

Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Fall Issue ~ Vol. 9 No. 2

October 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

What's New with Friends of BNC

Does one of your family gravestones include some symbol in addition to names and dates? If this symbol is something like Sokol or maybe a string of Odd Fellows chain links, you probably can easily figure out that your loved one belonged to one of those organizations. Those were pretty obvious, but at

our recent meeting, speaker **Samantha Chmelik** told us about unusual symbols, such as anchors and squirrels, that require some additional research to decipher. We also learned that these limestone trees were generally carved to order and that the most common source, Mr.

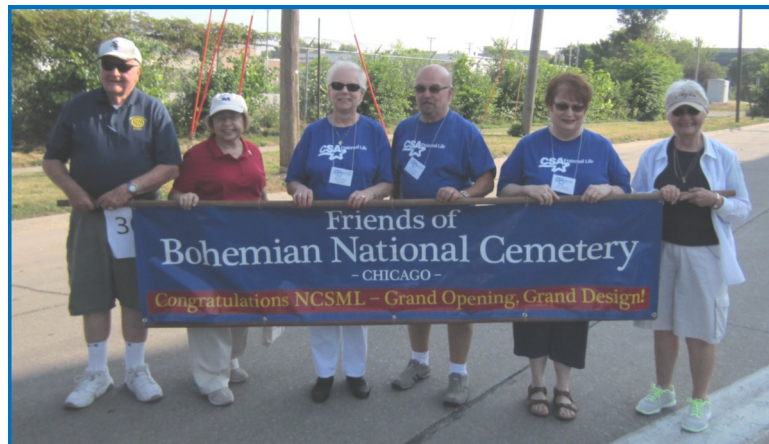
Heller's studio, was across the street from the cemetery. One also could order a very plain kind of tree stone from Sears Roebuck! We had a wonderful meeting with pleasant weather and capped it off with a short walk to see the trees right

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Friends members (left to right) Art Lorenz, Marge Stueckemann, Helen Gaydusek, Jerry Gaydusek, Gerri Romanelli, and Kathryn Lorenz, participated in a parade celebrating the grand re-opening of the Czech and Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in July.

[photo by Kathryn Lorenz]

Live from BNC

John Illse and **Steve Ziolowski** re-bricked the pit, located across from the pump house, that contains one of the water tower's shut-off valves and then replaced the sewer cover.

In the pump house, **Dan Pimm** installed a new switch system for the water pumps so they now work again. He also added

a switch to regulate the water flow to the tower. After John replaced the rusted and broken main lines carrying water to the pump house, and also repaired broken pipes carrying the water away, water can now be pumped to the spigots throughout the cemetery.

Martha Cervenka and **Gloria Adamek** have been

cleaning the gatehouse and watering the plants around the gatehouse, as well as working around the office.

Due to our hot, dry spring and summer, the trees in the cemetery are very dry and brittle, and many branches and trees have been falling. High-wind storms have also blown

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Heritage Happenings

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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

Vice-President: Andy Bultas

Secretary: Helen Gaydusek

Treasurer: Juli Nelson

Directors:

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Evelyn Krenek Fergle

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Membership: Gerri Romanelli

Newsletter: carol jean smetana

Publicity: Samantha Chmelik

Special Projects: Jerry Gaydusek

Webmaster: carol jean smetana



from the editor's laptop

This summer when I was back in Chicago for my nephew's wedding, I had an opportunity to spend a few hours at Bohemian National Cemetery. I stopped by the office to say hello and to enjoy the "history corner." Of course, I spent a few moments at my great-grandparents' monument near the gatehouse waiting room. And then I had time to wander. I always discover something new – a monument with an interesting inscription, a photo on a grave marker that sparks the imagination: who was she, why did he die so young? Some markers, by their size, their decoration, their words, are obvious candidates for our "Stories of the Stones" articles. Other markers give few clues to the lives they commemorate, like the one featured in this month's stone story by Frank Magallon about Sgt. Hosna. It's a fascinating read. Next time you're at the cemetery, I encourage you to wander through a section you haven't visited before and see what you can find.

There were many such stories about people and the monuments commemorating their lives that I had to leave out of our book A Dear and Precious Heritage due to space limitations. Some of them will appear in upcoming issues of Heritage Happenings. If you have a favorite monument or a favorite story about the cemetery, I'd love to hear it!!

Na shledanou!

carol jean smetana

And don't forget: You can find the latest issue of Heritage Happenings in color on our website at www.friendsofbnc.org/currentnewsletters.htm.

Election of Officers

At our August 19th meeting, the assembled members re-elected our current officers: Marge Sladek Stueckemann - President; Andy Bultas - Vice-President; Helen Gaydusek - Secretary; and Juli Nelson - Treasurer.

Volunteers

If you would like to become more involved with Friends, please contact Marge Sladek Stueckemann by phone 847-362-9036 or by email mdstueck@aol.com.

Welcome to Our New Members!

Lois J. Hansen ... Arlington Heights, IL

Lynn McDowell ... Jackson, WY

Gina Morgan ... Chicago, IL

Gilbert Novak ... Palatine, IL

Eunia Semple ... Rolling Meadows, IL

Karen Stoll ... Chicago, IL

Kenneth M. Teska ... Woodridge, IL

Jim Vlazny ... Glenview, IL



What's New with Friends of BNC

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near the crematorium/
columbarium. Our thanks to
Samantha for a terrific talk. In
addition to being such a fine
speaker, Samantha also serves
Friends as our publicity chair.

Our bright red and blue banner
(thanks to creator **Chuck
Betzold**) was stretched between
two big poles as we marched in the
parade to celebrate the grand re-
opening of the Czech and Slovak
Museum and Library in Cedar
Rapids, Iowa, this summer. **Art
and Kathryn Lorenz** held the
poles, and **Evelyn Fergle** and I
walked behind, passing out "body
parts" candy, which drew smiles
from the crowd.

In July we were honored to
host **Alena Palečková**, vice-

president of the Czech Republic
Senate, **Tomáš Grulich**, chairman
of the Senate Commission on
Compatriots Living Abroad, **Pavel
Čáslava**, a member of the
Compatriots Committee, and
Marie Stramková, Secretary of
the commission. Our own Chicago
Consul General, **Dana Hunatová**,
accompanied them as we shared
refreshments in the gatehouse. We
heard very nice things about the
beauty of the cemetery from our
guests, who were on their way to
the opening of the museum in
Iowa. We did see the senators at
the festivities in Iowa and had a
chance to wave hello.

Those reading our new book,
**A Dear and Precious Heritage -
Bohemian National Cemetery,
Chicago**, have sent in rave
reviews! If you haven't gotten

yours yet, please put that on your
to-do list! There's an order form in
the newsletter for your
convenience, or see the webpage,
www.friendsofbnc.org, on how to
order.

I'm very excited to be
representing Friends at the "Czechs
of the World Conference" in
Prague from Sept. 24-30th!
Director Evelyn Fergle will attend
with me, including special events in
the National Museum, behind-the-
scenes tours at places like the
Naprstek Museum, and a folklore
festival from all over Europe plus
Canada.

Happy fall and enjoy a most
festive holiday season.

Marge Sladek Stueckemann
President

Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery

**Note: New Fall and Winter hours will soon be in effect.
The office will be closed Saturdays & Sundays.**

**Grounds will be open daily.
Check our website for details.**

**Saturday, June 1st, 2013 (tentative) ~
Tours of the Tombstones
guided by Albert Walavich**

**Planning a family reunion? Do you have a group of friends
who would like a private tour of BNC?
Friends of BNC can arrange a tour for your group with
Albert Walavich as your guide. Cost is \$125.
For information, email info@friendsofbnc.org
or call 847-362-9036.**



Stories of the Stones

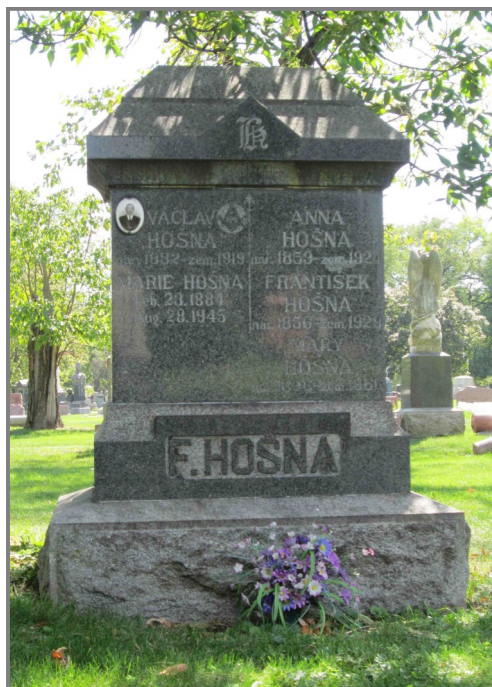
Chicago Police Detective Sergeant James L. Hosna

by Frank S. Magallon

Crime in Chicago is no new thing. Until recent times Chicago's reputation was centered on the exploits of criminals such as Al Capone and John Dillinger. These "men of the gun" wreaked havoc on Chicago and its vicinity, some of their illegal activity taking place in areas such as the Town of Cicero, where many of our Czech ancestors lived. Unfortunately, illegal activity was not limited to just criminals. Chicago was a place where a segment of elected officials, as well as the very men who were sworn to enforce the law, were "on the take." These men of authority either allowed criminals to operate freely outside of the law, or, in some cases, were even directly involved in criminal activity themselves. This is a story from that rough and tumble era of Chicago's criminal past.

On the night of February 16th, 1919, Chicago Police Detective Sergeant James L. Hosna was shot five times and died at Cook County Hospital after a brief fight for his life. The circumstances surrounding Detective Hosna's death vary depending on which side of the story you believe. The official account according to the Chicago Police Department was that Detective Hosna and his partner, Detective Frank J. Smith, were staking out the saloon of Paddy "The Bear" Ryan at 1403 S. Halsted Street in the gritty west side neighborhood known as The Valley. The saloon, reputed to be a "rendezvous of thieves," was where a gang of criminals including Jacob Weinstein, "Big George" Vogel, and Frank "Red" Krueger

were gathered to discuss a successfully completed robbery of whiskey from the Walsh Teaming Company. When Detective Hosna confronted "Big George" Vogel to question him about the heist, Hosna was shot five times, including twice



in the back. After Vogel fled the scene of the crime, a massive manhunt followed, and Chicago Police Chief of Detectives James L. Mooney called for the hanging of Vogel.

Within a day, Vogel turned himself in for fear that Chicago police would take vengeance and shoot him on sight. During Vogel's police interrogation, he told an entirely different tale of the events that led to him shooting Hosna. Vogel alleged that Hosna was a dirty cop, a grafter who was at the saloon

to collect a payoff of \$150 for allowing a member of Vogel's gang to steal automobiles. According to Vogel, he sat and drank with Hosna for almost five hours before their dispute over the payoff. He claimed that Detective Hosna was drunk and hit him with his revolver before Vogel defended himself and shot Hosna before he himself was shot.

The murder of James Hosna devastated his young family. Hosna's father and brothers were at the dying man's bedside, while his wife Marie was trying to get their daughters Elsie 11, and Myrtle 5, to the hospital to see their father one last time. They didn't make it in time, and 37-year-old James Hosna died from his wounds. The funeral was held in the family's new home, a two-flat located at 2701 S. Avers Avenue in Chicago's Czech California neighborhood. Hosna was buried at Bohemian National Cemetery. His brother William went on to have a full career with the Chicago Police Department before he retired as a detective sergeant.

The wheels of justice turned swiftly in those days, and within four months of Hosna's murder the trial was well under way. Among Vogel's defense team was legendary attorney Clarence S. Darrow, who convinced the jury, based on witness testimony, that Vogel acted in self-defense. Witnesses, including saloon keeper Paddy Ryan, testified that they saw Detective Hosna in the bar drunk and shouting at Vogel. They said that Hosna called Vogel a "stool

pigeon” before striking him in the head with his revolver. After four hours of deliberation, the jury acquitted George Vogel of Detective James Hosna’s murder. It was rumored that Vogel, who had a criminal record that spanned half of his life, was able to operate with immunity under the protection of a powerful politician. Shortly after the trial, Vogel opened up a saloon at Roosevelt Road and Campbell Avenue on Chicago’s west side. For years he remained

paranoid that the Chicago police would assassinate him in retribution for killing one of their own.

George Vogel went on to have a couple different careers in the legitimate business world and died in 1951 at 69 years old. As for saloonkeeper Paddy Ryan, he was gunned down, or as they used to say in Chicago gangland, was “put on the spot” a little over a year after Detective Hosna’s murder.

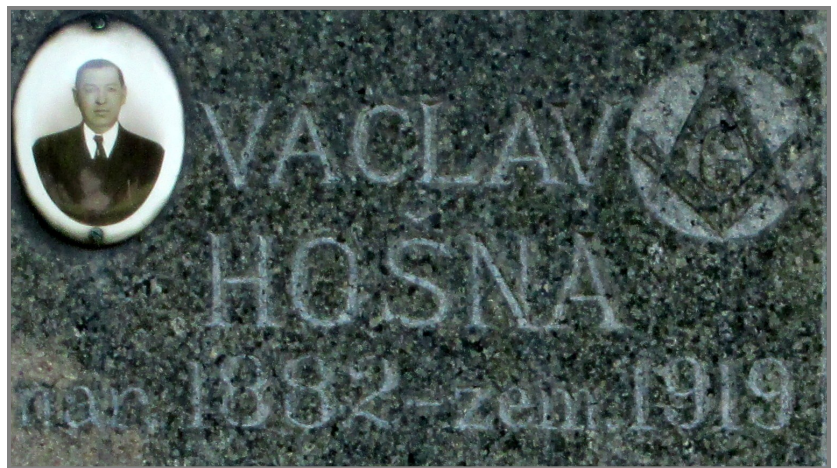
Was Detective Sergeant James L. Hosna an honest lawman waging battle against brutal Chicago criminals, or a grafter who was dishonoring his profession by shaking down local hoodlums? After ninety-three years it’s unlikely that anyone will ever really know.

Frank S. Magallon is a member of Friends and author of Chicago's Little Village: Lawndale-Crawford.

Although James Hosna was a first-generation American, his parents were born in Bohemia in the mid-19th century and immigrated to the United States in the early 1880s.

His name was spelled in Czech on his grave marker – Václav Hošna – and Czech abbreviations were used for “born” – nar. [narozen] – and “died” – zem. [zemřel].

In addition to a photo of James, there is also a Freemason symbol on his marker.



SAVE THE DATE!

May 5, 2013 ~ Springfest Gala Dinner & Silent Auction

at
Porretta's Elegant Banquets in Chicago

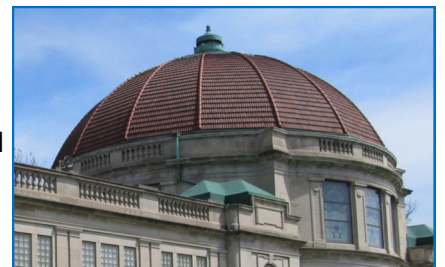
Plan to join us for an elegant meal with wine, favors, entertainment, and our always popular silent auction!

Porretta's is located at 3718 N. Central Ave., Chicago



Ceremony Hall Art Restoration

Friends of BNC has raised almost a third of our \$300,000 goal for restoring the artwork in the Ceremony Hall.



The section restored during the first phase looks beautiful, and we were planning for the next phase when a heavy spring storm revealed a water leakage problem in the domed roof. We cannot continue with the restoration until the roof is repaired. The BNC Association is considering options, and when they settle on a plan, Friends will do all it can to help, so we can then move forward with the interior restoration. See Andy Bultas’s column on page 1, “Live from the Cemetery,” for more information.

Donations

Sponsors (\$100—\$499)

Art and Kathryn Lorenz
Gerald and Ruth Swedeen

Donors (\$25—\$99)

Dolores Benes Duy

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



Two of our youngest volunteers took advantage of the recent Chicago teachers' strike to spend a day at the cemetery helping their great-uncle and Friends member **Chuck Michalek** with clean-up projects at the cemetery. At left, **Dylan** and **Mia** (readers might remember them from Chuck's article "Looking for Uncle Stanley" in a previous issue of *Heritage Happenings*) are cleaning the glass fronts of the columbarium niches.

[photo by Chuck Michalek]

Děkuji Vám!

Carol Jean Smetana, editor and co-author of *A Dear and Precious Heritage – Bohemian National Cemetery, Chicago*, who wove a masterful story of the history, beauty and people of the cemetery;

Linda Tassin, for research and photography, which added so much to the book.

Samantha Chmelik, whose talk on *Limestone Trees* was excellent.

Chuck Betzold for the bright red and blue *Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery* banner.

Refreshments for our meeting: **Martha and Chuck Cervenka**, who also helped serve;

Kathryn Ruzicka Lorenz
Lili Nemec

Rob Plummer, who also provided the silver samovar and tray

Jim Smick
Mary Syrup.

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down trees and large branches. Volunteers **Chuck Cervenka, Chuck Michalek, Chuck Betzold, Jerry Gydusek, and Andy Bultas,** along with John and Steve and the rest of the cemetery staff, have been busy removing dead trees, cutting up the fallen trees and branches, and loading them into the truck to be taken away.

John Illse, Chuck Cervenka, Andy Bultas, and Chuck Michalek removed the heater in the water tower, which had been inoperable for at least 15 years and was rusting out. The heater's bracket and pipes had to be cut and the heater lowered by ropes.

The roof on the south side of the garage has begun to rot. John Illse, Chuck Michalek, Andy Bultas, and Chuck Cervenka jacked up the roof, inserted a steel beam to re-enforce the roof and also re-enforced the rotted beams. Now a sealant needs to be applied to the roof to prevent leaking.

Chuck Cervenka and Chuck Michalek hired **Madden Plumbing** to get a second opinion on the sewer line coming west from the crematorium/columbarium. Madden Plumbing found the same situation as the first plumber: the line is apparently collapsed. Madden tried to open it up by rodding it out, but the rod wouldn't go through. The next step will have to be to replace the collapsed drain pipe.

On Wednesday September 12th, Chuck Michalek brought two new volunteers to help work around the cemetery. They were his grandniece **Mia** and his grandnephew **Dylan**. They helped Chuck clean up around the cemetery.

Now for a more serious problem that is confronting the cemetery: the dome on the crematorium/columbarium building. Further restoration of the Ceremony Hall inside the building has had to be postponed due to the discovery of leakage coming through the dome.

To continue with restoration inside would be unwise, as the restoration could be ruined by water leaks. The roof had been repaired by **Allendorfer Roofers**, but the last time any work was done on the dome itself was sometime in the 1970s. The cemetery has received estimates to repair the dome from several different contractors. All are over \$100,000. This is because the copper cupola on top of the dome has to be replaced, along with much of the tile roofing. At this time it is not possible for the cemetery to contract for these dome repairs because of all the other repairs that the cemetery faces. Different options are being considered to find a way to see that the repairs to the dome can be done.

That being said, the cemetery, even with all its problems, is a wonderful place to visit and enjoy. So please come and visit us and see how beautiful your cemetery is.

Andy Bultas
Vice-President

Keeping Up with Friends

On **Saturday, November 3, 2012**, at the meeting of the Czech & Slovak American Genealogical Society of Illinois, Friends president Marge Sladek Stueckemann and Friends member Kathryn Lorenz will present "Our Dear and Precious Heritage," an illustrated talk on Bohemian National Cemetery. Using beautiful photographs, they will describe the fascinating history, beautiful artwork, architecture and monuments, and exciting recent developments at the cemetery.

Where: First Presbyterian Church of LaGrange, 150 S. Ashland Ave., LaGrange, IL

When: 1:30 pm, Saturday, Nov, 3rd.



The meeting is open to the public, and there is no charge.

On **January 27, 2013**, Friends will hold its **Winter Meeting at Klas Restaurant**

1:00 pm: cash bar

1:30 pm: meal.

\$25, reservations will be required. Or come at 3:00 just for the special program on Mayor Anton Cermak, presented by Karel Sup. Look for more details soon on our website. Our December newsletter will include a reservation form.

*Friends of Bohemian
National Cemetery*

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Libertyville, IL 60048

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Email: mdstueck@aol.com



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 "Tours of the Tombstones." Above all, you will enjoy the satisfaction of knowing you are helping to maintain, 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, 2012.** 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.

Send renewal form with check payable to
Friends of BNC or credit card information
to:

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

*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.*

Membership Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code (+ 4) _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Type of Membership _____

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

Card number _____ Expiration date _____

Security code _____ Signature _____