

# Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Winter Issue ~ Vol. 8 No. 3

January 2012

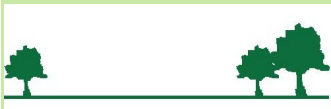
carol jean smetana, editor

## 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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## What's New with Friends of BNC

Looking at that scaffolding, seeing the results of the cleaning process, and realizing we really ARE going to restore our treasured Ceremony Hall back to its original beauty - what a

thrill. We're predicting that Phase One will be completed in late January or maybe early February. The title for the fundraising campaign, "Restoring the Past for the Future," helps express our

desire to enhance the events held now and far into the future. We are in the process of planning a kick-off event to showcase the work so far, probably in May. More

*(continued on page 3)*



*A delegation of officials and educators from Prague, Czech Republic, enjoy a visit to Bohemian National Cemetery, accompanied by representatives from Friends of BNC, and CSAGSI.*

## Live from BNC

On October 4, 2011, vandals toppled almost 100 monuments and statues in the cemetery, shattering the hands and other delicate parts of the statues. **Chuck Betzold** photographed and cataloged all the damage. After attempts to notify the lot owners, **Chuck, Jerry Gaydusek,** and

cemetery employees **Ed Vevang** and **Sammy Moreno** righted the monuments and statues, sealing the bases with new sealant. Broken pieces were catalogued and boxed for future repair by professionals.

Problems continue with the water tower: the tank

leaks. **Duro of Mulroy Excavating & Demolition, Inc.,** discovered that the pipes under the base of the liner and the connectors were broken.

On October 14th the cemetery hosted six officials and sixteen school

*(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.

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### Officers of Friends of BNC

President: Marge Sladek Stueckemann

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### *from the editor's laptop*

All four of my mother's grandparents emigrated from Bohemia and spoke Czech with their children. But my mother's parents only spoke Czech at home when they didn't want their kids to understand what they were saying; they did not pass on the language to their children, so my mother did not grow up speaking Czech. When one of her grandparents complained about not being able to communicate with the grandchildren because the children did not speak Czech, Mom said her father retorted, "We're Americans. If you want to talk with your grandchildren, you should learn English."

My mother always regretted that she never learned Czech. Years ago I got a copy of Mikula's Progressive Czech and showed it to my mom. She remembered the book from her youth and told me that one year she signed up for Czech class at Morton High School. Her teacher was Bohumil Mikula, the subject of this issue's "Stories of the Stones." But it seemed the other students in the class already knew Czech from home and were taking the course for an easy "A" — while she struggled to learn the basics of a foreign language, guided by Mikula's book. I was fortunate to be able to take Czech lessons when I lived in Prague, and today, I'm using that same book to help me maintain my Czech language skills.

*Na shledanou!*  
carol jean smetana



**Tony Kartsonas** (left) inspects the deterioration of the decorative painting as part of Phase One of our restoration project in the Ceremony Hall. See the articles on "**Restoring the Past for the Future**" on page 5.

## Welcome to Our New Members!

**David J. Jindrich** ... Morrison, IL

**Aloise Lynch** ... Chicago, IL

**Joseph & Geraldine Stoklasa** ... Berwyn, IL

Volunteer and Friends member **Chuck Michalek** paints a new window in the gatehouse. Read Chuck's article on page 7 about the **window restoration work.**





## What's New with Friends of BNC

(continued from first page)  
information will be coming soon.

Bohemian National Cemetery published histories for the 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th cemetery anniversaries, the last one in 1977. Now Friends is going to continue the process, but with a format suitable to 2012 - mostly photographs with a small amount of text. About 140-150 pages in length, our new book will feature

special monuments, interesting "resident" stories, and information about the buildings, and will be something you will definitely want for your library. Look for more information in upcoming newsletters. The title, *A Dear and Precious Heritage: Bohemian National Cemetery of Chicago*, expresses the feelings of all of us who work to support this treasured place. Deepest thanks to editor Carol Jean Smetana who is working hard

to make our book a reality.

Don't miss the articles explaining the restoration, our upcoming meeting January 29th at Klas Restaurant in Cicero, and the work done on the gatehouse windows.

Wishing everyone a most happy and healthy new year.

**Marge Sladek Stueckemann**  
President

## Děkuji Vám!

**September tour:**  
Roland Weiss, for publicizing our BNC tours and hosting funeral directors who attended the September tour to earn continuing education credit for their licensing

**Work on gatehouse windows - repair, painting, storm windows, etc.:**  
Jerry Gaydusek  
Chuck Michalek

**Food donations and hosts for our party for the 24 Czechs on October 14 at the gatehouse:**

Martha and Chuck Cervenka  
Evelyn and Don Fergle  
Helen and Jerry Gaydusek  
Art and Kathryn Lorenz  
Juli Nelson  
Lili Nemeč  
Helene Schaeffer  
Helen Souta

*Thanks to all who set up, cleaned up, spoke Czech, and made the day such a success!*

**Providing an information table for Friends at the Czechoslovak Genealogy Society International October conference in St. Louis:**  
Carol Jean Smetana

**Lunch treats for the November 11th ceremony:**  
Martha and Chuck Cervenka

## Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery

**Note: Fall and Winter Hours are in effect.**  
**Office is open Monday through Friday**  
**7:30 am - 3:00 pm.**  
**Grounds are open daily 7:30 am - 3:00 pm.**

**Sunday, May 20th, 2012 (tentative date) ~**  
**"Come and See Ceremony Hall" event:**  
**a chance to view Phase One of the restoration,**  
**details in next newsletter**

**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**



## Stories of the Stones: Bohumil Mikula

by carol jean smetana

Bohumil Mikula was a Czech teacher at J. Sterling Morton High School in Cicero, Illinois, in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, and was also the head of Morton's audio-visual department. He and his students - "Mikula's boys" - took care of all the filming of school activities, including Friends member Evelyn Fergle's 1948 high school trip to Washington, D.C. Mikula also filmed official events at Bohemian National Cemetery. The 100th anniversary book mentions several of these films, and the cemetery has a copy of one of them. (If any reader can lead us to more films, please contact Friends!)



Bohumil E. Mikula from *The Mortonion 1936*, the yearbook of J. Sterling Morton High School, Cicero, Illinois

Bohumil Emil Mikula was born in Červená Řečice, Bohemia, on October 13, 1899. When he was 22, he traveled to the United States on the SS *United States*, arriving in New York on July 4, 1922. He had been living in Prague, where he likely had received a substantial education: the passenger list indicated he was a lawyer and could read German and English.

Although at the time of his arrival, Mikula claimed he was only going to stay in the U.S. for three years, after two months in Chicago, Mikula married Emilie Yungova (Jungova) on September 12, 1922, and a month later he filed his declaration of intent to become a citizen. By 1929, Bohumil and Emma were living in Cicero, where he was a Czech language teacher at J. Sterling Morton High School. He organized and was the advisor for the Morton Czech Club, whose purpose was "to interest the students in the customs of the Bohemian people." By 1940 he had also started the Morton Movie Makers, and eventually he became head of Morton's audio-visual department. In a May 1959 article in the *Chicago Tribune*, which discussed the filmmaking output of the Chicago-based Encyclopaedia Britannica company, Mikula was quoted as saying, "There is evidence that students show greater attention, deeper concentration, and more

desirable behavior in a well organized audio-visual program, which supplements traditional teaching techniques." Mikula would not be surprised by today's technology. In the article, he predicted that film projectors and film itself would become obsolete, and in the future, a teacher would request a film from a central film library and "within seconds, the movie will be beamed electronically into the classroom."

In 1936 the Czechoslovak National Council published *Progressive Czech (Bohemian)*, written by Bohumil Mikula, which became the standard Czech language textbook. In



The cover and frontispiece of Mikula's classic textbook.

it, Mikula not only introduces the student to the Czech language but also to Czech culture. Interspersed with pronunciation and grammar instruction are photographs of Czechoslovakia, English essays about Czechoslovak culture, such as "Art in Czechoslovakia," "Main Industries in Czechoslovakia," "A Brief History of Czechoslovakia," and "Modern Czechoslovak Literature," as well as excerpts from classic Czech texts.



Bohumil Mikula died July 16, 1964, and was cremated. His cremains are in the Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum at the cemetery.

Mikula's columbarium marker includes the symbol of the Freemasons. Mikula belonged to the Dobrovský Club, a select group of influential Bohemian Masons in the Chicago area.



## **Why Friends is “Restoring the Past for the Future”** **by Samantha Chmelik**

The final statement of belief in the Creed of the Freethinkers is: “The devotion of one member of the universe to another is love, its conscious exercise is justice; the process of learning about the laws of the universe is science, and the imitation of universal harmony is art.”\* Anyone who visits the Ceremony Hall in the crematorium/columbarium instantly understands why Bohemian National Cemetery’s Freethinker founders believed that art represented universal harmony, and why noted artist John A. Mallin decorated the Ceremony Hall with the symbols of Czech and Slovak organizations, and not just the pansy, the symbol of the Freethinkers. Now Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery is pleased to share the news that Phase One of the Mallin artwork restoration project began on October 31.

Andy Bultas attended the installation of the scaffolding. Anthony Kartsonas, founder of Historic Surfaces LLC, is leading the restoration project. Kartsonas, an admirer of Mallin, has previously performed studies in two Mallin-decorated churches: St. Josaphat’s and St. Andrew’s. He also gave a presentation about conservation training at Litomyšl in the Czech Republic and has over 17 years of experience in paint restoration projects. The Friends website, [www.friendsofbnc.org](http://www.friendsofbnc.org), will have current photos and updates about the restoration.

News of the Mallin artwork restoration project and of Friends’ receipt of a \$9,737 Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to help fund the project has even reached Chicago’s City Hall. Alderman Margaret Laurino introduced a resolution in the City Council to commemorate the grant receipt. On September 8, 2011, Mayor Rahm Emanuel signed the proclamation congratulating Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery on this achievement. Alderman Laurino has also asked for a tour of the columbarium when the work is completed.

The Mallin restoration is the latest effort by Friends to preserve the cemetery’s art, which is so integral to the Freethinkers’ beliefs. Friends has repaired and restored the crematorium/columbarium roof, the historic water tower, the gatehouse bell tower, the cemetery burial registers, and the art glass windows in the Ceremony Hall. Your donations, along with grant funds, enable Friends to fulfill its mission of preserving the artistic heritage of Bohemian National Cemetery. The Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery has launched the campaign titled “Restoring the Past for the Future” to raise the estimated \$300,000 needed to complete the restoration. Please consider supporting the Restoring the Past for the Future campaign – enabling future generations to appreciate the art of Bohemian National Cemetery.

\*The complete Creed can be read in Vera Laska’s *The Czechs in America 1633-1977: A Chronology and Factbook* (Dobbs Ferry: Ocean Publications, Inc., 1978, p. 97).

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## **“Restoring the Past for the Future” Fundraising Committee** **by Marge Sladek Stueckemann**

Developing materials, meeting with interested people, pursuing possible grants, working with Jason Wright, Friends member and part of the greatly successful campaign to move and expand the Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids - these are the initial activities of the fundraising committee. Our task is to successfully raise the \$300,000 needed to complete the restoration, which we feel will take a 5-year campaign to finish. The initial Phase One is scheduled for completion in February.

Co-chairs Kathryn Lorenz and Marge Sladek Stueckemann are excited to work with Samantha Chmelik, fundraising publicity chair, and committee members Andy Bultas, Chuck and Martha Cervenka, Helen and Jerry Gaydusek, Art Lorenz, Juli Nelson, and Helene Schaeffer.

We welcome your input and ideas. Please contact Kathryn at [artkatlorenz@comcast.net](mailto:artkatlorenz@comcast.net), Marge at [mdstueck@aol.com](mailto:mdstueck@aol.com) or call 847-362-9036. Join us for this exciting opportunity to make a real difference at BNC!

## Donations October through December 15, 2011

### Benefactors

(\$1000 and above)

Marge Sladek Stueckemann

### Patrons

(\$500—\$999)

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John Voss

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Carole Woodham

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### Thank You

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Richard Holubek

Valentine & Richard Husak

Joseph Jesensky, Sr.

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Rebecca Patterson

Robert Teska

Jerome & Georgiana Wieczorek

Dorothy Zeniske

**Thank you all for your  
generosity.**

**Your donations help  
preserve and enhance  
Bohemian National  
Cemetery.**

(continued from first page)  
 principals from Prague 6 in the Czech Republic, accompanied by **Jana Rezna**, Deputy Consul at the Czech Consulate in Chicago, and **Danya Chazan** and other members of Chicago Sister Cities, the organization that sponsored their visit to Chicago. The officials from Prague 6 were: **Marie Kousalikova**, the mayor; **Petr Ayeboua** and **Rene Pekarek**, the deputy mayors; **Ondrej Balatka**, councilor for education; **Jan Holicky**, district administration authority manager; and **Jana Vobornikova**, international relations department. The principals from thirteen middle schools and three high schools were: **Ota Bazant**, **Jiri Benda**, **Maja Bihelerova**, **Karolina Cermakova**, **Mojmir Dundera**, **Zdenka Hamhalterova**, **Dana Hudeckova**, **Anna Jelinkova**, **Petr Karavanek**, **Jana Kindlova**,

## Live from BNC

**Milena Korenova**, **Jana Matousova**, **Anna Niklova**, **Jiri Ruzicka**, **Ivana Ullmannova**, and **Marcela Zavadilova**, president **Dave Pimm**, treasurer **Angie Bultas**, trustee **Chuck Cervenka**, trustee **Andy Bultas**, and audit committee members **Martha Cervenka**, **Jerry Gaydusek** and **Chuck Michalek** attended on behalf of the cemetery. Friends of BNC was represented by **Marge Stueckemann**, **Juli Nelson**, **Helen Gaydusek**, **Lillian Nemec**, **Katherine Lorenz**, and **Evelyn Fergle**. **Ken Dvorsky**, president of CSA District 12 Council, **Ray Capek**, president of CSAGSI, **Elizabeth Raleigh**, general manager of the cemetery, and **Phil Roux**, cemetery superintendent, also participated. The group toured the cemetery grounds, with stops at the Masaryk Mausoleum and the crematorium/columbarium. They were very impressed with all they

saw. After the tour everyone returned to the north gatehouse for refreshments provided by Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery.

On November 11 **Dana Hunatova**, Consul General in Chicago, visited Bohemian National Cemetery for Veterans Day. Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery again provided refreshments in the north gatehouse. Present for the Consul General's visit were: David Pimm, Chuck and Martha Cervenka, Andy Bultas, Angie Bultas, Chuck Michalek, Marge Stueckemann, Ken Dvorsky, and Ray Capek. After refreshments the group went to the World Wars I and II Memorial. They observed a few moments of silence at 11:00 a.m. Then Consul General Hunatova, escorted by Chuck Cervenka and Andy Bultas, placed a flower wreath at the memorial.

**Andy Bultas**  
 Vice-President

## Gatehouse Window Restoration Project

by **Chuck Michalek**



Jerry Gaydusek paints a gatehouse window.  
 (photo by Chuck Michalek)

Grants from the **Czech Republic** and **Friends of BNC** have been utilized to repair and replace deteriorated windows in the historic gatehouse at the cemetery.

The goal was to maintain the historic look of the windows and frames, while providing improved insulation by replacing some windows, painting and re-glazing frames, protecting historic leaded glass transom windows, and designing and installing arched wooden storm windows. Repairs were made by volunteers **Jerry Gaydusek** and **Chuck Michalek**, with assistance from BNC employee **John Illse**. Contractor **Jiri Vacek** recently installed storm windows over the smaller leaded glass transom windows on the east side, along with two larger storms over the glass panels next to entrance door, and two dormer windows at the attic roof line. These storms will provide insulation to the

gatehouse interior and protect the historic leaded glass windows. Three of the larger opening transom windows have new removable screens that will allow for ventilation in the summer.

To provide insulation for water pipes in the women's bathroom, three high quality wooden thermo pane double hung Marvin Windows were ordered from **Evanston Lumber Company** and installed by **Larsen Construction**.

A total of eleven arched storm windows are being milled by a woodshop. These individually sized windows, custom-fit for each opening, will be painted white to match existing exterior windows. Selected storm windows will be removable, and several windows in the reception area will have half-screens to further facilitate ventilation during the summer season.

*Friends of Bohemian  
National Cemetery*

611 Harvard Lane  
Libertyville, IL 60048

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

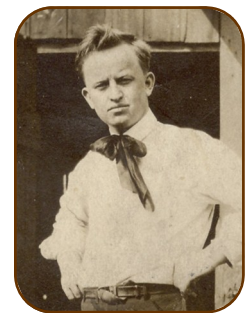


**we're on the web**  
**www.friendsofbnc.org**



**Friends' WINTER MEETING featuring a presentation by Kathy Mallin  
on her grandfather, artist John A. Mallin, and an update from Tony  
Kartsonas on the first phase of the Ceremony Hall restoration**

Bohemian-American artist John A. Mallin was a prominent interior decorator of theaters, courthouses, banks, homes, and churches in the greater Chicago area. In the first half of the 20th century, he decorated hundreds of interiors, including the Sokol-Slavsky (Olympic) theater in Cicero, St. Procopius church in Pilsen, the Lawndale National Bank, and the Ceremony Hall at BNC. Kathy's illustrated talk will introduce us to Mallin's life and distinctively rich artwork. Make your reservations today!



John A. Mallin,  
circa 1910-1912  
(photo courtesy Kathy Mallin)

**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:

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

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Send with check or credit card information by 25 January to: Juli Nelson, 300 Claymoor #2F, Hinsdale, IL60521