

Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery Announces Ceremony Hall Art Restoration Project

Phase One of the Restoration of the Ceremony Hall Begins

CHICAGO, ILL. November 9, 2011 -- The restoration of the Ceremony Hall in the crematorium/columbarium building at Bohemian National Cemetery began on November 1, 2011. Noted Moravian-born artist John A. Mallin decorated the Ceremony Hall in 1918 and led previous restoration efforts in 1928 and 1948. The current restoration project, initiated by Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery, is the first in almost 65 years.

The restoration is partially funded by a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors. 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.

Mallin decorated the hall with symbols of fraternal and patriotic associations who supported and managed the cemetery. The Ceremony Hall provides a unique retrospective commemoration of these organizations – some of which no longer exist. Over the course of his career, Mallin decorated banks, theaters, courthouses, homes, more than 100 churches, the facades at Riverview Amusement Park, and several rooms in the home of the wealthy businessman John Cuneo (now the Cuneo Museum).

Anthony Kartsonas, founder of Historic Surfaces LLC, is leading the restoration project. Mr. 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 Litomysl in the Czech Republic and has over 17 years of experience in paint restoration projects. He has worked on projects as diverse as tile stabilization in the Glessner House to an analysis of the exterior finish of Wrigley Field.

In the seven years of its existence, Friends has worked with the cemetery to obtain numerous grants and donations that have enabled the repair and restoration of 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. To learn more about the restoration projects, please visit <http://www.friendsofbnc.org>.

The Bohemian National Cemetery of Chicago is a fraternal, not-for-profit cemetery founded in 1877 by Bohemian, Moravian and Slovak immigrant Freethinkers and their descendants to provide a dignified place for burials free of religious restraints. The cemetery is available to all religions, nationalities and races. The cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

About Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 2004. The mission of the Friends is to promote the historical significance, enhance the beauty, and preserve the artistic heritage of Bohemian National Cemetery. Friends fosters an appreciation of the cemetery in local, national and international audiences. Friends has regular meetings with educational programs, conducts walking tours of the cemetery, and publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Heritage Happenings*. Friends also raises funds for the restoration and preservation of Bohemian National Cemetery. Additional information is available at the website: <http://www.friendsofbnc.org>.

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