

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 2012

From The Control Room

by Maynard Plahuta, BRMA President

This year has been a very successful and eventful year for BRMA. Many of the successes and achievements mentioned below are well known to local BRMA members who have attended regular BRMA meetings. However, I thought it would help bring members living outside of the Tri-City area, and others, up to date on progress made this year as well as current activity.

A major forward movement in 2011 was the National Parks Service's (NPS) issuance of its report of the Manhattan Project study. The report identified the feasibility of a Manhattan Project National Historic Park. Subsequent to issuance of the NPS report, Secretary Ken Salazar of the U.S. Department of Interior officially submitted the report to the U.S. Congress with his recommendation that Congress approve the establishment of a Manhattan Project National Historic Park. The study recommended one Park with units located at Hanford, Washington; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and Los Alamos, New Mexico. Of course B Reactor is the key facility at Hanford, but other Hanford facilities such as T Plant, the Nike missile Site, and pre-Hanford buildings such as the White Bluffs bank, the Hanford high school, and the Bruggemann warehouse could be included.

Representative Doc Hastings' invitation to Sec. Salazar to join him along with Senator Cantwell and Governor Gregoire for a visit to B Reactor was another highlight of the year. It is noteworthy that Sec. Salazar asked me while at B to give him a brief history of BRMA. After receiving the brief he stated to me his personal thanks to BRMA for saving B. It was interesting to note his extreme interest and enthusiasm while at B and his obvious pleasure that he had recommended the establishment of the Manhattan National Historic Park.

I received a complementary invitation from the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) to join several

NPCA members from the Northwest for a visit on November 30th with nine northwest U.S. congressional members and/or their staff in Washington D.C. A major topic discussed was draft legislation for the proposed Manhattan Project National Park. I had noted to senior staff member Todd Young of the House Natural Resources Committee (chaired by Rep. Doc Hastings) that several of us in the Tri-Cities were working on draft legislative language we would like to share when completed. We believe this draft language would be beneficial to all three locations. Todd requested we provide a copy that he would use in preparing the legislation for congressional approval and the President's signature. We did learn that no language had yet been prepared by congressional staff. Other topics shared with those we visited included making Mt. St. Helen's a national park, operational funding needs for the Ice Age Floods, and funding needed for eliminating the nearly annual wash-out of the Stehekin road in the wilderness area near Lake Chelan, Washington. Overall the visits were well received and productive.

The following day several of us met at the NPCA office to discuss the pros and cons of the draft legislation prepared to date, basically by Cindy Kelly, (President, Atomic Heritage Foundation (AHF)). This group was comprised of Cindy Kelly, Keith Dunbar (retired NPS employee), with assistance from Sean Smith and Ron Tipton (both experienced NPCA employees on legislative language and processes), and me. On December 21st our local team including Gary Petersen (TRIDEC), Pam Larsen (the Hanford Communities), myself, and Colleen French (DOE), along with Cindy Kelly, Ron Tipton and Sean Smith held a telephone conference call to continue developing the draft language.

Another achievement in 2011 was the transfer of two
(Continued on page 3)

The B Reactor Museum Assn. meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the CREHST Museum Auditorium, 95 Lee Blvd., Richland
The first meeting of Calendar Year 2012 is Monday, January 9, 7 p.m. at CREHST

2012 BRMA Officers, Committee Chairs Elected

The election of Officers and Committee Chairs for the 2012 calendar year was held on Dec. 12, 2011, at the B Reactor Museum Association's monthly meeting.

The following officers will continue in their present positions:

Maynard Plahuta - President,
C.J. Mitchell - Vice President,
Del Ballard - Treasurer.

Newly elected as **Secretary is Gene Weisskopf**
(previously serving as an appointee).

Continuing as Committee Chairs are:

Bob Bowersock – Government Relations;
Burt Pierard – Membership, History & Archives;
Del Ballard – Property & Facilities; and
Bob Horgos - Tour Coordinator.

Richard Romanelli continues as *The Moderator* Editor
& **Missy Keeney Baker** as Associate Editor.

Gary White will continue to serve as the recently
renamed **Communications Director** (was Public
Relations Chair) which he was filling as an appointee.

Membership Report By Burt Pierard, Membership Chair

We are starting off 2012 with 29 members who took advantage of the early renewal period last quarter. For the rest of you, just a reminder that the 2012 Dues are now due. To send in your Renewal, the Form is on this page to Clip or Print.

★ **BRMA Charitable Contributors** ★
★ This is a Public Acknowledgement of the generous ★
★ cash contributions to BRMA. The following list ★
★ covers the period, October thru December, 2011. ★
★
★ **Virgil L. Broadwater, Tony Grambihler** ★
★ **Bob Horgos, Jim & Sheryl Paglieri** ★
★ **Clay Perkins (2 contributions), Dr. Cameron Reed** ★
★ **Roger Rohrbacher, Watson C. Warriner** ★
★ **Gene Woodruff** ★
★ **Thank You!** ★

Treasurer's Report By Del Ballard, Treasurer

Again this year our activities have resulted in a moderately successful one from a financial perspective. Through mid-December, total revenue for the BRMA was \$27,727, and our total expenses were \$16,714, resulting in a gain of \$11,013. Primary sources of income were from member dues, donations, and the most significant was the BRMA gain from our tour guide service by BRMA members. Those three categories provided \$1,300, \$1,287, and \$8,690 respectively to our gain. Other minor income and expense categories made up the remainder.

BRMA has designated support funds for at least two new models and displays to enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of the B Reactor and the Manhattan Project at Hanford.



2012 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

From The Control Room (cont'd)

(Continued from page 1)

locomotives and two cask cars to B Reactor. This will enhance tourists' understanding of B operations and the enjoyment of their visits. BRMA is very appreciative of two of its members who offered significant contributions for paint and labor to repaint one of the locomotives. Specific thanks to Watson Warriner and Clay Perkins for their contributions of \$7,000 and \$10,000 respectively for this excellent project!

The number of tours increased again this year. Kirk Christensen and his staff have continued to enhance the experience of B Reactor tourists in many ways. For example, in a recent tour with one of Congressman Hastings' staff members I noted several improvements including increased lighting in the work area (use of 1,000 watt bulbs as used while B was operating) and the placement of a mirror over the accumulators to reflect the river rock below. This avoids the congestion in the accumulator room and the need to climb the stairs to view the rocks. It also avoids potential safety issues. Thanks Kirk for your continued dedication, support, and forward thinking.



Rep. Doc Hastings, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, and Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire learn about B Reactor instrumentation from MSA's Russ Fabré during their visit to the reactor last year.

Another advancement that occurred late this year is the recent progress made to officially transfer the excess reactor graphite and one or two process tubes to BRMA. It appears we are finally at the point of having the necessary paperwork finalized. This transfer will help Gene Woodruff and his team to have a graphite pile model (approximately a four-foot cube) built. This model will represent the B Reactor pile, including process tubes and other features. The graphite also will be used to make souvenirs that will be available for sale to B Reactor tourists and others. Gary White appears to have found a possible location for the storage of the graphite at a minimum or no cost price for locating the graphite once in our possession. Thanks, Gary.

Cindy Kelly advised BRMA that AHF's grant proposal made to the Murdock Foundation was partially funded. Of the requested \$225,000, only \$165,000 was awarded. It appears the Foundation's awards are based on the recipient receiving matching funds to complete proposed projects. Thus, we will need to be working with Cindy to

seek supplemental funding to complete the 100 B area model, the graphite model (not part of the AHF proposal to Murdock), and the 30 vignettes and related interpretive projects

In conclusion, I again thank Colleen French for her continuous active support and dedication to the preservation of B Reactor and related Manhattan artifacts for future generations. Her initiation of positive actions to recognize the importance of B Reactor and the entire Manhattan Project history at Hanford for "perpetuity" has been commendable. Likewise, Kirk Christensen and his staff deserve BRMA thanks.

Finally, I personally thank all BRMA officers and committee chairs as well as the entire membership for their unceasing support during 2011. The success BRMA has achieved this past year could not have been accomplished without the concerted efforts of ALL members. I look forward to even greater success in 2012.

B Reactor Tour Program Activities

Last month, Laurie Church, Indian Eyes LLC Employees Resources, provided the following update on B Reactor Tour Program activities.

"Kevin Haggerty and the Busy "B" Boys have been very industrious out at the Reactor making some great changes. I took a tour of the Reactor last week (mid-December) and all I can say is WOW, just think lighting, lighting, lighting.

Russ Fabré has been diligently working on updating the docent scripts and the agenda for the bus ride out to the reactor. The B Reactor Tours in 2012 are going to look and feel updated. Many of the changes are based on the customer tour surveys that have been received from the tours, and from docent contributions.

LaVonda and Viola at Logston Center are providing the best customer service to inquiries about tours in 2012 and Kirk Christensen, well he is just in the middle of it all."

The Pierard Boys Do The Trinity (Site)

by Burt Pierard, BRMA raconteur

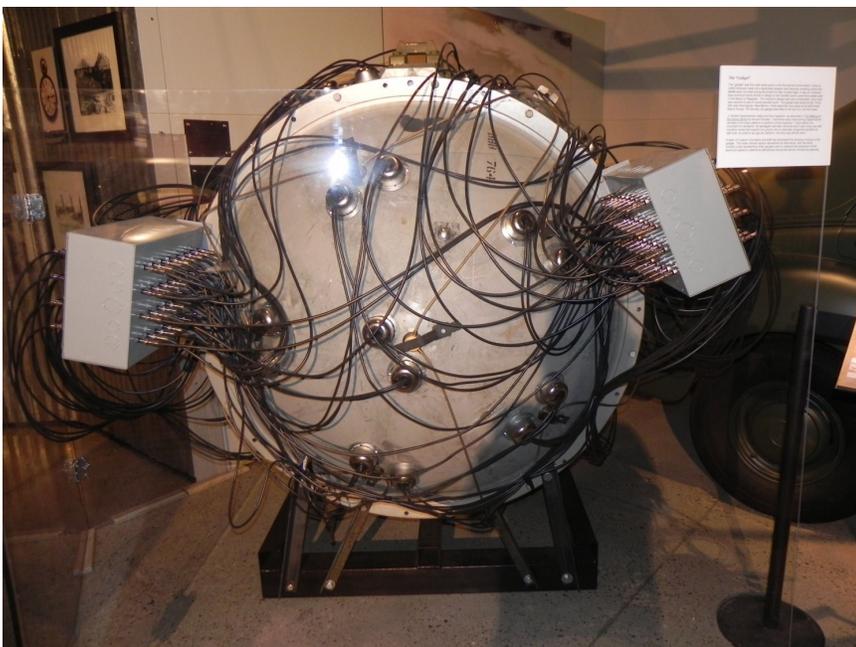
Editor's Note—For several years, Burt and his brother Dick mused about doing the Trinity Site Tour and when Dick was in Richland in December 2010, they decided that 2011 was to be the year. The Site is only opened for tours twice a year, the first Saturdays of April and October. They both had conflicts for the Spring so the October 1, 2011, Tour was their goal. In the Fall issue of The Moderator, Burt described the highlights of the first part of their tour, which included visits to the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History in Albuquerque, NM, the Los Alamos Historical Society Museum in the same state. Following is a description of the conclusion of their trip.

Day 3 started with a trip back to Los Alamos to tour the Bradbury Science Museum, sponsored by the Los Alamos National Laboratory. There was more neat stuff, including more replicas of Fat Man & Little Boy, a very well done 16-minute video about Los Alamos and Trinity and a bunch of modern stuff, like missiles, etc. One interesting tidbit from the video was the extreme measures taken to conceal the true identities of civilian employees at the Los Alamos Army Detachment. All civilian employees had the same Post Office Box address in Santa Fe. This address is what appeared on their New Mexico Driver's Licenses and any of the babies born at the Detachment Hospital had that address on their Birth Certificates. I also learned that since 2005, most scientists agree that "Trinitite" was not formed on the ground but was mostly made up of soil and sand material that was drawn up in the blast, melted by the heat, and "rained" (as molten material) back down in the crater. This explains the "pooling" of



Visitors enter and exit the Trinity Site at the parking lot gate. Arrow points to Dick Pierard.

the Trinitite close to the tower base and the smooth texture of the surface due to surface tension.



Replica of "The Gadget" at the Bradbury Science Museum in Los Alamos

We then had lunch with Dr. Jason Cooley of the Los Alamos National Lab (also a former college classmate of Dick's daughter Cindy) and he took us on a one-hour driving tour of most of the Lab facilities which are all post-war construction (the war-time labs were torn down along with essentially everything else from the Manhattan Project). We then headed back to Santa Fe and traveled about 100 miles south to Socorro, NM (just about 40 miles NW from the Trinity Site) for the night.

Day 4 started with meeting up with Dick's aforementioned daughter, Cindy, and her family (from Los Cruces, NM) for the drive out to the Site. We were surprised to find that the tours were totally freelance, i.e., they just opened the gate at the

Parking Lot and people were free to stroll about ¼ mile to the crater, wander around, take photos of the Obelisk at Ground Zero, etc. I concur with Dick’s utterance that standing near the exact point where the bomb was exploded was awe-inspiring. Lots of people noticed our BRMA hats and Richland Bombers shirts and chatted us up. The hats also made it easy to hook up with Ellen and Nick Low of CREHST Museum who were there (also with their BRMA hats).

We then walked back to the entrance and took a shuttle bus over to the McDonald Ranch (less than 2 miles from Ground Zero) where the final assembly of the



Nuclear tourists at the Trinity Site in NM are (from left) Nick and Ellen Low of the CREHST Museum and Burt and Dick Pierard



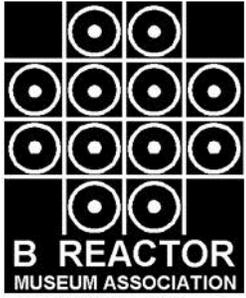
Visitors photograph the Obelisk that marks Ground Zero

Gadget had been performed before it was transported to the tower and raised for final connection and arming. One interesting item at the Ranch that caught my attention was the present condition of the only vertical structure that sustained no damage from the blast, namely the water pump Windmill. The lower part of this structure was wood, and the upper part was metal. No attempt was made to preserve it and sure enough, about two years ago the upper windmill structure broke off and landed in a heap at the base. I could only think that it will probably take a bit longer (since they are rusting steel), but that will be the inevitable result for our locomotives at B Reactor if no plans are made to eventually paint them for preservation.

After making a side trip to tour the VLA (Very Large Array) of Radio Telescopes about 80 miles NW of Trinity, we parted and I started the 1,300 mile drive back to Richland while Dick chose to spend a few days at Cindy’s before heading back East.



Remains of McDonald Ranch windmill, with fallen metal blades shown on ground in insert



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Dupus Boomer

