

# Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Fall Issue ~ Vol. 8 No. 2

October 2011

carol jean smetana, 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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## Friends of BNC Receives Grant from the Czech Republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery was awarded a \$2329 grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. The grant funds will be used to offset costs of our recent MayFest fundraiser, thus freeing up more money for the Ceremony Hall Art Restoration project.

program run by the Czech Ministry abroad. to support Czech cultural heritage



The grant comes from a unique

We are grateful to the Czech government for their continued support of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery and our mission.

Congratulations and thank you to Friends board members **Andy Bultas** and **Juli Nelson**, who wrote the grant proposal.

## What's New with Friends of BNC

Clean, bright and back to the historic colors - our **Phase One restoration** of the beautiful Mallin artwork in the Ceremony Hall will be starting any day now! Photos will be shared as soon as that first day's work begins, with regular updates on our webpage, [www.friendsofbnc.org](http://www.friendsofbnc.org). Stay informed, and share the excitement as we see this historic place begin to return to

its former glory. The grant we received from the Czech government (see article above) frees up more of our treasury funds for the restoration.

Did you ever go to Riverview, the amusement park that was a big hit when some of us were children? It had rides, shows, cotton candy and fun. **John Mallin** actually did a mural at the park in the early 1900's, his

first commission when he arrived from Moravia. He also decorated banks on "Bohemian Wall Street", the name given to Cermak Road as it passed through Cicero and Berwyn, because there were so many banks there where our thrifty ancestors deposited their savings. Come and hear granddaughter **Kathy Mallin** and Art Institute student **Erin Kennealy** explain and show us

*(continued on page 3)*

## Live from BNC

In July **Andy Bultas** and **John Illse** discovered that shut-off valves were mislabeled on a cemetery map, creating confusion as to which valves controlled the water supplies to the cemetery grounds and the crematorium/columbarium building. The water supply to the crematorium/columbarium was inadvertently shut off, and when the valve was reopened, there was insufficient water pressure to the building. A

plumbing firm was consulted and they gave an estimate of \$32,000 to run a new water line to the building.

John Illse felt he could fix the problem by replacing the old shut-off valve. This required extensive work on a pit by the old potting shed. Andy Bultas, **Chuck Michalek**, **Jerry Gaydusek**, **Chuck Cervenka** and John Illse worked on repairing pipes and replacing the

shut-off valve, which involved pumping water out of the pit. **Sammy**, **Rob Plummer**, **Paul**, John, Jerry, Chuck Michalek, and Andy tore out the fence around the pit and removed the concrete collar. Sammy, operating the end loader, enlarged the pit by removing the dirt surrounding the valve, which enabled John to go down into the pit and install a new valve, elbow and union.

*(continued on page 7)*

## 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, 167 County Road A4A, Sapello, NM 87745-5026 or emailed to her at [cjsmetana@msn.com](mailto:cjsmetana@msn.com).

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## Officers of Friends of BNC

President: Marge Sladek  
Stueckemann

Vice-President: Andy Bultas

Secretary: Helen Gaydusek

Treasurer: Juli Nelson

Directors:

Martha & Charles Cervenka,

Evelyn Krenek Fergle

Grants Chair: Andy Bultas

Membership:

Henrietta Bartizal Pons

Newsletter: carol jean smetana

Publicity: Helene Schaeffer

Webmaster: carol jean smetana



## from the editor's laptop

*It's back to black-and-white for the hard copy of this issue of Heritage Happenings. If you enjoyed seeing our July issue in color (a result of a mistake by our printer), remember you can see every issue in color on our website, [www.friendsofbnc.org](http://www.friendsofbnc.org). For the most recent issue, go to*

*[www.friendsofbnc.org/currentnewsletters.htm](http://www.friendsofbnc.org/currentnewsletters.htm). While you're online, be sure to browse our website. And we now have a Facebook page, too. Check us out.*

*In September I attended the annual conference of the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) in Springfield, Illinois. Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery participated in FGS's Society Showcase, setting up a table of information about our society in the vendor hall. It was interesting to talk with the people who stopped to browse our display of photos of our cemetery: its monuments, buildings, statues, and a special presentation of our Ceremony Hall Art Restoration project. Two people came by because they had Bohemian national cemeteries in their towns in Iowa and Minnesota.*

*One visitor to our table had no connection with BNC but she nevertheless wanted to thank our organization for our work: "My ancestors are buried at a cemetery with a society. I think that's neat." That's how I feel about BNC: some of my ancestors are buried there, and I'm proud to be a member of Friends, doing what I can to help preserve the cemetery.*

*Na shledanou!  
carol jean smetana*



## Membership Notice!

Memberships to Friends of BNC are set on a yearly January - December basis. If your membership expires this December, you will find an insert in this issue of our newsletter asking you to renew your membership. Please take the time to do that now, so you won't miss an issue of *Heritage Happenings* and will not miss out on any of our news or upcoming events. Thank you for your continuing membership and support!

## Welcome to Our New Members!

**Viola Mrazek Kline** ... Scottsdale, AZ

**Deborah Molinero** ... Varna, IL

**Margaret Hermanek Peaslee** ... Camp Hill, PA

**Charles Slamar, Jr.** ... Glenview, IL

**Janet Vitt** ... Berwyn, IL



## Donations

(from June, July & August)

### Sponsors (\$100—\$499)

Bevel Granite  
Pat DeVoe  
Marge Stueckemann *in honor of a Friend*

### Donors (\$25—\$99)

Robert Kopecky  
Blanche Kucera  
James Rogan  
Marge Stueckemann *in honor of Mary Syrup*

**Thank you all for your generosity.  
Your donations help preserve and enhance Bohemian National Cemetery.**

## What's New with Friends of BNC

(continued from first page)

examples of the wide range of Mallin's work. Join us at our **Friends Winter Meeting** on Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>. Cash bar will be at 1:00 pm and dinner at 1:30 pm (\$25 prepaid), or come at 3:00 pm for just the program at no charge. The beautiful Sokol Slavsky theater (now the Olympic), St. Procopius, and of course an update on our own Mallin masterpieces at BNC will help us all understand just how important this artist was not only to us but also to Chicago as a

whole. (See back page for reservation form.)

Our big canopy and large sign were brought out for both the BNC and the Czechoslovak American Congress picnics with good book sales at both events. Smelling the delicious potato pancakes frying is always a plus for those at the book tables. We also hosted two very successful Tours of the Tombstones on September 24<sup>th</sup> with 40 present for the 10:00 am tour and 25 for the

1:00 pm tour.

Congratulations to our new officers and committee chairs elected and introduced at the summer meeting. **Helen Gaydusek** is our new secretary, with all our other officers graciously being willing to continue serving.

**Marge Sladek Stueckemann**  
President

## Friends Summer Meeting "Helen Sclair, Our Cemetery Lady"

Our August 21st, 2011, meeting was called to order in the Ceremony Hall of the crematorium/columbarium by President Marge Sladek Stueckemann at 1:10 pm. The main order of business was the annual election of officers. Officers elected for the coming year are: Marge Stueckemann—President, Andrew Bultas—Vice-President, Helen Gaydusek—Secretary, and Juli Nelson—Treasurer. The Board of Directors are Charles Cervenka, Martha Cervenka, and Evelyn Krenek Fergle. President Stueckemann thanked outgoing secretary Mary Syrup for her years of dedicated service.

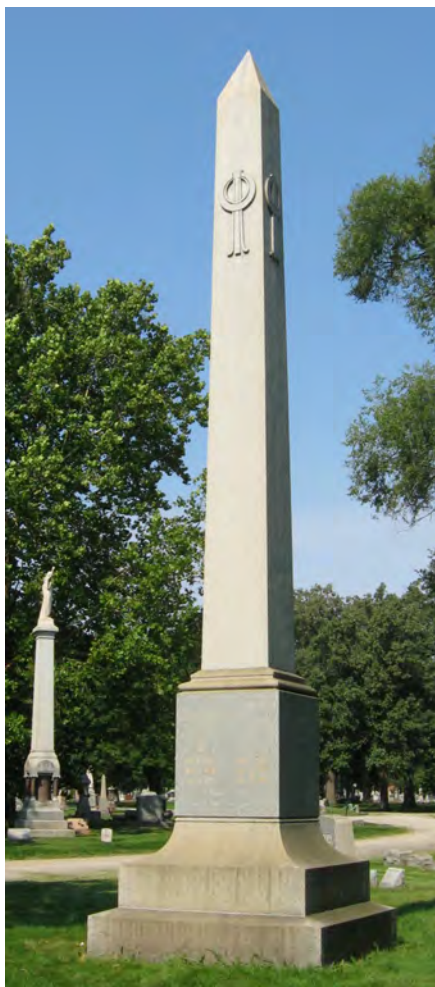
~ **Helenka Gaydušková**

As we approached the entry of the Ceremony Hall at the summer meeting, we were greeted with burning candles, miniature caskets, a huge stuffed spider, and unusual "Helen hats," all displayed on tables just inside where the pews begin. The presentation, "Helen Sclair, Our Cemetery Lady," featured multiple pictures of Helen and a fascinating narrative of Helen's life told by cemetery employee Rob Plummer. He described Helen's very interesting career as a self-proclaimed "advocate for the dead", as well as her extensive book collection on funerary customs that was donated to the Newberry Library, and showed pictures of the artifacts she collected that now grace the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. We placed a bouquet of flowers in her honor on her gravestone. The 60 attendees left with a far better understanding of this fascinating woman.

~ **Marge Sladek Stueckemann**

## Stories of the Stones: The Jan Kryl Family Monument

by carol jean smetana



Remember the photo in our last issue of the two young brothers, Augie and Joe Minarik, sitting in front of the Kryl gravestone marker? Did you imagine from the photo that the marker was actually a tall obelisk, one of the tallest family monuments in Bohemian National Cemetery? The obelisk, representing a ray of sunlight, is an example of Egyptian Revival architecture, popular in the period 1820-1850 and again in the 1920s with the advent of Art Deco style and the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922.

On the base of the monument, in bas-relief, is the name of the family patriarch, Jan Kryl. He and his wife

Josefa and their six children emigrated from Bohemia (but not all at the same time) towards the end of the nineteenth century. In 1905, Jan and two of his sons, Jan, Jr., and Alexander, bought the three cemetery lots where the obelisk now stands.

There are 16 names engraved on the four sides of the stone block just below the obelisk, including those of the three purchasers and their wives. Also on the stone are the names of Diane Minarik's great-grandparents Josef and Aloisie (Louisa) Minarik, who immigrated in 1883. Why are they here? One reason is that Jan Kryl, Jr., married Josef and Aloisie's oldest daughter Louise. (Louise's brother August Minarik was Diane's grandfather.)

The size of the monument suggests that the Kryl family indeed realized the American immigrant dream. Although Jan Kryl, Sr.'s death certificate lists his occupation as "retired farmer"—in the 1900 census he is a dairy farmer in McHenry County—other sources suggest he was a stone carver who passed his skills down to at least three of his sons, Bohumir, Alexander, and Jan, Jr. His fourth son Frank was a musician, and in fact Bohumir gave up a promising career as a stone carver to become a musician. Bohumir (who sculpted a Ben Hur statue at the home General Lew Wallace, the author of *Ben Hur*) was persuaded by John Phillip Sousa to pursue a career in music and became a world-renowned cornet virtuoso. He found success as a soloist, a band leader, and a financial executive.

Bohumir Kryl is reputed to be the first Bohemian musician to make a phonograph recording. So I understand how this might have come about (the article is from *The Oregonian* of December 4, 1910; Jan Kryl, Sr., died November 21, 1910):

### DYING MESSAGE RECORDED

Father on Deathbed Talks Into Phonograph to Children.

CHICAGO, Dec. 2.—After dictating into a phonograph a last message to his children, John Kryl, a sculptor, 71 years old, died Friday.

Seeing that the end was near and fearing that he would not be able to see and speak to his five children, Kryl asked that a phonograph be brought. This was done and the father spoke in the language of the home land, Bohemia, his parting words, telling his children that, after a long life, he was ready to die.

He bid them all farewell, and within six hours was dead.

I wonder if one of the Kryl descendants still has that phonograph recording? Wouldn't that be a treasure, to be able to hear your great-great-grandfather's voice?

What about the patriarch's namesake, Jan Kryl, Jr., who married Louisa Minarik? "J.Kryl" appears in the 1900 Chicago *Adresář*—a directory of Bohemian businessmen, tradesmen and societies—as the owner of the Pilsen Foundry and Iron Works, located at 605 W. 22nd Street in Chicago:

### Slévárny.

Pilsen Foundry, 605—609 w. 22nd street.

J. Kryl, majitel. K. A. Bitza, řídítel.

Pilsen Foundry & Iron Works

zhotovují všeho druhú železné práce na stavby.

Slévárna: 605-607-609 záp. 22. ulice

Telefon Canal 284.



According to the State of Illinois's *Ninth Annual Report of the Factory Inspectors*, the Pilsen Foundry employed 12 workers in 1901. In 1905 it was "incorporated, with a capital of \$10,000 to do a foundry and construction business" (*The Foundry*, Volume 26, No. 12, March 1905, Cleveland, Ohio). The 1906 *Directory of Directors in the City of Chicago* lists Bohumir Kryl as the President and John Kryl as the Secretary, Treasurer and Manager of Pilsen Foundry & Iron Works. That same year John Kryl signed a contract with the Bohemian National Cemetery Association for \$485 to do the iron work associated with remodeling the entrance gateway to the cemetery. This is the gate we pass through today.

John Kryl and the Pilsen Foundry played another important role in the physical appearance of our cemetery. In 1915, the cemetery board accepted the bid from the Pilsen Foundry for the installation of

columbaria in the new crematorium building. Next time you visit the crematorium/columbarium, take a look at the white-enamel-lined niches in the room in the northeast part of the columbarium area. They are the work of the Pilsen Foundry.

The Pilsen Foundry reveals another connection between the Kryl and Minarik families. The 1910 Chicago city directory entry for the foundry lists John Kryl as the secretary of the company—and his father-in-law Joseph Minarik as its president.

John Kryl and his wife Louisa Minarik Kryl had a daughter Louise and three sons, John Kryl, Jr., Joseph, and Alexander. John Kryl was traveling in Europe when he was taken ill. He sailed back to the United States, arriving in New York City on July 1, 1921. He died six weeks later, at the age of 53, on August 15, 1921, from chronic bronchitis and a pulmonary abscess. He was buried in the family plot.

### Death Takes John Kryl, Who Became Ill While in Europe

JOHN KRYL, 2405 South Lawndale avenue, president of the Pilsen Foundry and Iron works, a member of the Bohemian Arts club and a member of Austin commandery.

Knights Templar, and Oriental Consistory, died yesterday. Mr. Kryl was taken ill while touring Europe. Realizing the seriousness of his condition, he hurried home, arriving in Chicago a month ago. He was 53 years old.



The widow, Mrs. Louise Kryl, survives with a daughter, Miss Louise Kryl, and three sons, John

JOHN KRYL. [Wallinger Photo.]

Kryl Jr., Joseph, and Alexander Kryl, three brothers, Bohumir Kryl, a musician of note, Alexander and Frank Kryl, and a sister, Miss Anna Kryl.

The funeral will be held Thursday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock, from the home, and will be conducted with Masonic rites.

## Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery

**Note: New Fall and Winter Hours now in effect.**

**Office is open Monday through Friday  
7:30 am - 3:00 pm.**

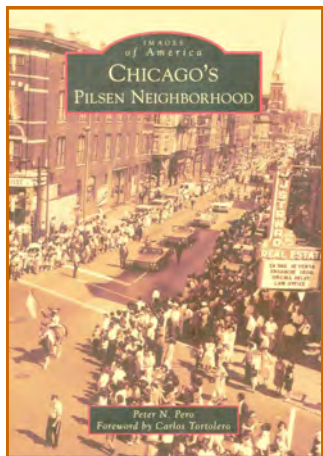
**Grounds are open daily 7:30 am - 3:00 pm.**

**Saturday, June 2nd, 2012, at 10:00 am & 1:00 pm ~  
Tours of the Tombstones guided by  
Albert Walavich**

**Sunday, August 19th, 2012 -  
Friends Summer Meeting at BNC**



## Two New Items For Sale!

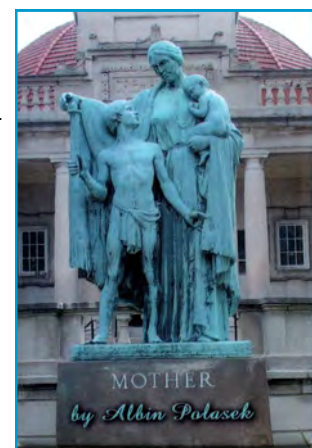


**Chicago's Pilsen Neighborhood** by Peter N. Pero is another publication in the Arcadia series *Images of America*. The softcover book uses nearly 200 photographs to tell the story of the neighborhood and the diverse ethnic groups who shaped its character. The 128 pages of the book are divided into eight chapters: "Born out of Industry," "People of Pilsen," "Pilsen Worships," "Education," "Business and Enterprise," "Celebrating the Arts," "Community Organizations," and "Street Life."

\$18 each for members  
plus \$5 shipping for the first book and \$2 for each additional book

Our full-color **Mother Magnet** depicts Albin Polášek's famous statue *The Mother* that stands in front of the crematorium/columbarium building. The magnet is four and one-eighth inches high by two and one-eighth inches wide.

\$4 each for members  
plus \$2 shipping for the first magnet and \$1 for each additional magnet



Ship to: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Pilsen books x \$18 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ + shipping \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Mother magnets x \$4 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ + shipping \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total check/credit card amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Send order form and check or credit card**

**information to:**

**Juli Nelson**

**300 Claymoor #2F**

**Hinsdale, IL 60521-5076**

*For credit card payment (Visa, Master Card, Discover, American Express), include:*

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

Security code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



## Live from BNC

(continued from first page)

The water supply to the crematorium/columbarium is now restored, with greater pressure than before. This work, led by John Illse, saved the cemetery \$32,000.00.

Andy Bultas, Chuck Cervenka, John Illse, Jerry Gaydusek, **Chuck Betzold**, and Chuck Michalek also worked on the pump house and the pit across from it, which contains the third shut-off valve from the water tower to the cemetery grounds. John, Andy, and Chuck Cervenka continued working on the cistern across the road from the water tower. Sammy used the end-loader to widen the area around the cistern so there would be access to the valve so it could be worked on. John had to go down into the cistern to drill a hole in the top of the valve in order to make a tool to shut the valve off. John now has a tool that can turn the valve on and off. John and Andy worked on opening up the water flow to the cistern that feeds the water tower. After digging out a lot of silt, the water started flowing into the cistern with a greater force than before. John then pumped the water into the tower but water started to leak from the water tower. Everything was shut off and **Ray Ortiz** (who installed the liner) was called. He came out and stated that the pipe bringing water up into the tower was cracked. Ray will submit a estimate to Phil on what the cost will be to replace the pipe.

John Illse over the past few months has replaced the majority of the pipes under the pumps in the pump house as most of them were cracked or broken. Due to his work it has been possible to at least get the water to

the tower. After evaluating all the work being done to restore getting water to flow from the water tower to the cemetery grounds, it was felt that the electricity in the pump house should be brought up to date.

In mid-September, **Duro of Mulroy Excavating and Demolition, Inc.**, gave the cemetery, at no charge, a new heavy duty sump pump to replace the failing pump in the basement of the north gatehouse. John Illse installed the new pump and ran a new drain line, and the sump pump is now working fine.

John Illse, Andy Bultas and Chuck Cervenka replaced spigots and pipes in sections 3 and 26. John also repaired a broken water line in section 26.

John and Duro have completed the installation of a new cistern at the east end of the lagoon. They will finish this project by digging an inlet to let the water flow into the new cistern when there are heavy rain falls and melting snow. This should prevent flooding of the road south of the crematorium/columbarium.

In August, John Illse, Andy Bultas and Chuck Cervenka removed the clogged aerator on the west side of the lagoon and cleaned it so it now works properly. Chuck Cervenka, Chuck Michalek, Chuck Betzold, and John Illse have been regularly throwing pellets into the lagoon to get rid of algae. These pellets, purchased by Chuck Cervenka, seem to be working, as the algae is slowly receding.

July and August brought severe storms to the area, blowing down many branches and

even some trees. Chuck Michalek, **Martha Cervenka**, Jerry Gaydusek, Chuck Betzold, and **Glenn Spachman** removed branches from the grounds, carrying them to the roadside to be picked up. An early August storm was so severe that a tree service was called in to help with the clean-up.

In August Chuck Michalek and his friend **Mike** set up a scaffold in front of the office building in order to put blocks up on the ledges to prevent pigeons from nesting there. They also scraped and power washed the ceiling area and then dismantled the scaffold.

**Linda Kostuba** worked in the crematorium/columbarium repairing three vacuum cleaners and then cleaned the office area and flower room in the office building. **Ken Dvorsky** helped Linda get some equipment she needed.

On August 17<sup>th</sup>, Chuck Michalek and Chuck Betzold placed signs, made by Chuck Betzold, around the cemetery, which indicated "No Parking," "This Way Out," etc. Chuck Michalek's friend Mike scraped and painted window frames on the north gatehouse.

As you can see, a lot of work has been done at the cemetery. The new winter hours are now in force. The cemetery is open from 7:30 am to 3:00 pm. I strongly suggest visiting the cemetery to enjoy all the beauty it holds. It is historically old but beautiful.

**Andy Bultas**  
Vice-President

## Děkuji Vám!

### Set up for book tables - BNC picnic & CAC picnic in Brookfield

Chuck and Martha Cervenka (helped sell, too)  
Juli Nelson (helped sell, too)

### Presenter at summer meeting

Rob Plummer

### Publicity

Helene Schaeffer ~ welcome as our new publicity coordinator

### Master bakers for BNC picnic and the summer meeting

Linda Kostuba  
Kathryn Lorenz  
Mary Syrup  
Patty Volkman

### Hosts for BNC book tables

Frank Magallon (BNC and CAC picnics)  
Helene Schaeffer (CAC picnic)  
Marge Sladek Stueckemann (BNC and CAC picnics)

### Secretaries

Mary Syrup ~ we are grateful for your service as secretary  
Helen Gaydusek ~ welcome as our new secretary

### Tour banners on BNC fence

Chuck Betzold

### Creators of new membership brochure and cemetery map

Carol Jean Smetana  
Joel Tassin

*Friends of Bohemian  
National Cemetery*

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Libertyville, IL 60048

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



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



**Join Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery at our WINTER MEETING  
Featuring a presentation on Bohemian-American artist John A. Mallin  
by Kathy Mallin and Erin Kennealy**

Learn how our beloved artist of the Ceremony Hall also influenced many aspects of Chicago culture from Riverview Amusement Park where he did a mural in the early 1900s, to important banks, including one whose owner now rests at BNC, plus the beautiful Sokol Slavsky (Olympic) theater. Kathy, Mallin's granddaughter, and Erin, a Master's candidate at the Art Institute of Chicago doing her thesis on Mallin, will explain some of his special techniques and the art world of the first half of the 20th century. Make your reservations today!

**Place:** Klas Restaurant, 5734 W Cermak Rd, Cicero, IL  
**Date:** SUNDAY, JANUARY 29<sup>th</sup> 2012  
**Cost:** \$25 includes lunch, tax, and tip (no cost for meeting only)  
**Time:** 1:00 pm cash bar; 1:30 pm for lunch, 3:00 pm for meeting only  
**More Info:** Marge Stueckemann - 847-362-9036

For credit card payment (Visa, Master Card,  
Discover, American Express), include:

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

Security code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending @ \$25 each: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Send with check or credit card information to: Juli Nelson, 300 Claymoor #2F, Hinsdale, IL 60521**