

Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

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January 2018

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

Can you imagine what Chicago was like in 1877? It did not include Foster and Pulaski in its boundaries — when the cemetery was founded, it was located in Jefferson Township and was incorporated into the city of Chicago in 1889. On October 29th, the board members of the **Bohemian National Cemetery Association** hosted a celebration, first in a tent and then in the gatehouse, of the cemetery's

140 years.

Friends of BNC has always prioritized the gatehouse, and in our earlier years, from 2004 until 2011, the grants we wrote to the Czech Government, much of the donation money, and the volunteer labor of Andy **Bultas**, **Martha** and **Chuck Cervenka**, **Jerry Gaydusek**, **Chuck Michalek** and **Ken Quick** combined to do so

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Enhancing the Beauty of BNC

In October, SavATree, a professional tree care service, returned to the cemetery and worked on eight more trees. To stay within our budget, SavATree removed the crowns on seven of the eight trees, and our volunteers cut down the trunks afterwards.

A grant to Friends of BNC from the Czech Government, supplemented by additional funds from Friends, financed this latest effort to cut down more of the many large dying trees that pose

a serious threat to cemetery monuments and visitors. Chuck Betzold has developed a detailed mapping of trees to help identify and prioritize those requiring urgent attention.

The work of removing diseased and dead trees throughout the cemetery will take several years, given the expense and dozens of trees needing work. In the meantime, Chuck Betzold and a core group of weekly volunteers continue to cut up

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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 editor@friendsofbnc.org.

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Officers of Friends of BNC

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Vice-President: *Ray Malecek*

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Juli Nelson

Special Projects Co-Chairs: *Jerry*

Gaydusek, Chuck Michalek

Webmaster: *carol jean smetana*



from the editor's laptop

The Bohemian National Cemetery Association's celebration of their 140th anniversary this past October prompted me to wonder, what happened next? What were the hallmarks of 1878, the cemetery's first full year of existence?

According to The Semi-Centennial Jubilee of the Bohemian National Cemetery Association, by Dr. J. E. S. Vojan, published in 1927, the BNC Association began 1878 with a focus on setting up the operations of the cemetery. Statutes of the Association and rules of order for meetings were written, cemetery regulations were established, and a job description was created for the grave-digger. The land was surveyed and divided into lots, which went on sale in mid-March and would generate much-needed income: the Association still had to rely on loans from societies and individuals for the bulk of its operating expenses. Trees were felled to make way for the cemetery roads, and in April, the cemetery grounds were enclosed by a new, six-foot high fence.

An adult grave cost \$5; a grave for a child between the ages of six and twelve cost \$3.50; for a child between two and six, the price was \$2.50; and infant graves cost \$1.50. Prices for the lots ranged from \$10 to \$30, and there was a provision for reducing the cost by up to 50 percent for poor families or widows. At the start of 1878, there had been 26 graves in the cemetery, three of which had been given free of charge. By May 1st, an additional 49 graves had been purchased, as well as eight lots. Bohemian National Cemetery was on its way.

Na shledanou!
carol jean smetana

Welcome to Our New Members!

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bures ...

Western Springs, IL

James Prihoda family ...

Portland, OR

Lisa Zahlmann ... Missoula, MT

Děkuji Vám!

Chuck Betzold for coordinating the project to remove dead and diseased trees at the cemetery; and **Chuck Michalek** for preparing the grant report on the project for the Czech Government;

Chuck Betzold, Carl Brader, Jerry Gaydusek, Chuck Michalek, Jim Miller, Bill Serviss, Bob Weniger: the volunteers who are working in conjunction with SavATree to remove dead and diseased trees at the cemetery;

Dave Pimm and the **BNCA Board** for planning and hosting the 140th BNC anniversary celebration;

Chuck Michalek and **Jeff Tucek** for photos of the 140th BNC celebration.

What's New with Friends of BNC

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much to make the gatehouse the perfect place for a celebration.

Part of the 140th celebration program was the rededication of the 1893 bell in the gatehouse bell tower. How special to hear it ring again! Several years ago, when men went up to inspect the bell tower, they found bricks without mortar and tuckpointing desperately needed, so that was the project for one year.

As one of the speakers at the 140th anniversary celebration, I was delighted to remember all that went into refurbishing and beautifying this treasure!

Mark your calendar and join us on Sunday, February 11th, at 1:00 p.m. for our winter meeting at Sawa's Old Warsaw buffet, 9200 W. Cermak in Broadview. For only \$22, enjoy a huge selection of meats, side dishes, wonderful potato pancakes, coffee, tea and soft

drinks plus dessert. John Pritasil will entertain us with hilarious stories of "Growing Up Czech." Look for information on how to send in your reservation and money on the back page of the newsletter. I hope to see you there for a great time!

May you have a most happy and healthy new year.

**Marge Sladek Stueckemann
President**

Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery

**Sunday, April 29, 2018, at 1:00 pm ~
Tour of the Tombstones
guided by Albert Walavich**

**Friday, May 25, 2018, at 10:00 am ~
Flag Placement: Help us decorate the cemetery
for Memorial Day**

**Monday, May 28, 2018 ~
Memorial Day Commemoration**

July ~ Annual BNC Picnic

**Saturday, September 29, 2018 ~
Tour of the Tombstones
guided by Albert Walavich**



Bohemian National Cemetery Association Celebrates 140 Years of Service

On October 29, 2017, the Bohemian National Cemetery Association hosted an afternoon reception to celebrate its 140th anniversary. The program took place in a tent erected on the grass in front of the



gatehouse, with speeches by BNCA President Dave Pimm, BNCA Treasurer Angie Bultas, **Czech Consul General Bořek Lizec**, and Friends of BNC President Marge Sladek Stueckemann. A framed poster of the current delegates was unveiled and will be hung in the board room in the cemetery office building. A highlight of the program was the



Dave Pimm (left), BNCA president, and Bořek Lizec, Consul General of the Czech Republic in Chicago, admiring montage poster of photos of current delegates to the cemetery. It will be hung in the board room in the cemetery office building. Both photos above and at right courtesy of Jeff Tucek



The gatehouse bell tower and close-up of the 1893 bell. Photos courtesy of Chuck Cervenka



ringing of the 1893 bell in the gatehouse bell tower. A plaque commemorating the bell was unveiled. It reads: "This memorial bell, installed for the Columbian Exposition—World's Fair of Chicago in 1893, is hereby rededicated to those who have honored Bohemian National Cemetery by allowing us to memorialize them through the passage of time. Celebrating 140 years of service 1877-2017."

After the official program, the gathering moved into the gatehouse to enjoy refreshments.



Friends Celebrates Cemetery Volunteers

To show appreciation for the volunteers who work throughout the year at the cemetery, Friends of BNC provided a nice pizza lunch for them just before Christmas. The volunteers spent the morning clearing and cleaning the south gatehouse and the old walk-in safe, and then enjoyed lunch in the BNCA boardroom in the cemetery office building. See **"Enhancing the Beauty"** on the first page for more details about the vital work

volunteers do to expand the **work we're able to do on the tree project.**

Volunteers make all the difference in how much Friends of BNC can accomplish. Please consider donating some of your time and energy. We welcome your active participation. Volunteers meet Wednesday mornings to help with clean-up and maintenance work at the cemetery. We also can use help with various

administrative functions, including publicity (the publicity chair position is currently vacant) and fundraising.

Please contact us: phone Marge Sladek Stueckemann at 847-362-9036; or email Marge or Chuck Michalek via email info@friendsofbnc.org; or write us at Friends of BNC, P.O. Box 72746, Roselle, IL 60172-0746. Whatever your skills, interests or experience, your participation is welcome!



Left to right, along the windows: Chuck Betzold, BNC Trustee; Bill Serviss, volunteer; Chuck Michalek, BNC Audit and Oversight; Jerry Gaydusek, BNC Audit and Oversight; Jim Miller, volunteer.

Left to right, foreground: Bob Weniger, volunteer; Sammy, BNC grounds staff; Angel, BNC grounds staff; Sonia, BNC grounds staff (mostly out of frame).

Photo courtesy of Chuck Michalek

Donations



Leadership

(\$10,000 and above)

Chuck Michalek
Jean Uhlir *in memory of her daughter Linda*

Benefactors

(\$1000—\$9999)

Carol Krauser

Patrons

(\$500—\$999)

Joseph and Dawn Calek
Henrietta Bartizal Pons
Jane Pugh

Sponsors

(\$100—\$499)

Anonymous
Pamela Carlson
Joseph Hasman
Marilyn John
Edward Kletecka
Lodge Yankee Jungmann #77
Judith Lovaas
Katherine Mallin *in honor of John A. Mallin*
Kathy Mallin *in honor of Randolph Mallin*
Kimberly Martin
Marlene Murray
Joan Peterson *in memory of Thomas J. Smart Family and Joseph Holub Family*

Bill and Ruth Rosol
Glenn and Susan Spachman
Cheryl and Charlotte Svoboda *in memory of Evelyn Fergle*
Kenneth Teska
Apostol and Sharon Sladek Triffon
Cheryl and Alan Zak

Donors

(\$25—\$99)

Patricia K. Devoe
Earl Hajic
Pamela Moong *in memory of Vaclav and Anna Holoubek Fryml*
Joann Poplar
Mary Sebahar

Eugene Sikorovsky
Charlotte Sommer *in celebration of Josephine Holada Sommer's 100th Birthday*
Lorraine Szabo
Albert Walavich

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

Columbarium Restoration Project Update by Chuck Michalek

The Columbarium Restoration Committee continues to develop strategies for attracting donors to support the multi-year Columbarium Restoration Project. As noted in a previous newsletter, a major accomplishment involved this past summer's dome roof repairs and gutter replacement.

The next phase will address the limestone exterior walls. This will require extensive masonry restoration that will include: installing new steel lintels over windows; repointing mortar joints; repairing or replacing limestone coping and balustrade edges; sealing cornice joints; repairing spalling and steel anchors where needed, etc.

To publicly acknowledge individuals and organizations who contribute to the

restoration project, the committee is discussing with the BNCA Board of Directors the development of a donor recognition area near the Ceremony Hall. Watch for more developments in future newsletter issues. If you would like more information on this project, please contact the Columbarium Restoration Project chairperson, Chuck Michalek, c/o

Friends of BNC, PO Box 72746, Roselle, IL 60172-0746, or via email michalekchas@aol.com.



Friends of BNC and the Columbarium Restoration Committee want to especially thank Mrs. Jean Uhlir for her significant contribution to the Columbarium Restoration Project, made in memory of her daughter Linda. According to Mrs. Uhlir, Linda, a member of Friends, had a special place in her heart for Bohemian National Cemetery. Mrs. Uhlir noted it is important to preserve historic places like BNC in order that future generations can continue to view and appreciate its special qualities and significance.

Enhancing the Beauty

(continued from first page)

fallen trees and branches and to trim dangerous hanging branches. Throughout 2017 the volunteers managed to cut down nearly two dozen additional trees in areas where there was no danger of

the falling trees impacting any monuments.

The project funds were also used to purchase equipment for the volunteers, including a new chainsaw, hand tools, safety gear and a large lawn wagon to haul debris.

Friends of BNC has submitted another grant proposal to the Czech Foreign Ministry for this year, requesting additional funds to continue work on this important project. We will hear in July if our proposal is funded.



The photo (left) was taken in Section 14. It shows the debris piles from the smaller limbs that were cut apart by volunteers and are now ready to be loaded on our dump truck and hauled away to our dump site.

Photo courtesy of Chuck Betzold



One of the volunteers (above) cuts up the trunk of a tree. The building in the distance is part of Northeastern Illinois University on the east edge of the cemetery.

Photo courtesy of Chuck Betzold



*Some of the equipment (left) purchased for the volunteers.
Photo courtesy of Chuck Betzold*

Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

P.O. Box 72746
Roselle, IL 60172-0746

Phone: 847-362-9036
Email: info@friendsofbnc.org



Heritage Happenings

we're on the web
www.friendsofbnc.org



Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

invites you for an

Afternoon of Friendship and Food

with Fun provided by John Pritasil, as he describes "Growing Up Czech"



Sunday, February 11, 2018, at 1:00 pm

Sawa's Old Warsaw Restaurant

9200 Cermak Road in Broadview, Illinois

Handicapped accessible ~ plenty of free parking

Cash bar and delicious buffet with multiple meats, terrific potato pancakes, side dishes, koláče and ice cream for dessert, coffee and soft drinks.

\$22 per person includes program, buffet, tax and gratuity.

Come hear John's tales of his Czech childhood and share some of your own!

Prepay your reservation by sending your check, postmarked by February 7th, to

Friends of BNC, P.O. Box 72746, Roselle, Illinois 60172-0746

or call by February 9th with a credit card number

Juli Nelson at 630-887-0411