



Columbarium Restoration Project Update by Chuck Michalek

As 2019 came to a close, the Columbarium Restoration Project succeeded in completing another important phase of repairing the historic crematorium/columbarium building. Focusing on much needed exterior masonry repairs, Marion Restoration Co. was paid \$179,031 for priority work as outlined in the previous newsletter. It is

satisfying to note several areas on the inside of the building have experienced a noticeable reduction of falling and flaking ceiling and wall plaster caused by outside water infiltration.

Water penetration not only compromises the structural integrity of the building but can harm the Ceremony Hall's elaborate interior ceiling and wall decorations, painted by renowned fresco artist John A. Mallin.

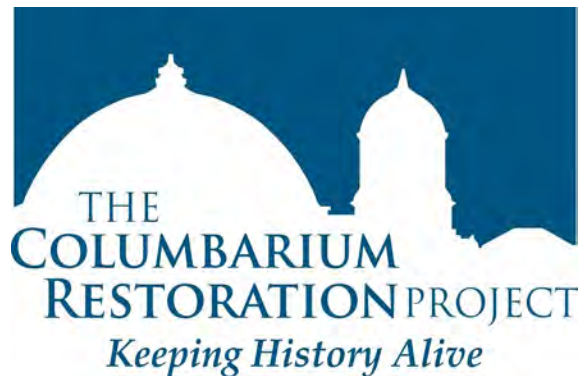
We are grateful to the many individuals and organizations whose ongoing donations to Friends of BNC's Columbarium Restoration Project make the preservation of this building possible. A special thank you to the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of the Czech Republic, who provided an important grant in 2019 to help with the building's restoration.

Dignitaries from the Czech Republic usually want to visit Bohemian National Cemetery while they are in Chicago. The Czech Consulate recently informed us that the Mayor of Prague has requested a tour of BNC this spring to visit former Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak's family mausoleum, as well as other significant buildings and sites at BNC.

Our work is not finished. There are several more major repairs to be done, detailed in the 2014 Survey and Master Plan for the crematorium/columbarium building. Friends of BNC will be meeting to discuss the next phases of repairs for 2020. As always, we appreciate your ongoing support.





Update by *Chuck Michalek*

If you visited BNC in late summer you witnessed the appearance of a web of tall scaffolding rising up on the crematorium/columbarium building's center elevation, indicating the start of work on the exterior limestone walls. This phase involved work on the building's three-story "drum" (curved-wall section). Masonry elements repaired include coping stones, balustrades, upper and lower cornices, and lintels above the stained glass windows. Work also included spall repairs and tuckpointing. The work is being done by Marion Restoration, known for its skilled workmanship and preservation of historic buildings throughout the country.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, \$158,663 has been raised by Friends of BNC to pay for the current phase of restoration work. In addition to work on the curved walls, Friends board voted to expand this year's work to include repairs of spalls on the other exterior walls. Additional work also included

tuckpointing of parapet roof wall sections suspected of letting rainwater into the east niche hallway. Marion Restoration quoted the additional work at \$20,368, a discounted quote that took into consideration the scaffolding and supplies already at the worksite.

Friends of BNC is committed to helping preserve the building so future generations can view and experience the heritage, culture and traditions represented at the cemetery. The next phase in weatherproofing will involve more masonry repairs and tuckpointing. Please consider donating to continue the columbarium's preservation. You can view donation information at FriendsofBNC.org or contact Chuck at restoration@friendsofbnc.org.






THE COLUMBARIUM RESTORATION PROJECT
Keeping History Alive

Thanks to the generous support from Friends of BNC donors and others, significant improvements continue to insure the preservation of the historic crematorium/columbarium building.

One of the main goals of the Columbarium Restoration Project involved repairs to the building's exterior to prevent water infiltration that was damaging the plaster and intricate wall decorations painted by John Mallin. As reported previously, in 2017 Knickerbocker Roofing Company installed a new copper gutter system around the dome and made significant repairs to the dome's center copper finial and the dome's top base area, including the replacement of several clay tiles. In 2019, Marion Restoration made critical repairs to the masonry wall, including repairs to upper level balustrades, coping units

and limestone blocks damaged by spalling. Both companies are highly rated preservation contractors and noted for their expert work on historic structures.



The latest fundraising campaign by Friends of BNC will address repairing several

of the building's flat roof areas that have been a source of water filtration in the east and west niche rooms (see photo).



Note to our past donors: the Ceremony Hall donor room's walls and trim recently received a final coat of paint. Newly engraved plates with the names of recent donors are currently being installed.

For the latest news on the project and how to donate, visit friendsofbnc.org or contact michalekchas@aol.com.

