please take the time to renew now.

Membership dues for 1 year are:

\$25 individual

\$20 senior

\$35 family

Make checks payable to Friends of BNC

Mail with the coupon to

FOBNC c/o Marge Sladek Stueckemann

611 Harvard Lane

Libertyville, IL 60048

### Membership Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_