



From the Control Room

by Hank Kosmata

As you will see from the other articles in this issue, a number of activities are taking place which begin to give us some confidence that B Reactor will escape the cocoon and be preserved for posterity. The primary problem is timing and ultimately finding an operational sponsor. We fully expect that the Park Service study will determine that B Reactor merits a continued life and would be a reasonable Park Service operation if they only had the resources. We expect that the DOE will ultimately acknowledge that a preservation option is a reasonable choice and in line with Presidential edicts with respect to Manhattan Project history, the problem again being to find the operational financing. We would suggest that the funds that would be required to cocoon would provide a significant trust fund that could be dedicated to that purpose. The Reach Museum is a likely operational sponsor, again with a funding problem.

The DOE has now officially stated that they will hold-off any action which would interfere with preservation until 2009, giving all these other options time to sort themselves out and hopefully come to some combined long-term solution. In the meantime DOE will be using funds which were earmarked by Congressman Doc Hastings to repair the roof and support other preservation actions.

We have been working with Cindy Kelly of the Atomic Heritage Foundation towards the goal of providing exhibits which could be used in B in a preservation mode. Towards that end we have worked with potential providers of both physical models as well as graphic virtual models and have received reasonable estimates and exciting concepts for both options. At a recent meeting in Richland these providers presented their concepts and estimates and we expect from the comments at the meeting that we will be able to proceed with both in the near future. In the same time frame, Cindy had a crew filming various BRMA members describing various aspects of the reactor and

its history. These films and others that have been made in the past will become a part of exhibits in the future when tours can be done in a relaxed and to some extent self-guided mode. Cindy also was interviewing a potential exhibit designer who would combine all these materials and models into a comprehensive museum quality experience. All of this work would be financed by the Murdock Trust grant of \$350,000 which Cindy has secured for this purpose, along with possible additional funds from other sources she pursued while she was here.

In summary, while the progress seems slow, especially compared to the construction schedule of B Reactor, at least there are significant efforts moving in the right direction.

We remain optimistic.

Deputy Secretary Of Energy Directs Preservation Options Study For B Reactor

by Bob Potter

In June of this year, the Department of Energy (DOE) Deputy Secretary of Energy Clay Sell directed Skip Gosling, DOE's Chief Historian at DOE headquarters, to prepare a DOE position document on possible options to preserve B Reactor and make it publicly accessible as a museum or exhibit.

The intent of the position document is to provide DOE with an improved ability to plan, to effectively cooperate and respond to the National Park Service Manhattan Project National Historic Park Special Resources Study that is currently underway (see adjacent article), and to support future Congressional preservation actions. The position document will also provide DOE with a better understanding of the issues that could affect the agency's view on preservation and

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BRMA Representatives Attend First Department Of Energy Museum Conference In Las Vegas

by Sally Ann Potter

Sally Ann and Bob Potter represented B Reactor Museum Association (BRMA) at the first-ever Department of Energy (DOE)-sponsored Museum Conference held in Las Vegas in June 2006. The conference was sponsored by DOE's Office of History and Heritage Resources (OHHR) and hosted by the Atomic Testing Museum and the Nevada Test Site Historical Foundation. Thirty-three representatives from 15 of 19 nation-wide DOE-related museums, science, and visitor centers attended the two-day conference.

The objectives of the conference were: 1) to provide input to a DOE headquarters (DOE-HQ) Museum and Visitor Center Study requested by Deputy Secretary of Energy Clay Sell; and 2) to organize a network of DOE-related museums, science, and visitor centers in order to establish access to DOE- HQ and influence how the Department meets its historic preservation responsibility.

The Museum and Visitor Center Study is an outgrowth of a Strategy Plan for DOE's OHHR that was approved by Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham in May 2004. That Strategic Plan noted that there was *"no policy and no coordinated museum management"* within the Department and called for *"a complex-wide museum study to help formulate DOE policy"*. OHHR is being assisted in preparing the study by Dr. David Ucko, President of Museums Plus More. Deputy Secretary Clay Sell invited input from the conference via a brief video taped presentation at the beginning of the conference. Each of the 19 DOE-related museums, science, and visitor centers provided input to the study by completing an extensive questionnaire that Dr. Ucko is consolidating for incorporation into the study.

The purpose of the Museum, Science, and Visitor Center Network (MSVC-Net) will be:

- to provide a mechanism to engage and educate the public and preserve materials and memories that characterize the work of the Department of Energy, its contractors and predecessor agencies as initiators of science and technology that made history and continue to change the world, and
- to serve the Department's interest in understanding and honoring its work in the past and its need for an informed public and capable future workforce.

The MSVC-Net has been established as an informal organization with no incorporation or by-laws. It will invite representatives from each museum, science, and visitor centers to be members. Communications will be via internet with designated representatives from each

organization that wants to participate; there will be no membership fees or dues, and an annual meeting hosted by a different museum each year. An organizational steering committee was established to develop a Charter, Policy Statement and Strategic Plan for the MSVC-Net. Bob Potter was asked to represent BRMA on the steering committee.

There are some distinct benefits and potential impacts of the new MSVC-Net, including:

- Strength in numbers, an advocacy group with a common mission,
- Access to DOE-HQ,
- Opportunity to influence DOE's policy and how the Department fulfills its historic preservation responsibilities,
- Establishment of a national political base and promoting unified political positions,
- Assistance with common issues and sharing lessons learned,
- Establishment of standards and uniform policies and procedures, including the identification, preservation and curation of artifacts,
- Sharing of resources, and
- Coordination of activities and joint promotional opportunities such as an Atomic Tourism Trail or Bureau of Atomic Tourism.

Preservation Options Study . . .

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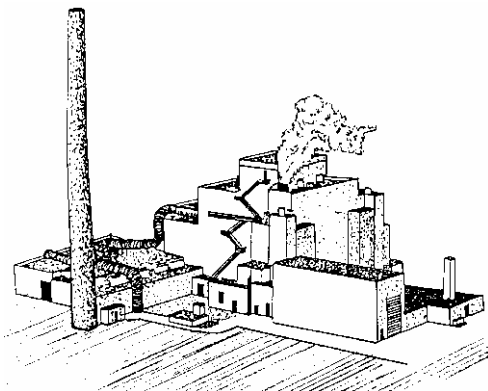
public access to historically significant DOE facilities. This position document will also provide DOE with an assessment of issues and options that will need to be addressed in the preservation of B Reactor and other Manhattan Project facilities.

In a related action, the Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management directed the DOE Richland Operations Office (RL) to support the Chief Historian in preparing the position document by conducting studies to gain an understanding of the legal, institutional, logistical and other issues that may affect the viability of preserving B Reactor and making the reactor publicly accessible as a museum or exhibit. In addition to providing support for the headquarters position document, RL also was directed to modify the Columbia River Corridor Closure Contract with Washington Closure Hanford to delay the turn-over of B Reactor for any cocooning activities until at least 2009. Significantly, this date is after the DOE headquarters position document is complete and the completion of the NPS Manhattan Project Study.

National Park Service Seattle Office To Nominate B Reactor As A National Historical Landmark

by Bob Potter

In April 2005, with the assistance of Cindy Kelly, President of the Atomic Heritage Foundation, the Department of Energy (DOE), as the owner of B Reactor, “officially” acknowledged that they had no objection to the request to designate B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark (NHL). After receiving DOE’s consent to proceed, the National Park Service (NPS) Seattle office submitted the draft National Historic Landmark application for B Reactor that was prepared by BRMA to their National Historic Landmark Program Office for review and comment. The review comments on the draft application were received back by the NPS Seattle office in September 2005.



and address its significance in comparison to other Manhattan Project facilities and other already designated NHL properties. It was further recommended that the period of national significance in the application for B Reactor be extended through 1968 and the end of the Cold War. It was also noted that a successful application would have to elaborate on the negative environmental consequences of the production, use, storage, and disposal of plutonium and other associated hazardous and radioactive materials.

Following the review by the National Landmarks Program, the NPS Seattle office offered to take the lead in preparing and submitting the final

application and in sponsoring the nomination of B Reactor as an NHL. To assist in addressing the recommended additional historical perspective in the application, the Seattle office obtained the consulting services of Dr. John Findlay, a history professor at the University of Washington, and Dr. Michele Gerber, Hanford historian, both acclaimed authors on the history of the Manhattan Project and specifically Hanford’s contribution to U.S. and world history.

There are distinct advantages in having the Seattle office of the NPS be the applicant and sponsor of the nomination, in having credentialed historians as contributing authors, and in having the NPS Seattle office responsible for ensuring that the application is complete and comprehensive when submitted to the NPS National Historic Landmarks Program Office and the National Park System Advisory Board for approval.

The final draft of the application is scheduled to be completed in late September 2006. NPS has agreed to have BRMA review the final draft of the application. The application will be submitted by the NPS to the National Park System Advisory Board for action at their scheduled fall meeting in November. If the application is approved by the Board the nomination will be forwarded to the Director of the National Park Service and Secretary of Interior for the formal designation of B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark. This will be another important designation that will help ensure the preservation of B Reactor.

While the draft application had excellent technical content, the review recommended that the application expand on the historical role and context of B Reactor

BRMA Financial Status

by Dell Ballard, Treasurer

The BRMA organization is blessed with an adequate bank account balance, considering our current activities and mode of operations. An informal budget prepared for CY-06 for BRMA operations predicted an annual income of \$5,950 and estimated expenses of \$7,850. With two-thirds of the year behind us, our income and expenses, are \$3,855 and \$2,917 respectively, well within budget.

We are fortunate and very grateful for a donation of \$1,000 from Hanford contractor, Washington Closure Hanford. Our sub-contract with that company for providing tour guide service, and our membership dues are our principal sources of revenue. Annual dues for all members will become due again on January 1, 2007.

In previous years, substantial income resulted for contract work on the preparation of “HAER Reports”- Historical American Engineering Reports for the Hanford B Reactor and the T Plant. That work was done under sub-contracts with previous Hanford contractors.

Current net worth of BRMA, including all checking, savings, and CD accounts is just over \$50,000. Recent membership action has authorized expenditures of an amount up to \$10,000 to help fund the fabrication of exhibits for the reactor.

Helping Assure Our Association's Health

by Mel Finkbeiner, Membership Secretary

Perhaps you've seen the most recent report in the *Tri-City Herald* that "locals" and folk from far and wide are eager to tour Hanford, and in particular to see the B Reactor! That is gratifying!

This interest is growing because members of our B Reactor Museum Association have been active in a variety of ways! That includes keeping in touch with friends as well as persons of influence in many quarters of the public, including our Legislators!

Unfortunately, some of you receiving *The Moderator* have allowed your association membership to lapse! Meaning, we've not received your "financial membership" in 2006. One quarter of 2006 still remains!!! Brother, Sister can you spare that "Ten" or that "Twenty?" Every second Monday of the month the BRMA is in session at the Richland Public Library,

beginning at 7 p.m. The meeting is open to the public. Our Association's health depends on your participation. Please attend—let's keep up the momentum.

One additional word: The Board voted to make the calendar year the membership year. Thus, Association membership dues for 2007 will be requested in December 2006.

2006 BRMA Leadership

Officers:

President: Hank Kosmata (acting)
Vice President: Hank Kosmata
Secretary: Bob Smith
Treasurer: Del Ballard

Chairs:

History & Artifacts: Burt Pierard
Public Relations: Open
Membership: Mel Finkbeiner
Tour Coordinator: Maynard Plahuta
Government Relations: Bob Potter
Property & Facilities: Del Ballard
Moderator Editor: Richard Romanelli

AUTUMN 2006

Meetings normally are held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 PM at the Richland Public Library.

The next meetings are:

Monday, October 9th, at the library
Monday, November 13th, at the library

2007 Renewal and New Member Application

I want to help preserve the history of the B Reactor. Below is my application with payment for annual membership or renewal in the B Reactor Museum Association.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: (h): (____) _____ (w): (____) _____ MSIN address: _____
(current Hanford employees)

E-mail: _____

Individual (\$20) or Senior (age 65+) or Student (\$10) and New or Renewal
 Group (\$25 up to 100 members; please add \$10 for each additional 100 members)

For Group Membership, Official Representative: _____

Additional tax deductible contribution: \$ _____
(Tax ID # 94-3142387)

Total Enclosed: \$ _____
(Please make check out to BRMA)

Thank you; please mail this application with payment to:

B Reactor Museum Association
PO Box 1531
Richland, WA 99352

National Park Service Kicks Off “Manhattan Project National Historic Park Study”

by Bob Potter

In March, the National Park Service (NPS) kicked off the Manhattan Project National Historic Park Special Resources Study that was authorized by Public Law 108-340, approved by President Bush in October 2004. The funding to initiate the study was included in this year's Department of Interior budget, with funding to complete the study included in the proposed 2007 budget.

The law directed the Secretary of the Interior, in conjunction with the Department of Energy (DOE), to conduct a study to evaluate options for preserving and interpreting facilities at four Manhattan Project sites: Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Los Alamos, New Mexico; Dayton, Ohio; and Hanford, Washington. The study will evaluate the potential for selected facilities at these sites to be included into the National Park System and/or to identify other management options. The facilities being studied at Hanford include B Reactor and T Plant. The total study is being managed by the NPS Denver office, with the Hanford portion being coordinated by the NPS Pacific West Region in Seattle.

The NPS conducted a series of public scoping meetings at each of the study sites during the spring and early summer. The first of these meetings was held in Richland in March, with than 150 people participating in the two scoping sessions held at the Red Lion Hanford House.

The NPS team is currently preparing draft statements on the significance, suitability and feasibility for the facilities included in the study. The NPS Seattle Office will be reviewing the draft statement for Hanford with a local steering committee in late September or early October. The local steering committee includes a number of BRMA members, along with other community leaders and government officials.

In 2007, the NPS will be holding a series of workshops at each site to develop a set of management options/alternatives for the facilities. A draft of the management options/alternatives for each site will be issued for public review and public meetings are planned for each site to solicit public comments. An analysis of the alternatives will be made, incorporating the public comments, and a preferred alternative selected. A draft Study Report will then be prepared, published and distributed, with a final set of public meetings held to obtain public comment.

In 2008, the public comments will be incorporated into a final Study Report that will be published, along with a Record of Decision; and the Secretary of the Interior will present the study results to Congress.

The published results of this NPS study will be the first official government position on preserving B Reactor and identify various options for managing and operating B Reactor as a museum or an interpreted historical exhibit.

B Reactor Tours

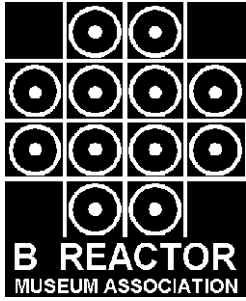
The next DOE-sponsored public tours of B Reactor are scheduled for Oct. 17th, 18th, & 19th, 2006. This is the first year that three separate tour events have been offered. BRMA guides have been the exclusive guides for the first two tours (19 groups, totaling approximately 760 people), and they will also conduct the October tours. The last tour (July) was filled within 15 minutes after opening. In addition to the public tours, BRMA guides conducted another 12 tours for approximately 320 people this calendar year to date. Clearly, this level of activity and early/quick requests to enroll for public tours demonstrates the public interest in B Reactor tours.

DOE and its contractors also conducted tours for dignitaries and special groups for approximately 50 additional people. Thus, more than 1,125 people have toured B Reactor this year to date. The total number for 2006 will approach, or perhaps exceed 1,500.

Any BRMA member who may have an interest in becoming a tour guide, or who would like more information about tour guides, should call Maynard Plahuta at 946-1162. We would be happy to have you join our group of 15 active guides.

A tour guide workshop is planned for this fall or early next spring. It will be held at the B Reactor and will hopefully follow one of the next scheduled non-public tours. It will include a personal option to climb up and over the reactor where a number of our guides have never trod. Maynard will inform all guides as soon as the schedule is confirmed.

Maynard Plahuta,
Tour Coordinator



PO Box 1531
Richland, WA 99352

<http://www.b-reactor.org>
info@b-reactor.org

Highlighting Hanford's Historic B Reactor

Weekly Column by Congressman Doc Hastings
September 22, 2006

This month Hanford's historic B Reactor is marking its 62nd Anniversary. From a scientific standpoint, the B Reactor is a testament to American ingenuity and innovation. From a historical standpoint it represents a part of Central Washington's past and our nation's past that should not be forgotten.

Hanford's nuclear history began in the 1940's and nuclear production at Hanford played a pivotal role in our nation's defense for more than 40 years. An integral part of the Manhattan Project, the World War II effort to develop and construct the first atomic bomb, the work done at Hanford helped win World War II. Later, nuclear production at Hanford helped provide the nuclear deterrence that helped defeat communism and win the Cold War.

One of the key components to Hanford's nuclear production success was the B Reactor. In 1943, only months after Enrico Fermi first demonstrated that controlled nuclear reaction was possible, ground was broken on the B Reactor - which became the world's first full-scale plutonium production reactor. The B Reactor produced the plutonium for the first ever manmade nuclear explosion - the Trinity test in New Mexico - and for the bomb dropped on Nagasaki that helped win World War II.

Recognizing the role that the B Reactor played in our regional and national history, I authored a bill that was signed into law in 2004 and marked a major step forward in preservation efforts. The law directed the National Park Service to study the potential for making Hanford's B Reactor into a museum. This ongoing study is the first step in preserving the historic B Reactor for generations to come. As this work moves forward, I continue to work with the local community, the National Park Service and the Department of Energy to ensure that this unique part of Central Washington's history is not forgotten.

Walking through the B Reactor is like catching a glimpse into the 1940's. Because it has been left largely intact, touring B Reactor gives you get a very real sense of what it might have been like to work there. For those who didn't live though World War II - the B Reactor helps tell the story of a workforce that contributed to our nation's defense for so many years.

For more information about the B Reactor, its history, and ongoing preservation efforts please visit the B Reactor Museum Association website at www.b-reactor.org.

Michael G. Conschafter

Legislative Assistant

Office of Congressman Doc Hastings

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