

Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

What's new with Friends of BNC

Our vision "Create an appreciation of BNC in local, national and international audiences" has been a focus for Summer 2006. To promote our activities in the local area, we have joined the Northeastern Illinois Historical Council, made up of over 40 historical societies and museums. Their newsletter goes out to many people interested in Chicago history, so this is a new way to spread the word of activities. This month's issue features a ½-page write-up of the history of the cemetery and Friends, plus a notice of the tour on October 7th.

Although it may have been an international stage, the Czechoslovak Society of Arts

and Sciences Congress in České Budějovice was also a way to connect with U. S. citizens. Our BNC was the Goliath among the smaller BNC's featured there. Evelyn Kreněk Fergle and I used colored transparencies and an overhead projector to tell the story of the cemetery's beautiful buildings, designation on the Historic Register, unique and artistic monuments, plus the contributions of Czechs to the history of Chicago, especially former Mayor Anton Cermak. We gave the membership brochure as our handout, and found a number of people in the audience who live throughout the U.S. who had ties to BNC. It was also interesting to hear the presentations about the BNC's at Spillville, Iowa (1 acre) and

Baltimore, Maryland (10 acres) which followed our talk. All 20 seats in the room were filled.

A further international tie was explored by our speaker for the August 27th meeting held in the Columbarium. Tony Jandacek gave a most interesting slide presentation of the world renowned Czech sculptor Albin Polasek's work. Despite being partially paralyzed at the end of his life, artist Albin Polasek continued to create beautiful sculptures. We learned details about famous Chicago creations, including the commissioning of *The Pilgrim* that represents the mother coming to the Stejskal Monument, heavily draped and

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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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Live from BNC

This year the cemetery is a particularly lovely place. Throughout the area The Brickman Group landscape company has done a great job with grass cutting and flower planting. A walk through the grounds brings close the trees and foliage, some of which are unique to our BNC. The appearance of the cemetery this year is something one can proudly show family and friends. Nevertheless the cemetery does

have its problems. The Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery raised money to repair two turrets on the Columbarium roof. These were thought to be the cause of water leakage into the Columbarium. Allendorfer Roofing company started work on the turrets and found that the brick walls had deteriorated and had to be rebuilt, thus increasing

the original estimated cost.

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What's new with Friends of BNC

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hooded, one of two monuments at BNC by Albin. We were delighted to have 21 visitors plus 19 members that day.

Following the presentation Friends conducted business necessary to continue our mission. Members voted unanimously to change the by-laws to make our document conform to what is needed for the IRS as we work to obtain 501c3 designation.

Of course as we created an appreciation of BNC with a widening audience, we did not neglect to work inside the cemetery grounds. Have you seen the beautiful flowers in front of the gatehouse, the patriotic and lush red, white, and blue flowers around the flagpole, the pink plantings at the Columbarium (pink was the color of plantings in the 1930's pictures) - all flowers provided by our Friends treasury? Thanks to Martha Cervenka for designing these displays and, of course, to our cemetery workers who keep things watered.

From beautifying the grounds, to helping raise funds for things like the Columbarium roof, and getting the word out about our treasured place, the Friends have had a busy summer!

Marge Sladek Stueckemann, President

Volunteers needed



Czech-American Congress

Want to be our delegate? The Czech-American Congress is a group of various Czech organizations which meets monthly in North Riverside. As a member organization, we are entitled to two delegates. Please contact Marge at 847-362-9036 or mdstueck@aol.com if you'd like more information or might be able to serve.

Thank you!

Green Thumb

Enjoy time spent outdoors? Volunteers are always welcome at BNC for various gardening activities, especially for watering those thirsty plants. Whether you have occasional free time or much more, inquire at the cemetery office, Monday through Friday from 8:00 until 4:00 and Saturday from 8:00 until 1:00.

Your help is appreciated!

Live from BNC

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Because there are a total of six turrets on the Columbarium roof, we were concerned about the other four. The next two sit over the chapel, while the final set are over the furnace and crematorium. Allendorfer evaluated the pair over the chapel, finding more bad walls. Small patches of the roof directly above the chapel were also cut into to check for damage. Water was found underneath this vital area and repairs are imperative.

Another incident occurred in the gatehouse while plumbers were working to put in a new water line. The main city water line burst, causing a flood of over four feet of water in

the basement. We tried to notify the City of Chicago to no avail. We were finally able to get the city to repair the line with the help of Alderwoman Laurino's office.

A third large project is taking place at the Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum. The problem arose because of water on the roof. Absolute Marble and Granite company found water leaking from the roof, seeping behind the marble, damaging the marble and forcing the caulking out. Allendorfer fixed the roof and now Absolute is removing all the old caulk, washing, and re-caulking the entire outside of the mausoleum.

Meanwhile the Tuesday volunteers Ken Dvorsky, Chuck Cervenka, Ray Capek, Ken Quick, Jerry Cicela, and Andy Bultas have also been busy with a number of other projects, such as fixing the elevator in the Columbarium, trimming trees and bushes, removing iron shelves from the morgue in the Columbarium and tuck-pointing the brick wall. However the biggest project was replacing the drainage pipe from the lagoon to the river because the old one had collapsed. As you can see, BNC is a beautiful landmark that needs continuous upkeep to maintain this condition.

Andrew Bultas

Natural nuances

Bohemian National Cemetery not only exhibits landmark buildings and unique monuments, but also offers an abundance of natural beauty. The numerous and varied great old trees, along with much shrubbery, beckon me to spend time, as if in a park. The 124-acre size ensures me that I may feel privacy in this beautiful "Garden of the Dead." The lagoon tops off my visit because the water never fails to attract birds, who allow me a glimpse of their peaceful perching.

While I appreciate the tranquility, BNC is important as part of a larger network of green infrastructure. Although it may go unnoticed by many, the North Branch of the Chicago River runs through the southeastern portion of the cemetery just north of Foster Avenue. The path of the river links a group of undeveloped

areas serving as a green corridor. It begins on the south side of Foster with Eugene Field Park. Continuing to the northwest with the river's slow, winding channel, BNC comes next. Just to the north is North Park Village, with its nature center, and Peterson Park. Gompers Park, St. Lucas and Montrose Cemeteries follow with LaBagh Woods to the west. At the Edens Expressway the greenway narrows, but the corridor meanders onward through Forest Glen Woods, Indian Road Woods, Edgebrook Woods, and further forest preserves, finally reaching the Chicago Botanic Garden at Lake Cook Road.



The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) has a mandate to lead the region in growth management. According to NIPC, green infrastructure is the interconnected network of land and water that supports biodiversity and provides habitat for diverse communities of native flora and fauna at the regional scale. It includes large complexes of remnant woodlands, savannas, prairies, wetlands, lakes, streams, corridors, and other natural communities. Green infrastructure may also

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Bohemian National Cemetery 5255 N. Pulaski @ Foster, Chicago, Illinois 60630 (708) 788-8442 (773) 539-8442

Saturday, October 7, 2006 1:00 P.M.

General Highlights Tour/2-Hour Walking Tour

Albert Walavich, tour guide extraordinaire and historian, will discuss the founding of the cemetery and its unusual features as he walks us through the highlights including the Victorian gatehouse, the Columbarium and chapel, Masaryk Mausoleum, and the main building, Mayor Anton Cermak's mausoleum, the war memorials, the special and unique features of the turn-of-the-century monuments and their cultural, social and historical significance. Refreshments following tour at the historic Victorian gatehouse. *handicapped- small set of stairs to gatehouse and walking tour will cover about 1 mile on asphalt, grass, and gravel. Men's and women's restroom facilities located in the gatehouse.

Fee: \$15 for non-members \$10 for members Make checks payable to Friends of BNC

Questions: Sher at (773) 763-8324 or sheridahudak@msn.com

Mail tour fees to Sher Hudak, 5818 N. Manton Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60646

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Member Tours \$ _____ + Non-member Tours \$ _____ = Total enclosed \$ _____

Note: To make a tax-deductible contribution for restoration of the cemetery, please enclose a separate check to

Bohemian National Cemetery.

Natural nuances

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include areas adjacent to and connecting these remnant natural areas that provide both buffers and opportunities for ecosystem restoration. These corridors serve the same purposes to wildlife that roads do for humans, by allowing access.

The Openlands Project is another organization concerned with space in northeastern Illinois. They are a non-profit urban conservation organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing open space. The Openlands Project pronounces that a greenway is a place for all age groups and levels of physical ability to enjoy life away from the noise, motion, and

Bohemian National Cemetery...offers an abundance of natural beauty...and is important as part of a larger network of green infrastructure.

crowdedness of urban and suburban built-up landscapes.

Whether referred to as greenway, corridor, or infrastructure, whether for humans or wildlife, BNC is a significant green gem. I respect its personal grace along with its role in the larger environment. Just as the Chicago River ebbs and flows, BNC connects me with life past and present.

Sherida Hudak

Members notes

*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*

A Friend contacted us from California.

I so loved going to BNC as a child. My relatives were buried near a pond or a pump or spigot of some type. It was my job to draw water for the gardening on the graves.

relatives. He was a drowning victim. The porcelain portraits were fascinating to me. I have shared my stories about the traditions at BNC with a lot of people and they are like no one else's!

I looked at the photos of grave stones and remember the boy with his dog. There was another child's head stone near by my

Bonnie Lawrence

Book Donation

Friends is trying to locate a copy of the 1927, Semi-Centennial Jubilee of the Bohemian National Cemetery Association, by Jaroslav E. S. Vojan, for historical purposes.

It is the free English version of J. J. Jelinek's, history of the first 50 years of BNC.

Please contact Sher Hudak

773-763-8324

Advertise in Our Newsletter

We are glad to accept advertising for related businesses

*Quarter page—one year (4 issues)
\$25*

*Eighth page—one year (4 issues)
\$12*

Celebrate 130 Years of BNC

What? Gala dinner with entertainment

When? Sunday, April 29, 2007

Where? Ashton Place in Willowbrook

Sponsored by the BNCA's

Board of Delegates.

Details will follow.

Save the date now!!!

Monumental musings

A Garden of Deco Delights

Usually people find me waxing rhapsodic over some of the truly wonderful Victorian era monuments to be found throughout BNC, but I do have a great fondness for the Art Deco era of design and some of the spectacular examples to be found in BNC.

Traveling along the southern edge of Section 12, it is possible to encounter one of the truly fantastic and unique designs in the cemetery. Though damaged by vandals many years ago, the monument for the Triner family shows a fine eye for detail and communication.

The monument is probably at least 12 feet in height and is a gray granite structure with an open space in its center. At the base are two sleeping figures—perhaps intended to depict the guards at the tomb of Christ. The figures are done in that wonderful geometric form that so typifies the human form as it appeared during the Deco era, and their crouched position turns them into two square cartouches of the sleepers who do not see the resurrection.

The open section, now holding only the bronze framework and two smallest of the rays of the rising sun, once contained a stylized depiction of the rays of light as they emanated from the base of the monument.

While I mourn the fact that I was never able to see the monument maker’s full concept, I still greatly enjoy the two carved figures and I create the sunrise in my mind’s eye.

Marie Triner, her son Michael M., and her daughter-in-law Bertha will be disappointed when their resurrection comes to find that their sunrise is incomplete, but Michael M. and Bertha who were probably the individuals who commissioned the monument will still feel a great pride in owning a truly unique monument.

In Section 21, just east of the mausoleum of Mayor Cernak, there is another unique monument, likely commissioned by a woman who lost both her husband and daughter in the space of less than two years.

Gusty Vlcek also chose a towering gray granite structure with an open space. Daughter Mildred died in 1940 and husband Michael in 1941, so Gusty chose to have a depiction of the figure of remembrance—a figure so common among the “Littering Ladies” I spoke of in our last issue. In this case she stands with roses clutched to her breast surrounded by the granite structure and a proscenium effect made all the stronger by the Greek Key design that edges the opening.

Unlike the “Littering Ladies” with their flowing hair and gowns, the Vlcek “Remembrance” stands with all the style of a movie star of the 40’s—hair waved just so and the clasps of her gown, which swirls in Art Moderne style, showing two wonderful jewels.

Given half a chance, I could give a whole litany of truly impressive monuments dating from the Art Deco and slightly later Art Moderne eras, but instead I will just invite you, the reader, to make your own visit of discovery to BNC.

Albert Walavich

Welcome New Members

William and Betty Bratschun
 Dr. Karel Bartusek
 Kathe Bartusek
 Richard C. Cinert
 Eliska M. Davis
 Pam Ferris
 Joseph and Lillian Hahn
 John K. Hudak
 Susan Marcinkus
 Emil L. Martinec
 Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Oestreicher
 Rebecca Patterson
 Mrs. Irena Polasek and Mr. Theodore Polasek
 Linda Uhlir
 Rowlene Wendoll

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 Sherida Hudak, Newsletter Editor
 Anna Schnedorf, Publicity Chair
 Sue Zielinski, Webmaster

Corrections to Donor List

In the previous edition the Family of Jarmila Vostal and Shirley A. Valla should have been included on the donor list

Thank you for your contribution

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

611 Harvard Lane
Libertyville, IL 60048

Phone: 847-362-9036
Email: mdstueck@aol.com



Heritage Happenings

We're on the web
www.friendsofbnc.org



Membership renewal reminder

Your membership as a Friend of 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 that has been 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 Miss Juli Nelson

300 Claymoor #2F

Hinsdale, IL 60521-5076

Membership Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip Code _____

E-mail _____