

# 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

July-September

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Summer 2016

## From The Control Room

by Maynard Plahuta, BRMA President

On June 7 of this year, BRMA reached a milestone long envisioned by our members. On that date the Hanford Site achieved the first privately-funded tours at B Reactor. The American Empress, of Shore Excursions of America, drove their own bus out to the B Reactor entrance door. It carried 40-plus passengers from their 200-plus passenger river cruiser boat docked at Howard Amon Park. (*see related story on page 3*)

This was an effort in development for nearly two years. It was a pilot test run that went well. It appears this operation will continue to serve American Empress Cruises Lines that run back and forth from Portland/Astoria to Lewiston, Idaho, on alternate Tuesdays and Fridays during the summer. This pilot run puts a crack in opening the door toward having the general public drive directly to B Reactor. However, there still are issues to hurdle such as road and parking improvements, security fences, staffing requirements, and other similar issues to address before we reach our goal of general open public access. We just need to take a step at a time, and getting the private bus with its tourists going directly to B Reactor completes the first step.

Another accomplishment as a result of becoming part of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (MPNHP) is that volunteers have completed drafts of “Junior Ranger” booklets for B Reactor and pre-World War II tours. The National Parks Service (NPS) will print the booklets and provide Jr. Ranger badges. BRMA will work with NPS and DOE to help publicize the program when it’s launched.

The NPS, DOE, and the Benton-Franklin River Heritage Foundation (BFRHF), administered by Visit Tri-Cities, have entered into an agreement to collect financial contributions for the MPNHP at Hanford. The letter of intent outlines the basic framework to allow BFRHF to accept and deposit tax-deductible donations and cause-related contributions to support our park. All projects funded by the contributions accepted will be approved by NPS and may include items such as development and production of interpretive materials, programs, plans, and technology; school programs; planning, design, or construction to improve public access; interpretive trails; and a list of six additional examples. As Tracy Adkins of NPS noted “This is another positive step forward in the

establishment of the park.” This agreement will serve for the interim until a formal “Friends of The Park” program is established for the MPNHP at Hanford. All tax-deductible donations and contributions that will benefit our park should be made payable to the “Hanford Unit Fund” and mailed to or delivered to Visit TRI-CITIES, Attn: Hanford Unit Fund, 7130 W. Grandridge Blvd., Suite B, Kennewick, WA. 99336. This arrangement again demonstrates the value to BRMA of being a member of Visit Tri-Cities.

Many thanks go to our BRMA Webmaster, Jim Stoffels, for his fine efforts in updating and significantly improving our Web site. He worked diligently with the contractor on this project. The structure of the site is clearly well designed. We still have a few edits and improvements on the narrative words, phrases, and portions of the site. We also are looking for a better picture with bright color such as nice blue skies, preferably an entrance view. Be sure to take a look at B-Reactor.org.

I also want to commend Hank Kosmata for his extensive work on completing his “Know Before You Go” video available on the BRMA Website. It gives visitors a “heads up” regarding what they will see and helps them to better understand B operations before visiting the reactor or to refresh what they saw and learned after a visit. It will benefit students—especially high school and college science and physics students.

We are working diligently with DOE and NPS to provide a gift shop at the B Reactor Office at Logston and/or at B Reactor. It looks positive at this point, and hopefully will materialize yet this year. It’s almost assured that more sales will be realized by having the gift shop available and easily accessible to tourists—especially when the shop is at the reactor.

It’s reassuring to note the large increase in the number of tourists visiting B Reactor this year. It’s also great to note the interest of school students attendance---a first this year. This is another positive result of being in the MPNHP. Look elsewhere in this addition for more detail.

*Continued on page 4*

## Hanford Health & Safety Expo Report by Missy Keeney Baker

On May 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>, BRMA had a booth at the Hanford Health & Safety Expo at TRAC in Pasco, WA. The Expo was sponsored by the Department of Energy.

BRMA's booth was totally the responsibility of Terry Andre. Terry was there for almost every minute of the two-day event. I was privileged to share and observe the last shift with Terry. She was amazing! She drew in children & adults alike with her enthusiasm, knowledge and creative experiments. BRMA is fortunate to have Terry as an active BRMA member.

Thank You Terry for a successful EXPO experience!

### Vital Statistics

#### NEW MEMBERS

Charles & Elaine Davis

#### IN MEMORIAM

Wally Greagor



Contributed by Connie Estep

### BRMA Charitable Contributors

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

Carl Connell  
Charles & Elaine Davis  
Jim Thornton  
Gerald Woodcock

## Membership Report

### 2016 BRMA MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOW DUE.

Our paid membership is 62 people (2 new) and two Organizations: Los Alamos Historical Society and The Reach. Anyone who has paid and not yet received a 2016

Membership Card should receive it in a separate mailing. To send in your renewal, the Form is below to Clip or Print and send in.

### 2016 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)

For Organization Membership, Official Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional tax deductible contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Tax ID # 94-3142387) (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 Paths Opening For Visitors To Take To Tour B Reactor

Photos and text by BRMA Secretary Gene Weisskopf



The *American Empress* tour boat docked at Howard Amon Park

exhibit, had lunch, and then I joined them as they boarded their bus for the reactor. On board were two experienced docents, Byron Robertson and Nancy Bowers, who filled the bus ride and the tour at the reactor with their knowledge and pretty darn good speaking skills (the trick is that they sound interested and seemed to really enjoy the topic).

To commemorate the day, Burt Pierard and I had made up BRMA's traditional "I Toured B Reactor" 2-inch badges (with magnets for refrigerators or file cabinets). We made it extra special by including the June 7 date of the tour. I gave one to each of the riverboat guests as they departed the bus back in Howard Amon Park. It was a small memento, which of course made it easy to transport back home, and a nice souvenir of their surprise visit to the new National Historical Park.

**On** June 7, I had the pleasure of accompanying a bus tour that was operated not by the DOE, but by the American Queen Steamboat Company, from their *American Empress* riverboat on the Columbia River that docks in Richland at the end of Lee Blvd. The bus drove directly to B Reactor, with no stop at the Logston Blvd tour office. This was a first, at least in the past many years, what Colleen French, the DOE's Program Manager for the Park, called a "pilot project," meaning that if it went well, it could open the gates for private tour buses in the future.



Tour bus at The Reach

Of note on the tour were a couple from Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Yes, that Oak Ridge, one-third of the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park. Turns out the fellow had worked there for many years of his career, and was stunned and really excited to all of a sudden get to tour B Reactor. It was a real treat for them, and a pleasure for me to see ordinary tourists lighting up over the opportunity to see the world's first full-scale nuclear reactor.

And guess what? It did go well, very well, 100%! (At least from my perspective and from what I've heard.) All of a sudden, the gates are being opened, literally, and B Reactor can really serve as the museum we in the BRMA always wanted to see.

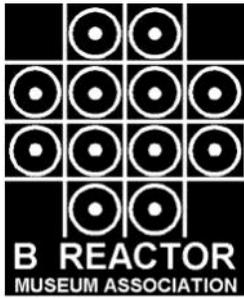
Thinking of all our efforts in the BRMA over the past 25 years, this tour was truly a milestone, and hopefully a harbinger of things to come.



The riverboat guests who signed up on the boat to take the tour had not been expecting the opportunity, because you don't advertise in advance a pilot project. Some 40 of them went on the Empress's own tour bus, first to The Reach museum, where they looked over the Manhattan Project



B Reactor docent Nancy Bowers describes the multitude of instruments in the control room and their functions during reactor operation



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<http://www.b-reactor.org>  
[info@b-reactor.org](mailto:info@b-reactor.org)

## Visitors Respond To Hanford Site Tour Opportunities

Tours, tours, and more tours. The present six-day per week tour schedule has resulted in a huge increase in total visitors and buses filled nearly to capacity. The total visitors for last year April-October was 9,500 (B and Pre-Manhattan combined). We are already at 4,475 for B and an additional 468 for pre-Manhattan tours for a total of 4,943 as of June 30. Another interesting factoid is that we've welcomed nearly 700 kids since we started in April, including 13 middle school and high school groups and several elementary schools.

Much of our visitor increase is attributed to the fact that B is now part of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. It also is significant to note that the help we are getting from the National Park Service (particularly with regard to establishing tours for younger students) has relevance to the increased number of visitors.

In addition to the two regular tours each day, there often is a third tour following the first two. These generally relate to either a professional or technical conference but can be for any interested group. Such groups include Rotary, Kiwanis, or similar social groups, or even a group of community friends. If interested and you need more

information, or wish to schedule groups, you are encouraged to call Julie at 376-6893.

Even though we are experiencing increased bus capacity there is nearly 100% chance that several people can still get on a bus for a tour. Just call 376-1647 or 376-6893 to determine if there is room available, or show up at Logston to ask if space is available---often there are "no shows" by people who had scheduled earlier. Pass this word on to others. It is good information for friends and family who are in town visiting.

## From the Control Room

*(Continued from page 1)*

BRMA again this year set up its booth at the DOE Health and Safety Expo at the TRAC. Thanks go to Terry Andre' for heading up the activity. See more about this later in this edition.

I'm again sad to close with a note on the departure of our long-term BRMA member Wally Greager. He was one of our earliest and very best tour guides. We extend our sincere sympathy to Wally's family.