

# Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

Spring Issue ~ Vol. XX No. 4

April 2024

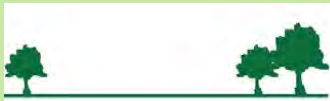
carol jean smetana, editor

## 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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## Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery

is grateful to the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the Czech Republic



for their generous 2024 grant to assist in our ongoing efforts to restore monuments and make improvements at Bohemian National Cemetery. We greatly appreciate their continued support.

## Live from BNC



Scene of the Memorial Day Service in the 50th Anniversary Year of 1927.

For many of us, a journey to Bohemian National Cemetery involves remembering a dear family member or a fond acquaintance. We might also pause to gaze at some of the remarkable old tombstones that remind us of visits long ago with our parents and grandparents. But

we sometimes overlook the impressive war memorials that can help us remember and honor the countless individuals who gave their lives while serving in the armed services defending the freedoms of our country.

Fortunately, our cemetery has  
*(continued on page 3)*

### 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, 511B 9th St, Las Vegas, NM 87701-3911 or emailed to her at editor@friendsofbnc.org.

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#### Officers of Friends of BNC

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*Juli Nelson*

Projects Co-Chair:

*Chuck Michalek*

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### from the editor's laptop



Just a brief note to apologize for this late and abbreviated newsletter. I thought it was important to let you know we're still here! I am hoping to get back on track toward the end of summer with a regular issue highlighting the spring and summer activities of Friends of BNC and bringing you news of events planned for the fall.

*Na shledanou!*  
*carol*

## Děkuji Vám!

**Jenny Llakmani** for volunteering to be our Publicity Chair

**Juli Nelson and Jenny Llakmani** for welcoming and checking in the tour participants, providing name tags, and handling sales.

**Chuck Betzold and Chuck Michalek** our spring tour leaders

## Welcome to Our New Members!

**Jill Aardsma** ... Palos Heights IL

**Kevin Davis** ... Carol Stream IL

**Susanne Bartek-Gomez** ...

**Janet Foster** ... Orland Park IL

Western Springs IL

**James Michalek** ... Woodridge IL

**Cherie Breaux family** ...

**Linda Odenback** ... Naperville IL

Chicago IL

**John Taska** ... Naperville IL

## Donations

### Benefactors

(\$1000—\$9999)

*Marge Sladek Stueckemann in memory of Evelyn Fergle*

### Patrons

(\$500—\$999)

*Dorothy Batka*

### Sponsors

(\$100—\$499)

*CSA Fraternal Life*

*Otto Dolansky*

*Mary Ellen Flaks*

*Bhupen Mody in memory of*

*Rekha Mody*

### Donors

(\$25—\$99)

*Anonymous*

*Penny McLaren*

**Thank you all for your generosity.**

**Your donations help preserve and restore Bohemian National Cemetery.**

## World Wars I and II Memorial Work Completed

The past several issues of *Heritage Happenings* featured updates on the repair project involving BNC's World Wars I and II Memorial. Thanks to the support and donations of many, the yearlong restoration of this memorial has been completed. Special thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic who provided a grant for the restoration, and to our membership, as well as the many other individuals who made donations. We also thank the skilled workmanship of the Marion Restoration

workers. We are grateful to D A M Excavation/Concrete Company for the addition of colored concrete curbing, and to Gethsemane Garden



Center for the four large flower containers and flowers.

The finished work was showcased at this year's Memorial Day service at BNC.

**Chuck Michalek**  
**Project Coordinator**

### Live from BNC

*(continued from first page)*  
a long tradition of helping us remember these fallen heroes, dating back to May 28, 1892. On that day, BNC dedicated the Bohemian Civil War Veterans Monument. Over 5,000 people turned out for the dedication, which was also the cemetery's first commemoration of Memorial



Day -- or Decoration Day, as it was then known. Subsequent Memorial Day observances involved long parades and drew crowds of several thousand people honoring our fallen heroes.

In 1952, the Bohemian National Cemetery Association dedicated the World Wars I and II Memorial, located near the cemetery's main entrance. The dedication, which also highlighted the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the cemetery, was

witnessed by thousands of spectators. The event featured an impressive parade made up of various groups, including the Fifth Army Band, Armed Forces Color Guards, Sokols, Bohemian schools and a host of other Czechoslovak groups and organizations.

BNCA's tradition of organizing Memorial Day Services was temporarily halted as a result of the Covid crisis and perceived dwindling interest. This year, Friends of BNC helped rekindle this long-held tradition at the cemetery. We will report on the event in our next issue of *Heritage Happenings*.

**Chuck Michalek**  
**Friends of BNC Volunteer**  
**Wednesday Volunteer**



A panoramic view of the large crowd with the flag at full mast.



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## *Heritage Happenings April (masquerading as July) 2024*

### **Upcoming Events at Bohemian National Cemetery**

#### **Fall Tours of the Tombstones**

Dates to be announced

#### **Summer office hours:**

Monday through Friday  
8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Closed Sunday.

#### **Cemetery Grounds:**

Open from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

***Is BNC the hottest new concert venue?***

***Enjoy this report from National Public Radio:***

<https://www.npr.org/2024/06/23/nx-s1-5003959/the-hottest-new-concert-venue-could-be-your-local-cemetery>