

Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Spring Issue ~ Vol. 8 No. 4

April 2012

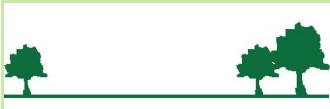
carol jean smetana, editor

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



Inside this issue:

Officers	2
from the editor's laptop	2
Děkuji Vám	2
New Members	2
Upcoming Events at BNC	3
Stories of the Stones -	4
Donations	6
Volunteer Opportunities	7
"Under the Dome" Reception	8

What's New with Friends of BNC

How amazing was the career of our Ceremony Hall artist John Mallin. His granddaughter **Kathy Mallin** presented wonderful historic slides illustrating the variety of his work at our January 29th meeting. From the very early picture of the design he created for Riverview Amusement Park prior to 1910 to the breathtaking scenes of heavenly angels and other religious topics he painted for churches like St. Procopius, and even tidbits such as the messages he sent to his wife, Kathy really helped us see her grandfather as a person.

After learning about Mallin the artist, our

restorer **Tony Kartsonas** treated us to his slides of the work in progress. They clearly showed not only the crumbling paint, but also the big difference when he cleaned sections and started to restore them. Standing on the scaffolding, the restorers noticed a little empty can filled with the backings of the foil leaf that had been applied originally, probably



photo by Kathy Mallin

in 1918. Tucked away so it would never be seen from the floor, this little treasure was brought down to Kathy, who shared it with us at the meeting. That original crew surely never expected it to be a cherished object of Kathy's display.

Erin Keneally then explained her research on Mallin, her topic for her thesis to earn a Master's degree at the Art Institute. This paper will provide wonderful documentation of all of Mallin's work and be invaluable to future scholars. There were about 90 people present for the presentation and 64 who enjoyed a

(continued on page 6)

Live from BNC

Historic Surfaces continues working on the Ceremony Hall Art Restoration inside the crematorium/columbarium building. **Tony Kartsonas**, his wife **Matka** and two associates **Jeff** and **Nick** have been diligently and carefully conducting the restoration. Tony described to me some of

the problems he has encountered in his efforts to clean the test area and determine the best way to restore artist John Mallin's decorative painting. Where cleaning alone will not suffice, Tony's crew will have to actually repaint some areas. Tony takes sample chips of the various paints used by Mallin to his

laboratory where he checks them under a microscope so he can develop the right formula for the colors he needs for the restoration. In the course of his assessment, Tony found some areas of the painted faux marble ceiling and of the cornices that require repainting rather than just

(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.

Copyright 2011 by Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

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

From the photos I've seen of the work being done by Tony Kartsonas and his crew in the Ceremony Hall, the "before" and "after" differences are striking. May 20th will be the first chance for our members and the general public to see the transformation that is taking place "under the dome." I wish I could be there! Those of you who can attend will have to be my eyes — I'd love to hear your responses to our project. How does the restored section look? You can let me know at either my email or home address at left.

The reception celebrating the completion of this first phase of our Ceremony Hall Art Restoration project provides an opportunity for you to explore the hall and the adjoining columbaria. How many of the symbols in the Ceremony Hall do you recognize? If you attended last year's MayFest, can you find the symbol that designated your dinner table? The photos in the "Stories of the Stones" article should help you locate August Geringer's niche in the western corridor. Take time to look closely at some of the other glass-fronted niches in the corridors. They are like small shadow boxes, often displaying photos, medals, ribbons and other mementos from a person's life. And don't miss the eastern corridor with its beautiful art glass windows.

We'll be finishing another Friends project in the next few months, A Dear and Precious Heritage: Bohemian National Cemetery of Chicago. This richly illustrated book will include a brief history of the cemetery, its monuments and its buildings, but the main focus will be on the fascinating, artistic and at times inexplicable gravestones of famous people, community leaders and just-plain-folk. See how our cemetery beautifully reflects the history and culture of Bohemian Chicago and the community's enduring connections to the homeland.

Be sure to check our website regularly for updates and photos of the Ceremony Hall Art Restoration project, as well as the latest information about events sponsored by Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery. It's shaping up to be a busy spring and summer. We would love to see you at our events!

Na shledanou!
carol jean smetana

Děkuji Vám!

Chuck Betzold for decorative magnets for our January meeting and for writing about the Bohemian Sharpshooters for the CSA Journal

Chuck Michalek for photos of our January meeting

Dale Burton for photos to enhance our Friends BNC presentation

Kathy Mallin, Tony Kartsonas and Erin Keneally for their excellent presentations at our January meeting

Welcome to Our New Members!

Dale & Linda Burton ... Wayne, IL

Dobrovsky Club ... Riverside, IL

Gail Gloede ... Grayslake, IL

Joseph Johnson ... Round Lake Beach, IL

Ralph J. Mandarino ... St. Clair Shores, MI

Eleanor Segal ... North Riverside, IL

Jerry Souta ... Tinley Park, IL

Patricia Young ... Davidsonville, MD

Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery

Saturday, April 28th, 9:30 am to noon ~ CSA "Join Hands Day"

Come help weed veterans' gravesites.
All welcome, no need to be a CSA member.

Sunday, May 13th at 1:00 pm ~ Mother's Day

Meet at gatehouse. Refreshments after the ceremony.

Sunday, May 20th, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm ~ Under the Dome

Join us to view and celebrate the completion of the first phase of the Ceremony Hall Art Restoration project.

Friday, May 25th, 10:00 am ~ Flag Placement for Memorial Day

Help decorate the cemetery for Memorial Day ~ meet in the office.

Monday, May 28th, 9:30 am ~ Memorial Day Service

Refreshments in the Gatehouse at 9:00 am. Ceremony starts at 9:30 am.
Carnations for ladies, compliments of Friends.

Sunday, June 2nd at 10:00 am and 1:00 pm ~ Tours of the Tombstones guided by Albert Walavich. Two-hour walking tours begin at the Gatehouse.

\$10 Friends members ~ \$15 non-members

Sunday, July 8th, noon to 4:00 pm ~ BNC Annual Picnic

Music, Czech food; Bakery donations for our table appreciated.

Sunday, August 19th ~ Friends Summer Meeting: "Trees That Talk: Conversing with Our Ancestors through Limestone Trees" presented by Samantha Chmelik

Sunday, September 30th, 1:00 pm ~ Tour of the Tombstones guided by Albert Walavich

New Cemetery Hours Take Effect on May 1, 2012

Starting the first of May, the cemetery grounds will be open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, seven days a week.
Office hours will be 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm Saturday, closed Sunday.



You can find the most recent issue of Heritage Happenings in color on our website at
www.friendsofbnc.org/currentnewsletters.htm

Stories of the Stones

by carol jean smetana

When the Bohemian National Cemetery Association agreed to incorporate a chapel or ceremony hall into the new crematorium design, they needed to reclaim previously sold lots to have enough land for the larger building. August Geringer owned several of those lots and agreed to the cemetery's request. In exchange he received his choice of the largest niche in the new columbarium.

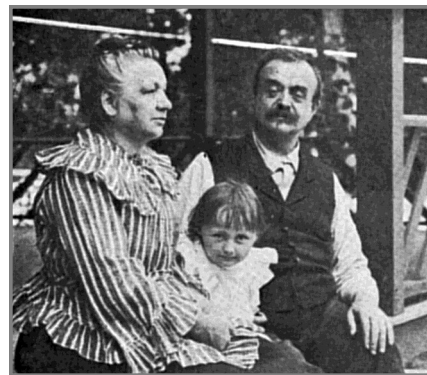
During his lifetime August Geringer was an influential publisher and philanthropist in the Bohemian community, not just in Chicago, but throughout the country. Geringer published many books and pamphlets for Bohemian fraternal and cultural organizations. He supported the development of Bohemian fraternal and cultural organizations and promoted Czech nationalism, not only through the editorial stances of his newspapers but with monetary contributions as well.

August Geringer was born 2 March 1842 in Březnice, in the Písek region of Bohemia, and he followed the family profession of schoolteachers. Soon after August and Antonie Kolar married, in February 1869, the couple immigrated in June to Chicago. Geringer opened a small bookstore and bookbinding shop on DeKoven Street but soon moved it to Canal Street in the heart of the Czech community in the

neighborhood around St. Wenceslaus church known as Praha. The Great Chicago Fire in 1871 gave his business a boost, as his was one of only a handful of printing firms to emerge unscathed. Subsequent moves to various locations on Canal Street reflected the growth of his bindery/printing business.

In 1874 Geringer started working with Frantisek Zdrubek to develop Czech readers for the freethinker schools. In July 1875 Geringer became a citizen of the U.S. That same year he founded the first Bohemian daily newspaper *Svornost* (Concord), published at 463 South Canal, with Zdrubek as editor; the paper would remain in the Geringer family until 1947. In 1886 he moved his printing firm to 12th and Clinton. The final location for the Geringer press was Crawford (Pulaski) Avenue.

Over the years, in addition to *Svornost*, Geringer published the semi-weekly *Amerikán*, which



Antonie and August Geringer with their granddaughter Vlasta Adele Vráz, 1912.

included stories of Bohemian pioneers in America, a humorous weekly *Duch Času*, and local newspapers in Baltimore, New York, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma and Iowa.

Through his various publications, Geringer promoted the Bohemian National Cemetery and the

Bohemian Old People's Home and Orphanage, Bohemian banks and loan associations, and Bohemian fraternal and cultural organizations, such as Sokol, Czech Beseda, and the Lyra chorus. (Geringer was a musician who reportedly played the violin at mass at St. Wenceslaus church and played the organ at St. John Nepoumecenec.)

With his background in education, Geringer took a leading role in the education of Bohemian immigrants, publishing useful pamphlets for the new immigrants (including



August Geringer agreed to give up the lots he owned in exchange for one of the largest niches in the western corridor, the original columbarium section built in 1915–16 by the Pilsen Foundry & Iron Works.

"How to Become Naturalized," written by his son Vladimir, supporting Czech schools, and helping to Czech-language Saturday schools.

Geringer belonged to several organizations including the American Press Association, the American Association of Foreign-Language Newspapers, and the CSPS (one of the founding organizations of BNC that is today known as CSA Fraternal Life). He helped bring the Ludvik acting troupe to the U.S., which went on to establish the first Bohemian theater in Chicago. He also played a

role in organizing Bohemian Day at Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893. During the First World War his paper *Svornost* rallied the public in support of the cause of a free Czech and Slovak state, and Geringer met with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and other leaders of the nationalist movement.

August and Antonie Geringer had four children, Miles, Vladimir, Vlasta and Augusta. Miles became treasurer of the Geringer Press Corporation after August's death. Vladimir, in addition to working with his father on publications for new immigrants, was a lawyer who

wrote bylaws for fraternal societies and was named the U.S. Trade Commissioner to the new Czechoslovakia in 1918. Vlasta married Enrique Stanko Vráz, an explorer, writer and lecturer. Augusta married R. Jaromir Psenka, an editor at *Svornost* who later became editor-in-chief of Geringer publications.

August Geringer died on April 1, 1930. His cremains are in the niche he selected when the crematorium/columbarium was first built.



The urn is inscribed Rodina Geringova - the Geringer family. According to cemetery records, it was designed by Emanuel Nadherny, a Bohemian artist and illustrator who often provided illustrations for Geringer's publications.

Phase One Will Soon Be Done!

Do you belong to an organization or have friends who might be interested in our Ceremony Hall Art Restoration project?

Please invite them to "Join Us Under the Dome" on Sunday, May 20th, 2012.

You can print out a flyer about our event celebrating the completion of this first phase of the restoration on our website www.friendsofbnc.org

This will be the first opportunity for everyone to see the test area of restoration and get an idea of how the entire Ceremony Hall will look once Mallin's decorative painting has been cleaned and restored to its original glory.

Prepare to be wow-ed!

Donations

December 16, 2011, through February 2012

Patrons**(\$500—\$999)**

Henrietta Bartizal Pons *in memory of her mother Henrietta Skala Bartizal*
Joseph Svehla

Sponsors**(\$100—\$499)**

Gwy Benda
Charles & Martha Cervenka
Czech & Slovak Genealogy Society of Illinois
Robert Doubek
Jan & Natalie Dvorak
First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association of USA
Carl & Mary Ellen Flaks
Janice Flynn

Jerry & Helen Gaydusek
Joseph Hasman
Hester Hilden
Lillian Huelsman
James Kisela
Robert Kopecky
Anne Kozak
Dr. & Mrs. Donald Krizek *in memory of his father Lad T. Krizek and his mother Elsie E. Krizek*
Lodge DuPage Pioneers #409 CSA
Lodge Yankee-Jungmann #77 CSA
Art & Kathryn Lorenz
Kathy Mallin
Jane Pugh
Donna Zapp Reusing
Bill & Ruth Rosol
Frank Ruzicka *in memory of the Joseph & Mary Ruzicka family*
Linda Uhlir

Joan Zuffrano

Donors**(\$25—\$99)**

Ruth Bartuska
Marilyn & Elmer Cerny
Sheila & Ian Chin
Mary Ellen Conroy
Donna Desai
Dobrovsky Club
Patricia Krizek DeVoe
James Fergle
Margaret Filip Konigsfeld
Howard Habenicht
Jim Herter
Shirley Jensen
Kadlec Duriet Family
Elaine Kovarik
Lodge Anton Cermak #99 CSA
Lodge Pilgrim #330 WFLA
Diane Macdonald

Carol Malin
Marilyn Michyets
Lilli Nemec
Michael Nemeth
Richard Palicka
Charmian Peska
Jim Pfeifer
Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Rode
Ludwig Scheuerle
Eugene & Patricia Sikorovsky
Sokol Tabor
Cheryl Svoboda
Lorraine Szabo
Jeff Tucek
Alois Vana
Christine Repa Visconti
Brian Zoufal

Thank You**(\$1—\$24)**

Dr. & Mrs. Robert Musil
Elmer Pavlas

*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)

full Czech dinner beforehand.

Join us "Under the Dome" on Sunday, May 20th, from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., to meet Tony, view the wonderful changes that are a result of this first phase of the restoration project, and enjoy chlebičky, other appetizers and beverages as we celebrate this inaugural step. RSVP to info@friendsofbnc.org or call 847-362-9036 so we know how many to expect.

If you belong to an organization in the Chicago area that has Czech/Slovak heritage members -- or is

interested in art or preservation activities -- consider having us come to make a short (15 minutes) slide presentation about the colorful history of BNC and our Friends organization, including the exciting progress of the restoration. **Kathryn Lorenz** started these presentations with the **Lodge DuPage Pioneers**, and Kathryn and I brought an expanded and updated version to the **Dobrovsky Club of Czech Masons** recently. Help your friends understand just how special our cemetery is and give them a chance to learn about what we are doing. This presentation will be constantly updated as the restoration

proceeds, so it would be possible for us to return in, say, a year, with a follow-up to show the progress. To schedule a time, please email info@friendsofbnc.org or call Kathryn at 630-257-5368.

Do you read the Sunday *Chicago Tribune*? Watch for the magazine section on April 15th when an article about Friends and my involvement at BNC is scheduled to be published in the "Remarkable Woman" feature. What a surprise and pleasure to have such recognition for our work!

Marge Sladek Stueckemann
President

Live from BNC

(continued from first page)

cleaning and touch-up work. Tony expects this first phase of the restoration to be completed by May 15th.

The sewage pipe from the



Photo taken by Tony Kartsonas showing the preliminary cleaning of an area of the dome just above a column. Join us "Under the Dome" on May 20th to see the results of this first phase of the restoration.

bungalows was clogged, and **Duro**, of **Mulroy Excavating & Demolition, Inc.**, discovered, by sending a camera through the pipe, that a section of the pipe had collapsed. To repair the pipe, Duro, at no charge to the cemetery, dug a hole ten feet deep, 40 feet long and five feet wide. **Eurolux**

Construction Corporation of Chicago then replaced the 32 feet of collapsed pipe with new clay sewer pipe and also installed a cleanout. When the work was completed, Duro leveled and smoothed out the area, again without charging the cemetery. **Chuck Cervenka** is going to make a diagram of the sewerage system for the bungalows.

Duro used his end loader and truck to remove the dirt, tree limbs and branches piled up between the garage and the water tower and transport them to the cemetery's dump and compost area.

Marble crypt covers in the Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum are being replaced with granite covers. **M.C. Royal Co.** of Chicago began the replacement work in January and is almost finished. **Cornel Dobrovsky**, the owner of M.C. Royal, keeps **Phil Roux** apprised of the progress of the project. **Jerry Gaydusek** has donated the stainless steel screws needed for the installing the new crypt covers.

Montoya Construction Co. of Evanston asphalted the potholes in the cemetery roads in sections

16,17,18,19, 20 and the Klacel Circle, which had the deepest holes. These areas will be seal-coated around May or June to increase the longevity of the patches.

Installation of windows in the north gatehouse is complete. **Jiri Vacek** installed storm windows over the transom windows, on the two side glass panels next to the entrance door, and over the dormer windows on the east side of the north gatehouse. **Evanston Lumber Co.** installed three double-hung windows for the women's bathroom. Jerry Gaydusek, **Chuck Michalek** and **John Ilse** are scraping, sanding and painting the interior windows, and replacing the window ropes with chains.

All the above work is being done to improve our beautiful Bohemian National Cemetery. Come and visit us and see how the cemetery looks. You can also visit just to enjoy the beautiful grounds, lagoon and monuments that our historic cemetery offers.

Andy Bultas
Vice-President

Can You Offer a Helping Hand to Friends?

One look at our "What's Happening at BNC" calendar on page 3, and you can see that spring is a busy time for Friends of BNC. We need volunteers! Do you like to garden? Bring your rakes, trowels, trimmers and dandelion diggers to the cemetery at 9:30 am on Saturday, April 28, and "Join Hands" with CSA lodge members to tidy up veterans' gravesites.

You can put those same dandelion diggers to use again on Friday, May 25th, digging holes for planting American flags to decorate the cemetery for the Memorial Day weekend. Meet in the office building at 10 am - flags will be provided.

On Sunday May 20th from 1 pm to 4 pm, Friends is celebrating the completion of the first phase of our Ceremony Hall Art Restoration project. If you can donate cheese and crackers or homemade appetizers for the reception, please call Marge Stueckemann at 847-362-9036. Be sure to bring your family and friends to view a clean, restored sample of John Mallin's interior decoration.

*Friends of Bohemian
National Cemetery*

611 Harvard Lane
Libertyville, IL 60048

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



we're on the web
www.friendsofbnc.org



**Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery
Invites You to Join Us Under the Dome**

Sunday, May 20th, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

View the Ceremony Hall Art Restoration Project

in the Crematorium / Columbarium Building of

Bohemian National Cemetery
5255 N. Pulaski Road, Chicago



Refreshments will be served.
It's free and open to the public,
but space is limited.



For reservations, please call (847) 362 9036