

Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Fall Issue ~ Vol. 7 No. 2

October 2010

carol jean smetana, editor



What's New with Friends of BNC

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:

| | |
|--|---|
| Officers | 2 |
| from the editor's laptop | 2 |
| New Members | 2 |
| Děkuji Vám | 2 |
| Upcoming Events at BNC | 3 |
| Czech Republic Awards Grants to Cemetery & to Friends of BNC | 4 |
| Donations | 4 |
| Keeping Up With Friends | 4 |
| Save the Date | 4 |
| Stories of the Stones | 5 |
| The Purchasing Power of a Dollar and a Half | 6 |
| Membership Renewal Reminder | 8 |

"Promote the historical significance" - our first Mission Statement phrase - surely was front and center at the fascinating presentation by **Carol Jean Smetana** for our August 22nd meeting. Beginning back in Bohemia to explain the animosity to the Catholic Church dating to the 1400s, the rise of the Freethinkers movement, and the story behind the story of the Czech Catholic woman who was refused burial in the Catholic cemetery in 1876 here in Chicago, Carol Jean gave us a new understanding of how our co-founder František Zdrůbek was able to galvanize the Czechs to establish Bohemian National Cemetery in 1877. We learned the story of Freethinker leader Ladimir Klacel, whose life inspired the Chicago Czechs to raise the first monument in the cemetery in 1885 in his memory, and the stories of those buried in the Klacel Circle. Highlighting not only the war monuments but also the beautiful tree stones, angels, and historic buildings, Carol Jean also went into the elaborate plantings of years ago and the various restoration
(continued on page 3)

Live from BNC

Early in June the cemetery sustained severe damage from a rain storm. Three large trees were knocked down, along with many branches. Cemetery personnel picked up the branches and large

limbs; however, the three large trees had to be removed by **Mickey's Tree Service**. The damage was removed in a timely manner and the cemetery remained opened.

On June 28th the cemetery received a **grant of \$4524 from the Czech Republic** for a proposal written by Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery for additional work needed on the water tower. With an additional **contribution from Friends of BNC of \$13,976**, the cemetery was able to repair the tower's leaking water tank. First, the tank was cleaned out, with a mound of dirt removed. Then the inside was reinforced and waterproofed, and the outside bands were tightened. Finally, the **Chicago Water and Tank Company** installed a new liner. In conjunction with this, **Phil Roux** and cemetery workers removed the pipes from the cistern so they could be cleaned and new gaskets installed.

On July 18th the annual **Bohemian National Cemetery picnic** was held. The potato
(continued on page 7)

BNC AND FRIENDS OF BNC RECEIVE GRANTS FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC!



STORY ON PAGE 4

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, HC 69 Box 16, Sapello, NM 87745-9602 or emailed to her at cjsmetana@msn.com.

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Officers of Friends of BNC

President: *Marge Sladek Stueckemann*
 Vice-President: *Andy Bultas*
 Secretary: *Mary Syrup*
 Treasurer: *Juli Nelson*
 Directors: *Martha and Charles Cervenka,*
 Evelyn Krenek Fergle
 Grants Chair: *Andy Bultas*
 Membership: *Henrietta Bartizal Pons*
 Newsletter: *carol jean smetana*
 Publicity: Open and seeking a volunteer
 Webmaster: *Sue Zielinski*



from the editor's laptop

I enjoyed meeting so many of you at our August gathering and am grateful for your kind words about my presentation. During my research for “BNC – Then and Now” I was surprised again and again by the fascinating history of our cemetery. After my presentation, several members shared with me personal stories about family members buried at the cemetery and about their memories of the cemetery decades ago. One man worked summers in the greenhouses when he was a teen-ager. I hope to find out more and share their stories in upcoming issues.

I am excited about our book project (see page 4). We are planning to include familiar and beloved monuments and people associated with the cemetery – but we are also uncovering some forgotten people worth remembering – and we are discovering some fascinating grave markers, too. The Czech Republic has honored us with a grant to help make our vision a reality. Our book will introduce even more people to the unique wonders of BNC.

I'd love to hear your memories of the cemetery and the stories of your ancestors at BNC. I'll be checking my mailboxes!

Na shledanou ~ carol jean smetana
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Welcome to Our New Members!

Carol & Al Hiliger ... Farragut, TN
 Gary Hudik ... Chicago, IL
 Kimberly Kubat-Martin ... Espanola, NM
 Dawn Kunatz ... Kankakee, IL
 Jenny & Anton Llakmani ... Chicago, IL
 Josephine Pleva ... Indianapolis, IN
 Beverly Rehm ... Greenwood Village, CO
 Donna Zapp Reusing ... Braselton, GA
 Ann Sanders & Sherry Mackey ... Chicago, IL
 George Valko ... Chicago, IL

Děkuji Vám!

Bill Hosna for excellent service as our Vice President ...
Andy Bultas our new Vice President.

Our wonderful bakers Linda Kostuba, Katherine Lorenz, Helene Schaeffer, Mary Syrup, and Patty Volkman, who made the Bakery Table such a success with about \$375 in donations to BNC to offset picnic costs ... The picnic had a \$180 profit this year, partly due to our bakery items. Martha Cervenka for organizing it all!

Frank Magallon, author of Chicago's Little Village, for coming to sign copies at BNC and CAC picnics.

Martha & Chuck Cervenka, & Juli Nelson for setting up and hosting the book table at the CAC picnic ... Martha also hosted the table for the CSA Fraternal Life event on August 7th, and Juli staffed the table at the BNC picnic.



What's New with Friends of BNC

(continued from first page)

projects Friends has helped to fund. A cool breeze blew into the entryway of the Columbarium where we were seated, which made it most pleasant. Following the presentation, director **Evelyn Krenek Fergle** presided over our annual election, which resulted in all officers remaining the same except for Vice-President. **Bill Hosna** could no longer serve in that role, and **Andy Bultas** was elected to replace him. Afterwards, we went to the gatehouse to have refreshments, pausing to look at the beautiful planting done recently by **Gethsemane Gardens** both on the inside area and also the entryway of the gatehouse.

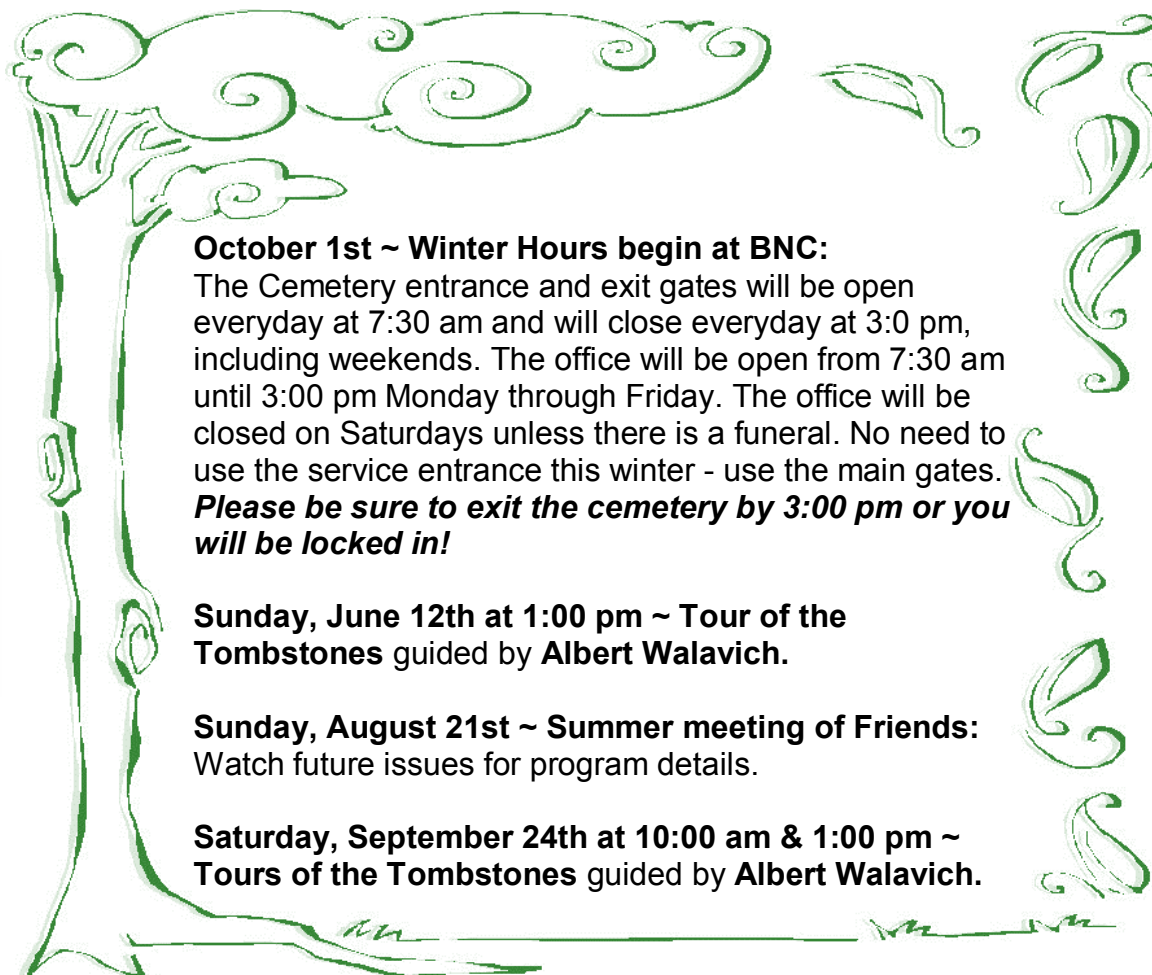
Rain didn't dampen our fun at the **BNC picnic** on July 18th, with brisk sales of baked items and also of **Frank Magallon's** new book on Czech California plus other items at our book table. The weather was sunny and hot for the **Czechoslovak American Congress picnic** on August 1st. Again, we had a table to spread the word about BNC and our Friends' activities. Then on August 7th, we helped host attendees from all over the United States who had come for the **CSA Fraternal Life Get-Together**. Two buses brought the visitors to BNC, where they enjoyed a picnic and driving tours, then gathered in the Large Ceremony Hall (chapel) in the Crematorium

building, where I gave a brief talk on the history of the cemetery. The president of the Cedar Rapids Czech National Cemetery and his wife were especially charmed by our BNC, and we had a very good response to the sales table hosted by **Martha Cervenka**.

Plans for Friends activities in 2011 are already taking shape. Do save the date for our next meeting on **Sunday, January 23rd**. More details in the January newsletter! Mark your calendar for the **spring fund-raising gala on Sunday, May 1st**, at Ashton Place in Willowbrook and see the Maypole dances enjoyed by our ancestors back in the old country!

Marge Sladek Stueckemann

Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery



October 1st ~ Winter Hours begin at BNC:

The Cemetery entrance and exit gates will be open everyday at 7:30 am and will close everyday at 3:00 pm, including weekends. The office will be open from 7:30 am until 3:00 pm Monday through Friday. The office will be closed on Saturdays unless there is a funeral. No need to use the service entrance this winter - use the main gates. ***Please be sure to exit the cemetery by 3:00 pm or you will be locked in!***

Sunday, June 12th at 1:00 pm ~ Tour of the Tombstones guided by **Albert Walavich**.

Sunday, August 21st ~ Summer meeting of Friends: Watch future issues for program details.

Saturday, September 24th at 10:00 am & 1:00 pm ~ Tours of the Tombstones guided by **Albert Walavich**.

Czech Republic Awards Grants to Cemetery and to Friends of BNC

The Czech Consulate General in Chicago recently announced that both Bohemian National Cemetery and Friends of BNC are recipients of grants from the Czech Government. The cemetery received a grant of \$4,524 for further restoration work on the water tower. Friends received \$1,784 for the book we are developing about Bohemian National Cemetery. These annual grants are made by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Czech-American community to support Czech cultural heritage abroad.

Friends' book will highlight the

unique aspects of the cemetery. The history and culture of the Czech and Slovak communities will be an integral part, as they are closely intertwined with the story of BNC. However, we will try to appeal to a broad range of potential readers by focusing on buildings and monuments that are of interest due to design, symbolism, or the person or event commemorated. We are already gathering stories and photos, with an eye on a target publication date of January 2012. If you have old photos of the cemetery, suggestions for markers, people, or

stories to be included, or are interested in working on the book in some way, please contact Carol Jean Smetana, who is coordinating the project.

Friends thanks our wonderful Grant Committee of Andy Bultas, Juli Nelson, and Marge Stueckemann for their successful grant proposals on behalf of both the cemetery and Friends. We also are grateful to the government of the Czech Republic for recognizing the value of our proposals and for their support of our organization and of BNC in this and so many other ways!

Donations

Your gifts help us fulfill our mission ~ thank you.

Sponsors (\$100 - \$499)

CSA Fraternal Life
Louann Devine

Harris Jewelers/Casa de Oro Custom Design

Kimberly Kubat-Martin *in memory of 15 relatives at BNC*

Donors (\$25 - \$99)

CSA August BNC Tour Participants
Margaret Konigsfeld

Lodge DuPage Pioneers #409

Carrie Ruzicka

Meribeth & John Tooke

KEEPING UP WITH FRIENDS JOIN US!

Sunday, January 23rd, 2011 ~ Friends Meeting at Klas Restaurant

Frank Magallon, author of *Chicago's Little Village*, will present a program on Czech California. Copies of his book will be available for purchase. Cash bar opens at 12:30 pm, dinner (cost approximately \$25) at 1:00 pm. Program will begin around 2:00 pm and is free to all - no need to attend dinner to enjoy the program!

More information in the next newsletter.



BNC Mayfest ~ Kde domov můj?
Sunday May 1st, 2011, at 1:00 pm

Friends Spring Fundraiser

Ashton Place, Willowbrook, Illinois

Proceeds will go toward the restoration of the Mallin paintings in the Large Ceremony Hall in the Crematorium.

Dinner ~ Silent Auction ~ Maypole Dances

... more details in the next newsletter ...



Stories of the Stones by carol jean smetana

Who were Kacena's Night Owls? That's the question Betty Schultz

asked when she sent me this photo of her grandfather with a cigar



in one hand and a large beer stein in the other (seated 3rd from left).

Betty's grandparents, Thomas and

Anna Dvorak, were born in Bohemia, married in Chicago by Freethinker František Zdrůbek, and rest in peace at Bohemian National Cemetery.

The other Night Owls are unidentified. Do you recognize any of them? Does the group's name sound familiar? Here are some possible clues.

In 1920, the Dvoraks lived in

Chicago's Česká Kalifornie neighborhood at 1507 S. Keeler Avenue. About half a block east, at 15th and Kedvale, lived the family of Joseph Kacena, saloon keeper, and his father, Joseph, a retired saloon keeper. Perhaps they are in the photo with Thomas Dvorak, enjoying beer and cigars and concertina music in the backyard.

The photo was probably taken in

Can any of our readers help solve the mystery of Kacena's Night Owls?

the 1910s, when Thomas Dvorak was in his 40s and Joseph Kacena, Sr., was in his 50s. In the 1920s, after prohibition became law, barkeep Joseph Kacena, Jr., went into politics. He rose through the Democratic ranks and served as alderman of the 23rd ward from 1935 until 1947. He died shortly after

leaving office and is the third generation of his family buried at



Bohemian National. So Kacena may be a familiar name to some of you.

Returning to the 1910s, there was a *hostinec* (Czech for saloon or tavern) called Night Owl's Nest at

3301 W. 22nd Street at the corner of Spaulding Avenue. The *majitel* (proprietor) was Henry

Dvorak. Was Henry related to Thomas? Perhaps, but Dvorak is a fairly common Czech name. But how common in Chicago's Czech community was the term Night Owls? Does anyone know?

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Did you know that the Cemetery used to charge each lot owner an annual grass-cutting fee of \$1.50? Reprinted below is a BNC hand-out sent to me by Friends member **Victor Havel**, of Ennis, Texas. Victor wrote that it was given to his grandmother Franziska Maresova Havel when her husband Antonin Havel was buried at Bohemian National Cemetery in 1936. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. It gives us pause to think about the behind-the-scenes daily work that is part of caring for the graves of our loved ones and keeping our cemetery beautiful. *carol jean smetana*

The Purchasing Power of a Dollar and a Half

The **BOHEMIAN NATIONAL CEMETERY** consists of 126 acres of land. Of this, 20 acres (15.8%) are occupied by roads, 9 acres (7.2%) are occupied by buildings, the balance, 97 acres (77%) are almost entirely subdivided and for the sake of beauty must be maintained.

To properly **MAINTAIN** the grounds, a weed control program is put into effect.

The spraying of these 97 acres begins about the middle of April when the plantain is starting to sprout and spraying must stop about 1st of May or after the graves are planted as the drifting mist will kill the grave decorations.

In this **SPRAYING** operation, 244 gallons of **WEEDONE (2-4-D)** are used.

In addition 4 pieces of equipment, 2 tractors and 2 trailer carts are tied up for this project. One cart has a 550 gallon capacity and the other a 275 gallon capacity. Also 800 feet of garden hose to reach deep into the sections and 4 high

pressure nozzles are also required.

The **GRASS CUTTING** season extends from early May until the latter part of October, an average of 24 weeks with each area cut about once a week. To mow grass on an area of 97 acres, a large fleet of power mowers must be available at all times. Tractor type mowers are used in wide open areas where movability is no problem and in sections where there is more lawn space. Next, 20" hand type mowers mow the lawn left open by the tractor type mowers cutting up to the graves and monuments. Finally 10" power trimmers make the final cut, trimming the grass around trees, evergreens, monuments, headstones, around and in between planted graves where the larger mowers cannot manipulate.

These **MOWERS** must be maintained, oiled, cleaned and sharpened daily. New blades and motors are replaced and overhauled during the cutting season.

These mowers operate 8 hours a day, 40

hours a week. Statistics show that even though it pulverizes the Autumn leaves as well as cutting the grass, the average power mower used around the home operates only 40 hours per year. In retrospect, our mowers do as much cutting in one season as the average home owner cuts with his mower in 24 years.

Our charge to the lot owner for cutting grass for 1 grave for 1 year is \$1.50 which amounts to 6½¢ per grave per cutting. This 6½¢ also includes besides the cutting of the grass, spraying of the lot with 2-4-D, raking the leaves in the Fall, paving and maintaining the roads in repair so that the lot owners have access to their lot and graves, maintaining the fence for protection of your property and also snow removal in Winter time.

ALL THIS FOR A DOLLAR AND A HALF!



Live from BNC

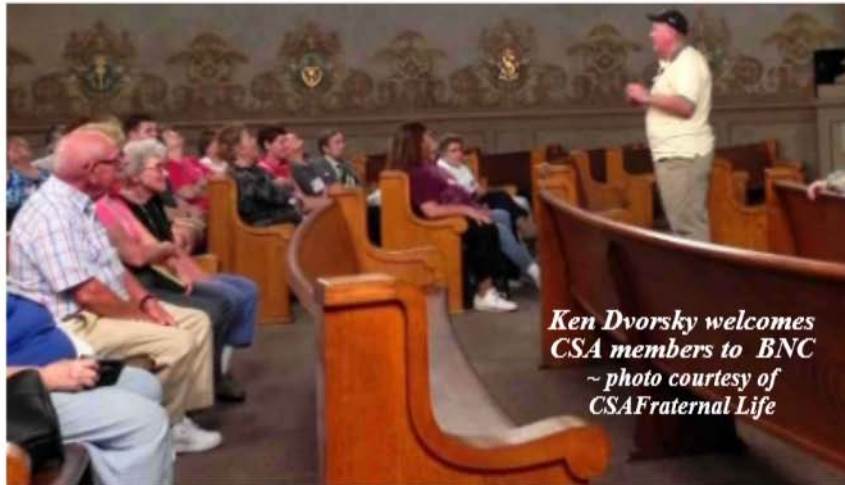
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pancake and sausage tent was manned by **Frank Saballus** from **Klas Restaurant**. Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery handled the bakery tent, which was filled with homemade Bohemian bakery made by **Linda Kostuba** and **Patty Volkman**. Also there were stands with watermelon, pop and other items. There also was a one-man band. Although the picnic started with a brief rainstorm, the rest of the day was beautiful.

On July 22nd **Juanita Tucker** of the **Petersen Pulaski Industrial Council** rented our gatehouse for a fund raiser. Tents were assembled and tables and chairs set up in front of the gatehouse. Approximately 100 people enjoyed the affair, which was proclaimed a success by the organizers.

Ken Dvorsky, President of CSA District Council 12, arranged with the cemetery to hold a tour and luncheon on August 7th for over **70 CSA delegates** attending a Get-Together and convention in Lisle, Illinois. The delegates represented several states, including

Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Missouri, Iowa, Texas, Colorado, and Illinois. The delegates, along with the director and president of the Czech Cemetery in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, arrived at Bohemian



Ken Dvorsky welcomes CSA members to BNC ~ photo courtesy of CSA Fraternal Life



New plantings at BNC

National Cemetery around noon and enjoyed a luncheon of potato pancakes, sausages and Bohemian bakery provided by Frank Saballus from the Klas Resturant in Cicero, Illinois. **Ray Capek, Jerry Gaydusek, Paul Kaderabek, Chuck**

Michalek and Andy Bultas conducted a personal tour for the delegates, highlighting the Cermak and Masaryk mausoleums, the war memorials, and the Columbarium. **Marge Stueckemann**, president of

Friends of BNC, presented a brief history of Bohemian National Cemetery in the Crematorium building. Ken stated that the delegates were highly complimentary in their praise of Bohemian National Cemetery. They were amazed at how beautiful the cemetery looked and how many interesting monuments there were, especially the limestone trees. Kudos to Ken Dvorsky for his excellent coordination of the highly successful tour.

Gethsemane Gardens has planted over 100 yews around the cemetery buildings, including the gatehouse and administration building. They also planted many flowers around the cemetery.

As you can see, many various groups of people utilized our cemetery buildings and grounds. All who have a chance should make visiting the cemetery a priority, so that you too may enjoy its beauty.

Andy Bultas

Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

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we're on the web
www.friendsofbnc.org



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

Your membership in Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery is vital to the preservation of our cemetery. As a member, you will receive our quarterly newsletter and be entitled to discounts on merchandise and our popular "Tours of the Tombstones." Above all, you will enjoy the satisfaction of knowing you are helping to improve and beautify Bohemian National Cemetery.

Our membership year is January - December. This means that **all memberships, except those renewed for two years last year, will expire December 31, 2010.** New members joining in the last quarter of a year (Sept.-Dec.) receive those 3 months as a bonus, and their membership year begins the following January.

Please send in your renewal now!

Memberships:

One year: \$25 individual; \$35 family;
\$20 student or senior; \$30 senior family.

Two years: \$45 individual; \$60 family;
\$35 student or senior; \$50 senior family.

Make checks payable to Friends of BNC.

Mail with coupon to:

FOBNC c/o Miss Juli Nelson
300 Claymoor #2F
Hinsdale, IL 60521-5076

Membership Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code (+ 4) _____ - _____

E-mail _____

Type of Membership _____

Friends of BNC is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public charity. To make a tax-deductible donation to fund improvements at BNC, please write a separate check with a notation on the memo line. Thank you.