

Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Spring Issue ~ Vol. XV No. 4

April 2019

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



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What's New with Friends of BNC

We were delighted to receive a grant of 150,000 CZK (Czech koruna) or approximately \$6,500. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes grants available to various Czech-American organizations, and Friends has received funds yearly since we began in 2004.

This money will help pay for upcoming work on the Columbarium Restoration Project. We are so grateful for the support

of our ancestral homeland in preserving our beautiful crematorium/columbarium building. Jan Kubišta, Deputy Consul at the Consulate of the Czech Republic in Chicago, was our contact for this wonderful news.

The Czech Consulate in Chicago has been a wonderful support for Friends. Bořek Lizec, the former Czech Consul General, *(Continued on page 3)*

Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery thanks the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for their continued support.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic

Live from BNC

Chicago's winter weather can be especially hard on buildings. Unfortunately, the 1,000,000 BTU steam boiler in BNC's crematorium/columbarium building suffered a breakdown. Valiant efforts on the part of staff and a local HVAC contractor to make repairs proved unsuccessful. After securing several bids, Williams Stoker & Heating Co., a long-established local firm

specializing in boiler work, was contacted and provided a cost-saving bid compared to other bids. They quickly and proficiently installed a new high-efficiency boiler that may even qualify for a rebate from Peoples Gas. When Williams Stoker noticed the new boiler was drawing in large amounts of fresh water, they immediately assessed that several *(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 editor@friendsofbnc.org.

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Gaydusek, Chuck Michalek

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from the editor's laptop

All newsletter editors love to hear from their readers, although it doesn't happen too often. In the last issue, I asked folks to tell me about any monuments at Bohemian National Cemetery that they find interesting. In mid-February I received an email from Don Jenkinson. The photo Don sent me of one of his favorite monuments at BNC became the inspiration for this issue's Stories of the Stones about Eleanore Janos. While Don has family members buried at the cemetery, he is not related to the Janos family. He simply liked the monument. I hope you all enjoy the story of Eleanore and her gravestone, and in turn will be inspired to tell me about any BNC grave marker that has caught your attention.

Spring and summer will see increased activity at the cemetery. There are Mother's Day and Memorial Day events in May (see page 3), and soon the next phase of work on the crematorium/columbarium building will begin. Read Chuck's update on page 5, and check our website for more information.

Na shledanou!
carol jean smetana

Děkuji vám!

Chuck Michalek for being our contact with Marion Restoration as they work on the c/c building; for creating an illustrated presentation about the Columbarium Restoration Project and presenting it to various Czech/Slovak groups in the Chicago area; and with **Chuck Betzold** for organizing and installing the name plates on the Donor Wall;

Chuck Betzold for coordinating the removal of dead trees with SavATree;

Jeff Hamerman, carpenter, for crafting the Donor Wall.

What's New with Friends of BNC

(continued from first page)
finished his term of service here and has returned to Prague with his lovely wife, **Kateřina. Bořek** was instrumental in planning the wonderful celebration of the centennial of Czechoslovakia in 2018. A number of us were able to attend the gala, a concert at Chicago Symphony Center, and a special tour of Bohemian National Cemetery. We are looking forward to meeting our new Consul General, Jaroslav **Kantůrek**.

Despite lots of snow (at least north of the city),

our February 17th winter meeting was well-attended and most interesting! Czech Plaza, newly reopened with Czech management, provided a delicious Czech dinner and the 28 people in attendance enjoyed Anna Cooková's illustrated talk about Charles **Vopička**, who was instrumental in helping America during World War I and also known as the owner of Atlas Brewing Company. Charles is buried at BNC.

Please join us at 10 a.m. on Friday, May 24th, at the cemetery to help place flags and do some planting to

beautify the cemetery for Memorial Day.

The Memorial Day event on Monday, May 27th, starts at about 8:45 a.m. with refreshments in the gatehouse, followed by a walk to the crematorium/columbarium building for a service with music and speeches in the Ceremony Hall. Join us in honoring the brave men and women who have served in the armed forces.

Marge Sladek Stueckemann
President

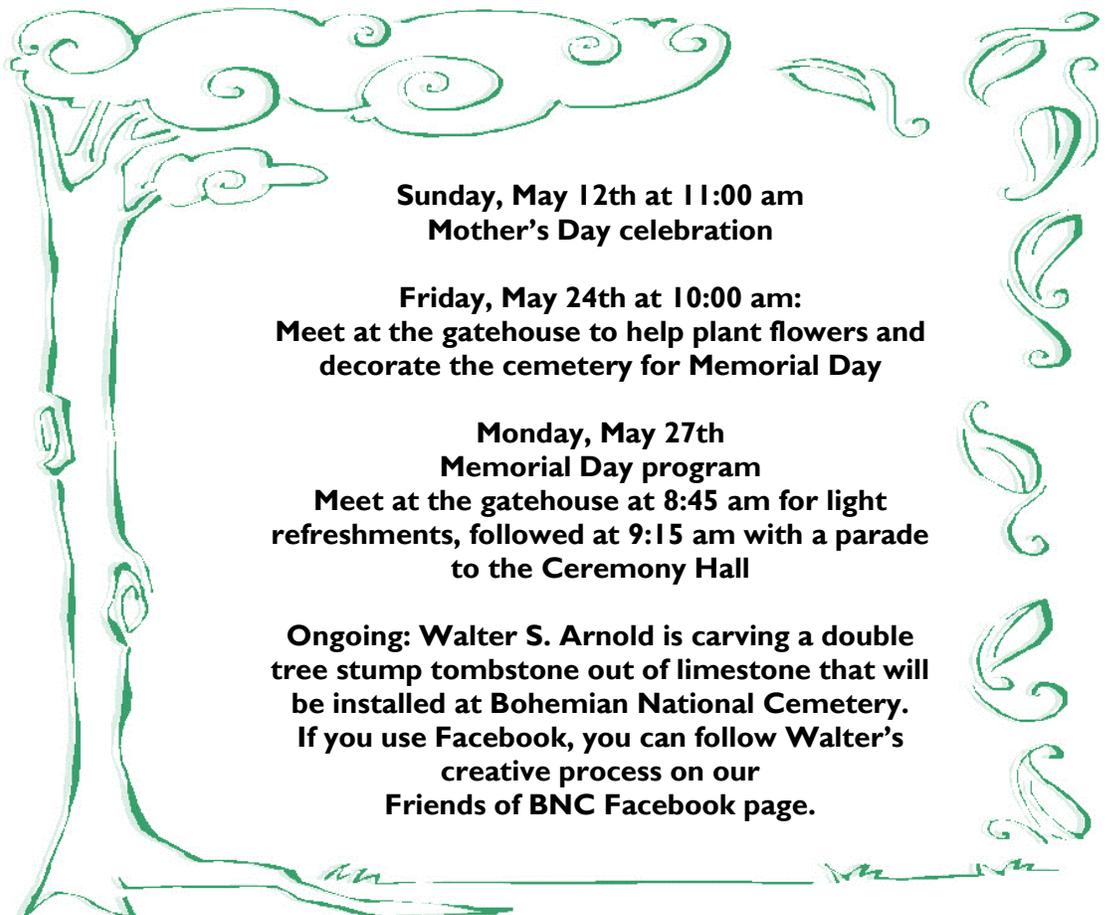
Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery

Sunday, May 12th at 11:00 am
Mother's Day celebration

Friday, May 24th at 10:00 am:
Meet at the gatehouse to help plant flowers and decorate the cemetery for Memorial Day

Monday, May 27th
Memorial Day program
Meet at the gatehouse at 8:45 am for light refreshments, followed at 9:15 am with a parade to the Ceremony Hall

Ongoing: Walter S. Arnold is carving a double tree stump tombstone out of limestone that will be installed at Bohemian National Cemetery. If you use Facebook, you can follow Walter's creative process on our Friends of BNC Facebook page.



Stories of the Stones: Eleanore H. Janos

by carol jean smetana

Friends member Don Jenkins emailed the photo, below center, with this note: "You asked people to send in a favorite photo, and this is mine, a little girl holding her dolly who died at age 7." Photo below left is a close-up of the oval photo attached to the monument.

A sculpted marble cherub, eyes heavenward, prays over the grave of Eleanore Helen Janos. The photograph on the pedestal below the cherub depicts a young girl holding a doll. The inscription below the photo tells us Eleanore "died Feb. 28, 1930, age 7 years 7 months," and concludes with this epitaph: "May our darling always rest in peace."



Eleanore was the youngest daughter of immigrant parents. Her father, John Albert Janos (originally Janusz), was born in Poland around 1889 and came to the U.S. with his mother when he was just a toddler; his father had immigrated to Chicago a



couple years earlier.

Eleanore's mother, Josephine Malecek, was born in 1891 in Bohemia; she immigrated with her parents to Chicago in 1892 when she was just a year old.

John Janos and Josephine Malecek married on May 19, 1909, in Chicago. Their first daughter Milada (Mildred) was born February 6, 1910; she died a year and a half later. In 1913, Elsie was born, followed by Florence in 1914. Six years later, on July 8, 1922, Eleanore was born.

John Janos was a successful wholesaler, first of coffee and then of flour. The family moved between Indiana and Illinois and was living in Hammond, Indiana, at the time of Eleanore's death. Her obituary in the *Denní Hlasatel* tells us only that she died after a "short and difficult illness."

One more poignant element on Eleanore's marker is the inscription on the pedestal's left panel, a version of the poem "Away."

*I cannot say, and I will not say
That she is dead, she is just
away!
With a cheery smile and a wave
of the hand
She has wandered into an
unknown land*

*And left us dreaming how very
fair
It needs must be since she
lingers there,
And you - oh you, who the
wildest yearn
For the old-time step and the
glad return*

*Think of her faring on, as dear
In the love of There, as the love
of Here.
Think of her still as the same, I
say,
She is not dead - she is just
away.*

“Away” was written by James Whitcomb Riley (1849—1916). The original version uses male pronouns (“... *that he is dead, he is just away...*” etc.) and was reportedly

written by Riley after the death of his only brother. “Away” is read at memorial services and included in obituaries and on gravestones to this day.



Also buried in the lot with Eleanore are her maternal grandmother Josephine Malecek (died in 1937), her father John (died in 1961), and her mother Josephine (died in 1979). Their names are inscribed on the base of the Janos rectangular stone to the left of **Eleanore’s** monument. Her older sister Milada (who died in 1911 when just a toddler) is buried in another section of BNC with her maternal great-grandparents.

Columbarium Restoration Project Update

Recently the boards of both the Bohemian National Cemetery Association and Friends of BNC voted to approve a contract with Marion Restoration for \$158,663.40 to begin significant repairs to the exterior masonry walls of the crematorium/ columbarium building. In March, Mario Machnicki, owner of Marion Restoration Inc. and founder/owner of US Heritage Group Inc., appeared before the BNCA Board. His presentation included a summary of the **contractor’s masonry** expertise, especially as it pertains to work on historic

buildings and the utilization of proper materials and masonry techniques.

Once the necessary work permits are secured, the next phase of restoration, including replacement of the stained glass lintels, will begin, hopefully by early summer. This work phase will primarily cover repairs to the drum walls surrounding the Ceremony Hall on the east and west sides.

You can find more details on Friends website, www.friendsofbnc.org. Click on the Columbarium Restoration Project link under “Events” in the left-

hand column.

The target of the next phase of fundraising for this multi-year project will be the repair of the north (front entrance) and south walls.

Generous donations from individuals and organizations have already provided for dome roof and gutter repairs and the replacement of the front entrance stairs and railings. Please contact me if you or your organization would like a presentation on the ongoing Columbarium Restoration Project.

Chuck Michalek
CRP Chair
michalekchas@aol.com

Winter Into Spring Reflections at BNC

by Chuck Michalek

The winter season brings a stillness and quietness to BNC's frigid landscape. As one views the dormant trees and snow-covered aging monuments, one's thoughts are easily reminded of the fleeting nature of life itself.



photo by Chuck Michalek

At such moments we may wonder what compels some of us to devote time and resources to remembering those who have been taken from us by death, particularly at places like BNC. The spiritual writer Robert Merton added to this quandary when he wrote:

*Or if the wise would understand
And the world without heart
That the dead are not yet dead
And that the living live apart*

The mission of Friends of BNC and its ongoing Columbarium Restoration Project satisfy for some of us our desires to meaningfully keep alive the memory and heritage of those who have passed on. As we move into the spring season, Friends of BNC extends gratitude to individuals and organizations that continue to support these efforts.

Donations

Benefactors

(\$1000—\$9999)

American Legion Post 488,
Riverside IL, and Bugles
Across America

Bohemian Lawyers' Association of
Chicago

Joseph and Dawn Calek

Raymond and Thelma Malecek *in
memory of Edward & Mae
Malecek*

Pamela Ann Morong *in loving
memory of Anna & Vaclav Fryml*

Dr. James Prihoda *in honor of
Vojtech & Ana Prihoda, his great-
grandparents who came with
little*

Robert and Mary Syrup *in memory
of Hrdlicka family, Jack & Helen
Syrup*

Sponsors

(\$100—\$499)

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Randall J. Kadlec *in memory of Rose
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Maryelln Visek Szwed *in memory of
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Donors

(\$25—\$99)

First Czechoslovak Garden Club
of America

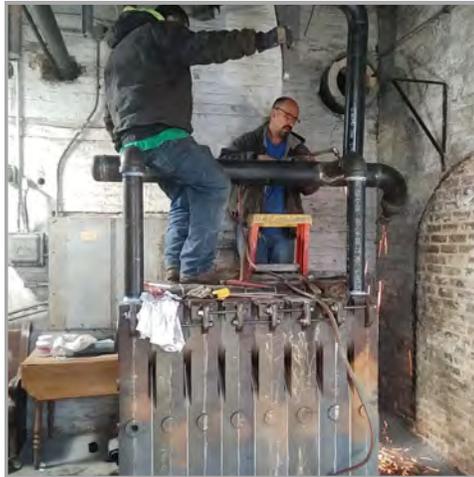
***Thank you all for
your generosity.
Your donations help
preserve and restore
Bohemian National
Cemetery.***

(continued from first page)

of the aging underground steam return pipes were leaking. This was fortuitous because this problem had not been previously known: it **was a cause of BNC's** increased water bill and the premature deterioration of internal boiler parts. Williams Stoker quickly embarked on digging out the old pipes and installing new pipes. Of interest was hearing one of the Stoker workers recall his high school job cutting grass at the cemetery and another Stoker employee fondly **mention her family's** Bohemian heritage and grandparents buried at BNC.

Our volunteers continue to contribute,

sometimes in unexpected **ways.** Jerry Gaydusek's experience with the machine shop industry enabled him to obtain specialized stainless steel screws needed to replace the fastener elements attaching large engraved marble plates on the fronts of



crypts and niches at the open-air Masaryk Memorial Mausoleum. Chuck Betzold carries on his volunteer work with SavATree. See his article below.

Chuck Michalek Friends of BNC Volunteer



*Workers from Williams Stoker removed BNC's old boiler located in the lower level of the crematorium/columbarium building (left) and replaced it with a new high-efficiency unit.
~photos by Chuck Michalek*

Among the Trees of BNC

by Chuck Betzold

On Friday, April 17th, the cemetery was proactive in removing two problem trees along our fence line on the eastern edge of our property. Northeastern Illinois University, our neighbor to the east, complained about the two dying trees whose branches were overhanging the roadway on their property. In recent months, numerous branches and limbs had fallen on our side of the fence, and the university was concerned that some might fall on their side and damage

students' cars.

We coordinated with the university security staff to close a portion of Central Park Avenue on their property. A tree crew from SavATree came out with a bucket truck and cut down the offending trees, a job that took all day.

Afterward, we worked with the university grounds staff to remove the tree debris that fell on their parkway on their side of our fence. Debris that ended up on our side of the fence will be removed by our cemetery staff as soon as

possible.

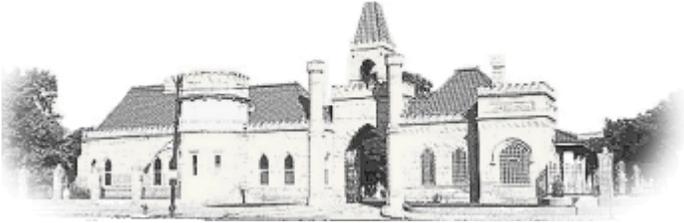
Sometime in the near future we plan on having SavATree remove a line of trees on the west side of the cemetery bungalows. These trees have grown too close to electrical and phone lines that enter the cemetery from Foster Avenue.

We have well over a thousand trees at Bohemian National Cemetery, so the trimming and removal is an ongoing process throughout the year, as resources permit.

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



Memorial Day at BNC

Join us Friday, May 24th, to help decorate the cemetery. Return on Monday, May 27th, for the Memorial Day program. See details on page 3.

