

THE

MODERATOR

B REACTOR MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

October – December

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Fall 2016

From The Control Room

by Maynard Plahuta, BRMA President

The National Parks Service (NPS) announced its selection for the Superintendent of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (MPNHP) headquartered in Denver, Colorado. That position will oversee the three Park sites—Hanford, Oak Ridge and Los Alamos. The NPS selected Ms. Kris Kirby a long-time NPS employee who has served at a number of NPS parks, the most recent at the Yosemite National Park. She currently is moving from the Yosemite area and will reside in Denver to begin her duties. She has already been working on some of these duties while not physically in the Denver office. Among those duties is the announcement and selection process for the NPS full-time NPS employee at Hanford. We are the first of the three MPNHP sites for which a NPS person will be selected for location at the site. It is expected that selection will be made by the end of the calendar year.

I want to specifically thank Tracy Atkins and Charlie Strickfaden (the NPS employees who have served as interim superintendents) for their excellent support and help to this community. Tracy was held that position most of the time and was extremely valuable to us and the entire local community. And Charlie followed in that same path. Thanks to both and we wish both the best in their NPS careers.

BRMA has achieved its prime purpose to make B Reactor a fully fledged museum open to the general public. With the establishment of the National Park we have far exceeded our primary mission. We shall never forget the forward thinking and recognition of the founding BRMA members regarding B Reactor's historic significance---that is to establish and place its importance in U.S. and world history. That has been accomplished solely to the credit of BRMA's founding members. Thanks so much, ladies and gentlemen. The BRMA Board of Directors is now revisiting what changes, if any, need to be made to achieve a possible expanded or different mission. As this process moves forward the Board will present its thoughts

and suggestions to the full membership for consideration.

When we stop and reflect in how far BRMA has come in achieving its basic mission, we need only reflect on the events that occurred at B the weekend of September 30--October 2. This includes the Mastersingers concerts on Friday night and Sunday afternoon, and the REI-sponsored 15-mile bike ride around the B Reactor area on Saturday Oct 1. This demonstrates how events involving a variety of interests can utilize a national park. We look forward to having similar future events with a wide range of sponsors and participants. These events resulted in shared returns to our local "Friends of the Park" non-profit organization administered free gratis by Visit Tri-Cities. It is noted that REI paid all expenses for this event and donated 100% of the \$100.00 entry fee received from each participant. See Gene Weisskopf's article covering this event later in this **Moderator**. Funds from REI and the shared funding results from Mastersingers will be used locally. Future information will be coming forward to the entire community on how contributions can be directed to help support our Park at Hanford via the local "Friends of the Park".

In addition to the events at B we also acknowledge the WSU Tri-Cities events held during this same weekend. This included the artifact displays on campus along with the nearby newly expanded facility containing the Hanford site historical collection. This facility will be available for university student use and public access upon request. A fundraiser for the continued and expanded WSU efforts in this area was held at the Wine Science Center. Thanks to Mike Mays and his staff at WSU-Tri Cities for current and future efforts to permanently preserve Hanford history---there is no better place for a central and permanent home for the preservation of this history than at a university.

Communications Director Appointed

Gary Fetterolf has graciously accepted an appointment by President Maynard Plahuta as BRMA's Director of Communications. He will be filling out the term of Gary White, who chose to resign due to illness. Gary F. has hit the ground running, already fielding several inquiries about BRMA, B Reactor, and the Hanford Project. He can be reached at info@b-reactor.org.

BRMA Charitable Contributors

This is a Public Acknowledgement of the generous cash contributions to BRMA. The following list covers the period, July through September, 2016.

Becky Brock

William Porath

Vital Statistics

NEW MEMBERS

Betty Brock

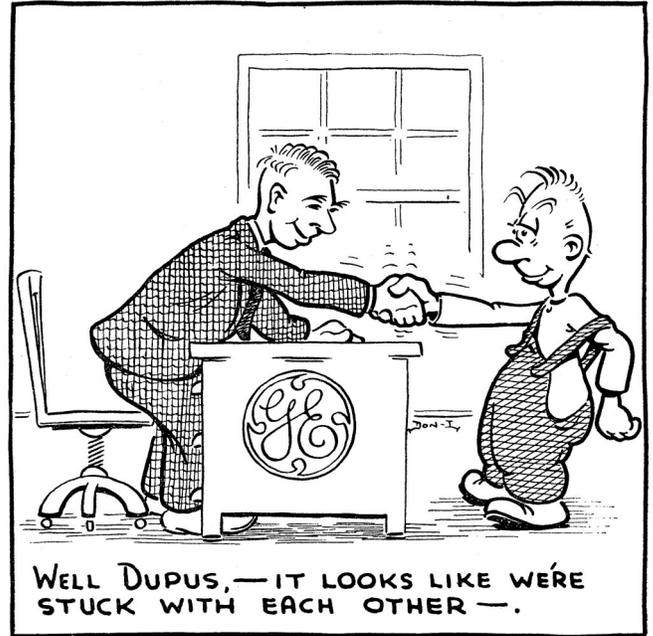
Michael Crawford

Jane Shumate

The Reach (Organization)

IN MEMORIAM

Betty Ely King



This September (2016) was the 70th anniversary of the GE takeover from DuPont. DuPont stuck at HEW until their job was completed. Villagers stuck on the job, too - what else could they do in such a hot climate? When DuPont left, Richlanders wondered if they would be stuck someplace else. Then General Electric asked them to stick around. So pity the poor villagers who were stuck with steady jobs at good salaries and had nice homes in a model town. They spent their time sticking pins in themselves to see if they were dreaming. (Text by Dupus. Cartoon courtesy of Connie Estep)

Membership Report

By Burt Pierard, Membership Chair

Our final 2016 membership count was 72 members and 2 Organizations—Los Alamos Historical Society and The Reach. We also had 31 Complimentary members. As of October 1, the **Early 2017 Renewal Period is now OPEN** (any dues we receive are credited to CY2017). To send in your Renewal, the form is below to Clip or Print.

2017 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

Organization (\$25 up to 100 members; please add \$10 for each additional 100 members)

Another First at B Reactor

by Gene Weisskopf: Photographer, Biker, and BRMA Secretary

This story isn't a look back at the initial startup of B Reactor in September 1944. It's about another first that happened on Saturday, October 1, 2016.

On that day, some 60 bicycles and their riders converged at B Reactor for what was the very first time that, well, people rode their bicycles at B Reactor. Doesn't really sound earth-shaking, but it was, indeed, a first, and heralded the new era at B Reactor and for the Hanford site—that it is now part of the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

The organized ride served as a fund-raising event for the new Park, with each rider donating \$100. All of those funds went to the new Park, with the expenses of the day being covered by the REI store in Kennewick. As is so often the case at Hanford, the event was being supported by multiple organizations.

It was conceived many months ago by the local bicycle advocacy group, Bike Tri-Cities (biketricities.org). REI joined in to support the ride and provide lunch for the riders. The Visit Tri-Cities organization (visittricitities.com) handled the reservations, waivers, information, and payment processing. Of course, the DOE joined in and agreed that the ride could take place. To make that happen, Colleen French made the necessary six or eight (hundred?) phone calls to get everyone on board and agreeing to how the ride would go. The NPS was involved, too, but as the new kid on the block, it was probably an enlightening learning experience.

I was interested in the ride for two reasons. First, I'm a big fan of B Reactor, now a significant part of the new National Historical Park. I'm also an avid bicyclist, having ridden for most of my life for all the usual reasons – fresh air, sunshine, exercise, transportation, and psychic unwinding. Here in the desert of southeastern Washington, we're living in great bicycling country. Since I moved to Richland in 1995, I've ridden over 75,000 miles (and have a cycling log to prove it). I've always imagined a 100-mile bike ride through the Hanford site, on a weekend when there are no or few trucks on the job. There would be a dozen or two stops where riders could take a break but also learn about those locations on the site, whether it be the shrub-steppe terrain, the river, the reactors, the town sites, the native Americans who preceded all of that, or the Ice Age floods.

The ride on October 1 was a first step in that direction. A very first step, given that the last time people rode bicycles at B Reactor was probably long before B Reactor was ever built. So the route for the ride was somewhat constrained, initially a 15-mile ride, which was probably well and good for the variety of cyclists who would want to join in. But in the week before the ride, the route was reconsidered and then revised, so it became a 12 mile ride, basically going from the reactor back out the road to WA-24, by the Vernita rest stop, returning to the reactor and then looping the reactor on the roads that run around it.

The terrain around B Reactor is very beautiful and very rustic, with few signs of development to be seen. The roads are rather rustic, too! The route from the highway to B is a combination of perhaps 5% very smooth modern asphalt, 80% very rustic, broken up antique concrete or asphalt, and the rest being gravel. Mountain bikes with their larger tires were recommended, and rightfully so.

I don't own a mountain bike, although my bike has reasonably solid tires on it (not skinny race-bike tires), but it really wasn't



appropriate for gravel. I went with my friend Evelyn, whose bicycle did have skinny tires, so we decided we'd walk the gravel portions. It was wonderful to be with Evelyn for the ride. I've known her since soon after I moved to Richland, and she and her husband Bill were avid cyclists, too, with whom I've ridden for many of those thousands of miles. Even nicer, she was

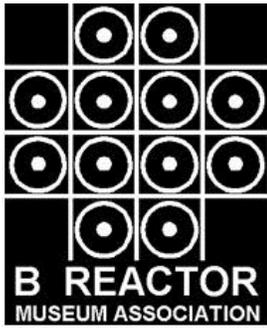
a kid here in Richland during the Manhattan Project! It's not just "history."

Evelyn picked me up at 7:30 Saturday morning, in her 21st century, bright red Honda Fit with a bike rack on the back. We headed to the Logston Blvd tour office for the 8:00 sign in. From there, we drove out to the reactor via the gate on WA-24... which was another first! Visitors seldom drive their private cars to B Reactor, but they did for this event. Another step toward easier National Park access.

The riders gathered in front of the reactor, where David Berkowitz, the manager of the local REI, gave us a pep talk and described the route and also mentioned that should we hear sirens blaring, we should return to the reactor for further instructions.

The weather was perfect, and so typical for early October. A bit cool (much better than July heat), but with bright sunshine and endless vistas. Because Evelyn and I walked the gravel portions, we ended up going out the road to the gate on WA-24, then back again, and we didn't do the loop around B. Evelyn then joined a tour of the reactor while I visited with people I knew and some I'd just met. A little later, REI had hamburgers and veggie burgers cooking on a gas grill, and soon people were lined up for lunch. It wasn't a long ride, but the day had an early start for a Saturday, and there was fresh air and sunshine all morning, aided by a brisk and not uncommon breeze, which all added up to a feeling of having had a big day outside.

To conclude the event, Dave Berkowitz said he and REI were to help make this sort of event possible. After all, the event included bicycles, outdoor activities, and all for a good cause. Stuff that REI is known for. Denise Baush, from the National Park Service, spoke about the new role the Park Service will play at Hanford. Finally, yours truly spoke for just a few minutes about the BRMA's role in helping to preserve B Reactor, Welcome, B Reactor, to your new role in a new National Park.



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Report From BRMA Tour Coordinator Gary Busselman

The B Reactor tour season is winding down. There is no building-wide heating system at the reactor, so as temperatures decline, the tours will end for the “season”. We usually end about November 1, but I am not sure what the exact plan is for this year. There are still many tours available, so if you want to go, find the B Reactor tour site on your computer and then find a date and time that suits you. Most of the tours are officially full, but as they are free, people often do not show up at the Logston Blvd office tour starting point in Richland. I have never been a tour guide on a completely full bus, so take a chance. The tours take about 4 hours - an hour out, two hours at the reactor, and another hour back to Logston Blvd in Richland. There are restroom facilities at the reactor, but no food service. You can bring bottled water, but no food. Food attracts “critters” which attract larger ones and

pretty soon there could be snakes and other unwelcome critters. There are prohibited items, such as large knives, firearms, and alcoholic beverages, so check the list.

BRMA also supports reactor visits from passengers on some of the Columbia River tour boats. There folks pay extra for the tour and are provided an introductory talk and a lunch at The REACH prior to being taken to the site by a bus provided by the tour line. BRMA provides a organizational history of our role in preserving the reactor as a museum.

The progress toward being a full-fledged National Park is moving forward, but at a very slow pace. Our own resident park overseer is still not in place, but should be here this fall sometime. Plans are to allow easier access to the reactor, but there are still many hurdles.