

THE

MODERATOR



B R E A C T O R M U S E U M A S S O C I A T I O N

January—March

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

Winter 2007-8

From The Control Room

by Hank Kosmata

A highlight of this period was the unanimous recommendation of B Reactor as a national historic landmark. This action was taken on December 5th by the Landmarks Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board. BRMA began the effort to achieve this designation in 2005 and has been assisted along the way by the NPS and by Congressman Hastings and Senator Murray. The full story of the extensive process to achieve this designation is told in a following article by Bob and Sally Ann Potter. They also discuss the upcoming important regional hearings by NPS with respect to a possible inclusion of B Reactor in the National Park System.

In the previous *Moderator* we discussed the activities surrounding the final preparation of models and exhibits to be unveiled in October and another following article by Bob and Sally Ann describes in detail the full extent of the grand opening for the new enhancements to the B Reactor. We are certainly moving closer to the hoped for day when our visitors will be able to spend extended time in the facility and will have the opportunity to self guide their tours and probe their own areas of interest to the

extent of that interest-in short, a true museum experience.

Approximately 1750 people toured B Reactor in 2007. Tour coordinator Maynard Plahuta describes the 2007 tour year in detail in his following article.

Our work on the Meier computer model will conclude with a DVD that will demonstrate the construction of the reactor from the foundation up and will also include a power point presentation of similar material. All of this material will be usable on the BRMA desk top and projector equipment and will be available for presentations to interested parties.

While all the above events and actions are positive with respect to the future of B Reactor, we still have a concern as to the timing of a looming cocoon date and to the lack of progress in needed preservation work such as the much delayed roof repair. We are working with the B Reactor Coalition to find ways to focus on needed action and to develop a workable schedule and activity program acceptable to ourselves, to the DOE at all levels, and to our Congressional delegation.

National Park System Advisory Board Landmarks Committee Recommends *National Historic Landmark* Status For B Reactor

by Bob and Sally Ann Potter

On December 5, 2007, the Landmarks Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board voted unanimously to recommend designating B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark, the most significant designation for a historic property in the United States.

In early 2005 BRMA submitted the draft application for B Reactor's landmark designation, through the National Park Service (NPS) Seattle Office, for review by the NPS National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program. Following receipt of the comments from the Program Office in September 2005, the NPS Seattle Office offered to take the lead in preparing and submitting the final application and sponsoring the nomination of B Reactor as an NHL before the Landmark Committee. Responsibility for the final application was

the NPS Pacific West regional office in Oakland, California.

Congressman Doc Hastings had worked with the Interior Department for nearly a year to have the B Reactor application be considered by the Advisory Committee and secured the date for December 5th Committee meeting. At the hearing Congressman Hastings testified, "It has been local citizens who have worked tirelessly to highlight the national significance of B Reactor". He noted, "We are proud of the historic role that Hanford workers played during the middle part of the 20th Century and we are proud of the engineering marvel that Hanford workers built out in the desert." He concluded, "Recognizing B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark

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NPS Advisory Board Recommends...

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has my support as well as the support of the Tri-Cities community. They believe the B Reactor deserves the highest recognition from the federal government for historic preservation”.

Senator Patty Murray also applauded the decision by the Landmarks Committee. She said, “Designating the B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark will help preserve the legacy of our region in American History. The B Reactor is both an important symbol of our nation’s transition to the nuclear age and a reminder of the service and sacrifice that came with it. I look forward to the preservation of the site for future generations.”

Also testifying at the hearing was Dr. Michele Gerber, our local Hanford historian who played a key role in providing the national historical perspective of B Reactor in the application. Following the unanimous recommendation by the Advisory Committee, Michele stated “This is huge!”, but she warned that this is only an important first step in designating B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark, and only one step toward preserving B Reactor and preventing DOE from proceeding with the cocooning of the facility.

The next step in the nomination process is for the full National Park System Advisory Committee to act on the Committee recommendation and then forward their recommendation on to the Secretary of Interior for his final approval. It is expected that the Secretary of Interior can sign an order designating B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark as early as the spring of 2008. Once designated, we will be able to request an official bronze plaque from the National Park Service to recognize this high distinction.

The designation of B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark will also greatly support the results of the NPS “Manhattan Project Sites Special Resources Study” that is currently underway. This study was authorized in a bipartisan bill signed by President Bush in 2004 that was authored by Congressman Hastings and Senator Maria Cantwell. The study is evaluating the potential for selected Manhattan Project facilities, including B Reactor, to be included into the National Park System and/or identify other management options. The draft study report, including the management options for B Reactor, is scheduled to be issued by the NPS in the spring of 2008. A public hearing on the draft management options will be held in Richland, along with a period for written comments, in the spring of 2008. The final study report is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2008.

B REACTOR MUSEUM:* Our Aim! **Preserve History.*

1 – The Atomic Age begins!

2 – Fantastic Human Ingenuity!

3 – A War of Horror was ended!

4 – An unending source of Energy tapped!

5 – World-wide Cooperation

I want to help! Below is my application with payment for this Full Year membership or renewal in the “B Reactor Museum Association.”

2008 Renewal and New Member Application

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**

New Exhibits Open At B Reactor

by Bob and Sally Ann Potter

Wednesday October 10th was an exciting day for BRMA and the Atomic Heritage Foundation with the unveiling to the public and the media of a set of new exhibits at B Reactor. The exhibits, funded by a grant from the Murdock Charitable Trust and BRMA, include a set of self-standing rail panels located throughout the tour route that contain back-lighted storyboards with push-button stations to select a series of video and/or audio vignettes. The audio/visual vignettes include professionally narrated text, filmed statements from Manhattan Project and B Reactor veterans (including members of BRMA) that were taken from recorded oral histories, and accentuated by the computer-generated virtual model created by Meier Enterprises, Inc. of Kennewick. In addition to the exhibits, the Murdock Charitable Trust funded the publication of a 40-page B Reactor guide book.

The storyboard rail panel in the front face area introduces B Reactor at the Hanford Engineer Works and provides access to the presentation of vignettes on two large flat-screen monitors that describe the history of the Manhattan Project, the selection of Hanford, how the B Reactor is constructed, a description of how the fuel was fabricated, how the fuel was loaded into the reactor, and how the reactor was refueled after the fuel was irradiated. Story-board panels are located in the fan room area to tell the story of the ventilation system, the cooling-water system description is told along the valve pit rail, and the rail panel in the accumulator room tells the story of the back-up safety system.

The control room has two flat-screen monitors for vignettes that describe the startup and control of the reactor, the many safety systems, and the mystery xenon-gas shutdown in 1944. Storyboard rail panels and a flat-screen monitor are located in the fuel basin viewing area. They describe fuel basin operation and the chemical process that was used to separate the plutonium from the irradiated fuel elements after being transferred to the chemical processing plants.

The highlight of the exhibits is the 4ft x 4ft x 4ft cut-away, scale model of the B Reactor block that BRMA

members have been anxious to have fabricated for many years. Lockheed Martin Information Technology SnakeWorks model facility in Richland fabricated the model, along with the rail panels and storyboards. The outstanding details of the graphite stack, the shield blocks, movable control and safety rods, and the reactor piping systems will greatly assist visitors in understanding how the reactor was constructed and what went on behind the front face. The model includes small lights that allows a tour guide to point out a reactor component from a push-button station on a rail panel storyboard that describes that component.



B Reactor model with pile cutaway

In addition to contributing to the funding for exhibits, BRMA members provided technical direction for the construction of the physical and computer models and extensive writing and editing support for the text in the vignettes, story boards, and 40-page guide book.

The new B Reactor exhibits were introduced during two guided bus tours to the reactor for a total of more than 50 invited community leaders and the media, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. Following the afternoon tour, a public reception, sponsored by the Atomic Heritage Foundation, BRMA, *The REACH* Interpretive Center Board of Directors, and the Richland Public Facility District, was held at the Anthony's Event Center in Richland, with more than 80 community leaders in attendance. The reception was to celebrate the opening of the new exhibits, to promote the preservation of B Reactor and the important synergy with *The REACH*, and the publication of a new Atomic Heritage Foundation book, *The Manhattan Project: The Birth of the Atomic Bomb in the Words of its Creators, Eyewitnesses, and Historians*. The book, edited by Cindy Kelly, is a compilation of primary historical documents, commentary from leading historians and experts, and first-hand accounts from extraordinary leaders such as J. Robert Oppenheimer, General Leslie Groves, Enrico Fermi and Richard Feynman. Copies of *The Manhattan Project: The Birth of the Atomic Bomb in the Words of its Creators, Eyewitnesses, and Historians* are available in the Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science and Technology (CREHST) gift shop.

BRMA meets the second Monday of each month at Richland's CREHST Museum, 7 p.m.

B Reactor Tours

by Maynard Plahuta, Tour Coordinator

“AMAZING”, “WHAT A TECHNICAL ACCOMPLISHMENT”, “TO SEE IT WITH MY OWN EYES IS A REAL TREAT”, “I HAVE LIVED HERE FOR SIX YEARS AND HAD NO IDEA WHAT A TREASURE IS RIGHT IN MY BACKYARD”, “IT LOOKS LIKE A REAL MUSEUM” These are some of the quotes I received while observing and chatting with tour participants during the public tours this fall. Even the bus driver reportedly commented that after leaving the reactor the people were pumped up and kept talking about the tour for an extended time.

So again, the tours in 2007 have been a huge success! This is the first set of public tours that included the new physical cutaway model and the virtual model vignettes. Many of those touring remarked how great these features were. Some DOE staff remarked that these additions have made the reactor’s museum potential even more obvious.

There were approximately 1750 people who toured B Reactor in 2007. BRMA tour guides toured about 1350 of those people. The remainder was generally smaller groups toured by Washington Hanford Closure or DOE staff. In addition to the general public tour attendees BRMA and the other guides toured a wide range of other interested parties.. These include U.S. Senators and Congress Members, State officials, U.S. Congressional staff, various U.S. and State agency staff, national and

local TV and news media, students, and a host of interested technical/professional associations and civic groups. This array of people demonstrates the breadth of interest which is the foundation of a sustaining museum.

The total number of “tourists” in 2007 is down slightly from 2006. Nevertheless, the 2007 attendance is amazingly high given the fact that no tours were scheduled during much of the summer in anticipation the reactor roof repair would be under way. Unfortunately, the roof repair was not accomplished but is now scheduled for spring of 2008. Hopefully this will not interfere significantly with tours this coming year. It is possible that additional public tours will be scheduled in 2008, but as always we should not get our hopes up too high until a firm decision is announced.

BRMA members (or others who may be interested) are invited to become tour guides. If interested please call Maynard Plahuta at 946-1162 or e-mail him at his new e-mail address at myplahuta@clearwire.net

A note to BRMA Guides: Tari (pronounced Terry) Birch has replace Cecelia Ward as the Washington Hanford Closure point of contact for matters relating to B Reactor tour schedules. Normally Maynard Plahuta will handle matters with Tari. But when he is needed and not available to answer questions, arrange for security badge pick up, etc. feel free to contact Tari at 372-9179.

2008 BRMA Officers Elected

by Bob Smith

New BRMA Officers for the 2008 Calendar Year were elected at the December 2007 meeting of the membership.

The following Officers will continue on in their previous positions: Hank Kosmata, President; Steve Buckingham, Secretary; and Del Ballard, Treasurer. C. J. Mitchell was elected Vice President.

The following Committee Chairs will continue on in their previous positions: Mel Finkbeiner, Membership; Bob Bowersock, Governmental Affairs; Burt Pierard, Artifacts & Historian; Richard Romanelli, Moderator Editor; and Missy Keeney Baker, Asst. Moderator Editor. Bob and Sally Ann Potter were elected to return to the Public Relations position, which has been vacant for the last two years.

Heartfelt thanks go out to Bob Smith, Wally Gregor, and Bill McCullough, who served as the Nominating Committee to draw up the slate of candidates.

2008 BRMA Leadership

Officers:

President: Hank Kosmata
Vice President: C.J. Mitchell
Secretary: Steve Buckingham
Treasurer: Del Ballard

Chairs:

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



Burt Pierard & Steve Buckingham manning the BRMA display at the Tri-Cities Visitor & Convention Bureau Trade Show in November 2007. (Photo credit: Gary White)

Financial Review

Del Ballard - Treasurer

BRMA has completed another year on a sound financial basis. The two primary sources of revenue continues to be our member dues /donations and funds from our contract to provide tour guide service for the reactor tours.

Total receipts, including interest, for 2007 were \$7,901.81. Total expenditures were \$12,930.36. A major outlay for this year was our \$10,000 payment to Atomic Heritage Foundation for new B Reactor exhibits. Our contribution was billed as reimbursement for a portion of fabrication cost for a tenth scale physical model of the reactor that was designed and built by Lockheed Martin. A breakdown for the year's activity follows.

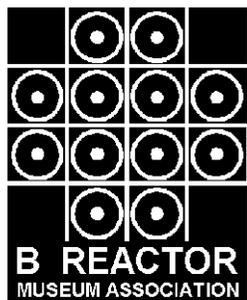
The total balance of all our accounts at year's end was \$48,274.54. Of that amount \$11,103.49 was in checking and savings accounts and \$37,171.05 (not including accrued interest) was in a fixed-rate CD.

RECEIPTS, all accounts:

Member Dues & donations	\$2,630.00
Tour Service	4,250.00
Sale of caps & Supplies	25.00
Interest, CD & Savings accounts	<u>996.81</u>
Total	\$7,901.81

EXPENDITURES, all from checking:

Advertisement	\$ 43.05
PO Box rent	72.00
Exhibits	10,000.00
State Corporation fee	10.00
Printing, Office, Postage	291.31
Record Retention (storage unit)	539.00
Tour Guide Honorariums	<u>1,975.00</u>
Total	\$12,930.36



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info@b-reactor.org