

Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Winter Issue
Vol.4, #3

January 2008
Sherida Hudak, Editor

What's new with Friends of BNC

"And the winner is!"

Remember those words as we watched the Academy Awards night on TV? As November 13th approached, all of us who voted, usually every day, to receive the grant to restore the water tank were anxious to hear if we made it! AND WE DID!! If you read the last issue of our newsletter,



"We celebrate the planned restoration of our water tank to its usual role in plant care but also as a special landmark."

you'll be familiar with the American Express/Partners in Preservation contest that chose 25 historic Chicagoland sites. Through online voting, each of these sites competed to be one that received funding for a certain grant project. If you don't have a computer and weren't really into this whole thing, know that we beat the Chicago Cultural Center and the Art Institute in our ranking of 8th out of 25! At a recent party I attended as your president (and I surely appreciate the chance to represent Friends at various Czech events), a man from the Art Institute congratulated us and really did seem sort of puzzled as to how we actually managed this! One answer is that Friends and everyone associated with the cemetery had forwarded this

message of how to help Czech culture to everyone they knew.

One of the best contacts we made was with Zora Pergl, editor of the weekly online Czech newsletter, www.thedumplingnews.com. Zora wrote up a wonderful history of BNC on the first page of that current edition and encouraged people to vote by sending reminders! Zora is planning a fall Polka Train trip beginning in New York which will come to Chicago and will include a special BNC tour, plus a planned polka party. Zora also made contact with Western Fraternal Life's Joe Kuzma. Joe, too, sent reminders to vote. Joe plans to bring a bus trip from Milwaukee to Chicago in spring and also hopes to incorporate a

(Continued on page 2)

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

Inside this issue:

<i>Winter meeting</i>	3
<i>Consolidating friendship</i>	4
<i>Thank you</i>	4
<i>Members notes</i>	4
<i>Prši z Osvitimi</i>	5
<i>Officers</i>	5
<i>Renewal form</i>	6

Live from BNC

September was a very active month at BNC, beginning with the grant application written by Chuck Hagopian to Partners in Preservation for restoration of the cemetery's water tank. Partners in Preservation is sponsored by American Express. The proposal

was accepted and the cemetery was asked to hold an open house on September 15th. This event was to promote the computer voting that began on September 6th. The open house was hosted in the Gatehouse and cemetery

(Continued on page 2)



What's new with Friends of BNC

(Continued from page 1)

BNC tour. We will be sure to let all of the Friends know when these events take place so they can join in and meet these helpful people.

It is only fitting to celebrate the publicity we received from being part of this contest, both in the major Chicago papers (there were 3 articles in the Tribune alone) and from network TV. We also celebrate the planned restoration of our water tank to its usual role in plant care but also as a special landmark. Please don't miss our Friends' January 27th meeting which will be a Czech dinner at Klas Restaurant. Details are in the flyer enclosed with this newsletter. There is limited space, so

send in your reservation right away. It promises to be a joyful time to get better acquainted and celebrate 2007 as a year of many achievements at BNC.

Marge Sladek Stueckemann, President



IMPORTANT RENEWAL INFORMATION

**Did you join before August 2007? If so, did you send in your renewal recently?
If so, thank you!**

If not, don't let this be your last newsletter—renew today with the form on the back page.

Live from BNC

(Continued from page 1)

staff set up food and beverages.

In attendance at the open house were Alderwoman Margaret Laurino, former Illinois State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, President of Northeastern Illinois University Sharon Hahs, Northeastern Professor William Seiger and Cheryl Rosanio of American Express, along with many others. Margaret Hagopian made and donated a variety basket for a raffle, which was won by area resident Laura Loeger. Cheryl Rosanio said that attendance was high and that it was the best open house of all the participants of the Partners in Preservation contest. The computer voting finished on October 10th with Bohemian National Cemetery in eight place.

On Saturday, September 22nd the cemetery

was host to a group of senators from the Czech Republic. They toured the Columbarium and Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum. The senators pointed out notable Czechs and Slovaks interred in the mausoleum. Like many others from the Czech Republic, they held Mayor Cermak in high esteem and placed a wreath at the Cermak Mausoleum. The Czech party consisted of four senators: Josef Zoser, Chairman of the Commission; Otakar Veovovsky; Tomas Grulich; Ludik Sezig; and the Commission Secretary, Bronislava Hegrova. Other dignitaries were also in attendance, including Zdenik Lyeka, Director of the Department for Cultural Relations with Czech Communities Living Abroad; Borek Lizec, Czech Deputy Consul; and Miroslav Kraus, Office Manager of the Czech Consulate. The visitors were impressed with

BNC.

During October an important project was completed in the Columbarium. The old oil retort and flooring were removed. A new reinforced floor and a wall were installed, ready for the new retort. Work has also begun on the stained glass windows. The volunteers continue to work on projects throughout the cemetery.

On November 12th President Ray Capek, Beth Raleigh, Phil Roux, and Chuck Hagopian attended a meeting hosted by Partners in Preservation. They were told that BNC will be awarded \$26,000 for the water tank.

Andy Bultas

Winter Meeting and Program

Sunday, January 27, 2008

Klas Restaurant
5734 W. Cermak Road
Cicero, IL

“Historic Cemeteries in the Czech Republic”

An illustrated presentation by Andy Bultas, Ray Capek, and Ken Dvorsky

1:00 pm—1:30 pm Cash bar and Slavic folk music accompanied by the accordion and dulcimer presented by Mazurka Wojciechowska

1:30 pm—2:30 pm Family Style Dinner \$20 per person, reservation required by January 19th

2:30 pm Program, free admission, reservation not required

John Persic will have historic studio photographs from various Czech photographers for sale. Proceeds will be donated to the Columbarium restoration fund.

Questions? Call 708-366-6564 or 847-362-9036

Friends of BNC is a 501c3 organization. All donations are deductible to the full extent of the law and are designated to ongoing restoration at Bohemian National Cemetery.

Make checks payable to:

Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery, January Meeting, 300 Claymoor #2F, Hinsdale, IL 60521-5076

Please Print

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Number attending at \$20 each _____ Amount enclosed _____

Consolidating Czech-American friendship

Members of the U.S. Congress including Representatives Daniel Lipinski and Senator George Voinovich, have called upon their colleagues to join them as members of a Czech Caucus, convened to promote strong cultural connections between our countries and to strengthen the Czech-U.S. alliance. Our Chicago Consul General, Marek Skolil, has asked us to inform our members of this

exciting development and ask if you could raise awareness of this initiative among your senators and representative.

Please encourage your elected officials to contact Rep. Lipinski at 708-837-6190 or Senator Voinovich at 202-224-3353. Of course email or other contacts are surely possible as well. If you don't know your senators or representative, call your local

library or go online to www.congress.org.

Thank you for helping cement Czech and U.S. relations.

Thank you-dekuji vam

It was a beautiful, sunny November 9th when these Friends volunteers came to honor our veterans by placing flags. Strolling among beautiful colored leaves, thinking about each veteran and their service, these volunteers enjoyed serving. Afterwards most of them went for lunch to get better acquainted.

Chuck Betzold
Mr. and Mrs. Roy Brabec
Rosemary Isberner
Nancy & Bruno Leginski
Alice & Tony Mika
Henrietta Bartizal Pons
Anna & Richard Schnedorf

Welcome new members

Marie Betzold
Daniel P. Boyle
Marilyn and Elmer Cerny
Martin Chlapecka
Nada Dobias
John Iltis
James W. Kopriva
Jean Hemzacek Laukant
Kennan Seda
Rosemary L. Tirio

Members notes

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

Adolph Misar (later changed to Misare) was born in Humpolec, Bohemia, in 1866. After marriage to Anna Rehak, born in Chvalovice, Bohemia, in 1872, he fathered six children, two of whom died in childhood in Nymburk, Bohemia. After moving to Pecky, Bohemia, my mother Vlasta Josephina was born in 1903. A miller by trade, Adolph was a staunch Protestant, and was very opposed to the then rulers of Bohemia, Imperial Austria. In January, 1904, he left Bohemia and arrived in Baltimore, MD, where he remained until joined by Anna, sons Otokar (Otto), Adolph, daughter Vlasta, and son Antonin in August,

1905. (Antonin was born shortly after Adolph left Bohemia.)

The re-united family then moved to Milwaukee, WI, where they remained until 1909. Three daughters were born in Milwaukee, including twins, one twin dying as an infant. The family moved to Cicero, IL, in 1909, where Adolph worked as a cabinet maker and carpenter. He fathered three more children, including a second set of twins. He became a U.S. citizen in September, 1909. The family rented a home at 2231 58th Court. In 1922, he and Anna purchased a vacant lot at 2526 59th Avenue in Cicero, upon which Adolph built a new home for his family.

Adolph joined several Czech organizations in the Chicago area, including Lodge Zlata Praha #287 and the Co-op Hall of the Workingmen, a Socialist organization. A heart attack forced his retirement in the early 1930's, and with deteriorating health, he and Anna purchased lot 225 in section 22 of BNC for \$400 in

September 1935. On March 19, 1936 Adolph Misare passed away. Anna joined him there in March 1942. An extensive obituary was written for "Comrade Misar" and his lifelong Socialist history.

When I became interested in genealogy, my sister, Gloria, my brother, Robert, and I began searching for Misar family records. In May 1993, we travelled to the Czech Republic to search for the ancestral home. After locating records in Pecky and locating the Misar residence, we were traveling to Humpolec when our vehicle was struck broadside by a large tour bus near Nymburk. My sister died at the scene, and my brother later in Prague. My wife was hospitalized at the Nymburk hospital. Later, we discussed how ironic it was that my two siblings were fatally injured near the same town in Bohemia where Adolph and Anna's first two children died.

Paul Hohe

Prši z Osvitimi (It's raining from Osvitim)

After 130 years, Bohemian National Cemetery has many stories to tell. Some are found by reading a headstone, others are shared by our families and friends. Others remain a mystery. This story, spurred on by photographs in the Cemetery's centennial commemorative book, is one of the mysteries.

"Tragically, the urns were the unfortunate victims of a burglary in the early 1980's and have remained missing ever since."

Our story begins with two horrific events of the Second World War. Throughout the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, members of Czech Sokols were sent to concentration camps, most notably Osvitim — Auschwitz — in Poland. Sokol organizations were created to encourage physical and mental fitness, and to further Czech patriotism. As a result, the organizations were banned during the Nazi

occupation and many associated with the Sokols were persecuted or killed.

No less shocking was the destruction of Lidice. In 1942, Nazi officer Reinhard Heydrich was ambushed and killed by Czech patriots. The Nazis alleged that the small village of Lidice, Czechoslovakia, harbored the assassins. Though the accusations were baseless, the small town was completely destroyed in retribution. Nazi forces sent women and children to concentration camps, and brutally gunned down every man over the age of 16 before burning the entire village to the ground.

Just two years after the war ended, the American Sokol Organization and Czechoslovak Sokol Organization worked together to memorialize these two events. On June 28, 1947, two unique urns were presented to the Bohemian National Cemetery for safekeeping. One, a pyramid-shaped container housing soil from Lidice; the other, a bronze box that held ashes and soil from the Auschwitz concentration camp, inscribed with the words "Prši z Osvitimi."

A simple ceremony was attended by members of American and Czech Sokols who were in Chicago for a meeting of the organizations—the American Sokol Slet—at Soldier Field. Following the dedication, the Lidice and

Osvitim urns were placed on specially made pedestals in the Cemetery's Columbarium.

Sixty years have passed since the dedication ceremony, and today two empty pedestals remain in the Columbarium. Tragically, the urns were the unfortunate victims of a burglary in the early 1980's and have remained missing ever since.

An ideal—albeit unlikely—end to this story would be the return of the urns and a new dedication ceremony. What I believe is more important, though, is what stories like that of the Lidice and Osvitim urns say about the character of the cemetery and the community that supports it. They reveal a community that is proud of its people, rooted in the present through its deep and honest commitment to grappling with the past. These stories don't require physical reminders, only our willingness to remember them.

Susan Golland

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

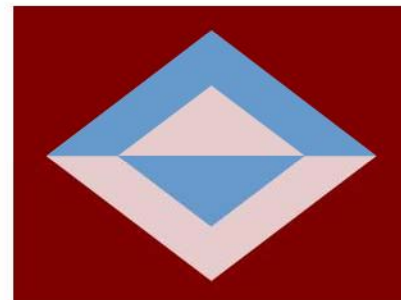
Henrietta Bartizal Pons, Membership Chair

Andrew Bultas, Grants

Sherida Hudak, Newsletter Editor

Anna Schnedorf, Publicity Chair

Sue Zielinski, Webmaster



Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

611 Harvard Lane
Libertyville, IL 60048
Phone: 847-362-9036
E-mail: mdstueck@aol.com



Heritage Happenings

We're on the web
www.friendsofbnc.org



New membership policy for renewals

All memberships will now expire December 31st. Please send in your renewals with this form to remain in good standing! People joining the last ¼ of the year will receive those 3 months as a bonus with their membership year beginning in January. Besides receiving our very interesting newsletter, your membership provides discounts on merchandise and tours, and the satisfaction of knowing you are helping us improve and beautify Bohemian National Cemetery! Friends of BNC is a 501c3 not-for-profit public charity. To make a tax-deductible donation to fund improvements at BNC, please write a separate check with a notation in the subject line. Thank you for your support!

Membership Fees

One year :	\$25 Individual	\$20 Students/Seniors	\$35 Family	\$30 Senior family
Two years :	\$45 Individual	\$35 Students/Seniors	\$60 Family	\$50 Senior family

2008 Membership Application for Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Make checks payable to Friends of BNC and mail to Juli Nelson, Treasurer, 300 Claymore #2F, Hinsdale, IL 60521

Name (please print) _____ Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

(Note: we do not share emails but do use them to communicate about events related to BNC.)