

THE

# MODERATOR



B REACTOR MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

April-June

Vol. 23, Issue 2

Spring 2017

## From The Control Room

by John Fox, BRMA President

2017 promises to be an important transition year for BRMA and the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. National Park Service has completed the Foundation Document for the Park; it's now published on the Park website, <http://nps.gov/mapr/index.htm>. NPS is requesting funding for interpretive planning for site resources and artifact collections in federal fiscal year 2018, visitor access planning and a Park film in 2019, and aims to complete a management plan by 2022. Realistically, given federal budget priorities, this schedule may be ambitious rather than cautious. In any case, it's going to take a lot of local volunteer effort and financial contributions to accommodate more visitors to the Park and improve their experience while here.

This year's kickoff event was the WSU-TC sponsored conference "Legacies of the Manhattan Project", described elsewhere in this newsletter. Five of the key Park officials from NPS and DOE were here the full week of March 13-18: Tracy Atkins, DOE-Legacy Management and Kris Kirby, NPS Park Superintendent, both stationed in Denver; Charlie Strickfaden, NPS Los Alamos Site Supervisor; Colleen French, DOE Hanford Site Manager; and Becky Burghart, NPS designated Hanford Site Supervisor. Becky will be stationed here full time when her transfer from White Sands National Monument is freed from the Federal Government hiring freeze. Colleen, Kris, and Tracy attended the BRMA meeting Monday evening, March 13<sup>th</sup>, and Maynard Plahuta and I met with them and Becky the following morning to discuss various matters of mutual interest for this year's planning and operation. I also joined Kris, Tracy, Becky and docent Nancy Bowers on a day's tour of the site (including a 221-T drive-by) with Kirk Christensen.

The Logston Center for tour departures is being remodeled for tours beginning in mid-April. A more open and convenient lobby arrangement will facilitate

check-in. Colleen and Becky will both have offices there, but it is not clear yet if a gift shop arrangement will be concluded this year. We have asked for some form of BRMA presence there, but will need to consider what is suitable in the interim. I've also explored the possibility of a BRMA display of some sort in the Manhattan Project room at the REACH, since it serves as an off-season resource for the Park. The American Empress River Tour Co. strongly wants to continue land tours to B this year and in the future. In 2017 they plan 29 tour weeks, alternating Wednesdays and Saturdays. Last year their tours began with a lunch at the Reach before departing for the Park.

Kris Watkins, CEO of Visit Tri-Cities, leads the common "branding" effort of the three Park locations. At a February meeting in Denver, progress was made in developing common themes and marketing approaches. These may be finalized at an Energy Communities Alliance meeting here in August dedicated to Park development. This should be a major step forward for the overall Park.

Here, it will take much creative effort to develop ways to tell the full story of all of Hanford and its long-term legacies to Park visitors. It's a great and worthwhile but very challenging opportunity. Setting priorities for topics to add and choosing the best ways to present them will require a variety of talents working together. BRMA has achieved its initial goal of preserving B Reactor for all time, and enjoys credibility because of its past contributions. Now it's time to define a broader yet well focused future role for us, working with others as a team member based on our strengths. The Board has discussed this over the past few months. As I've mentioned, I'll be presenting a Mission Statement to outline the scope of this and ask for an advisory vote of the membership present at the next meeting to support this move. Then we can embark on another ambitious quarter century mission.

# Membership Report

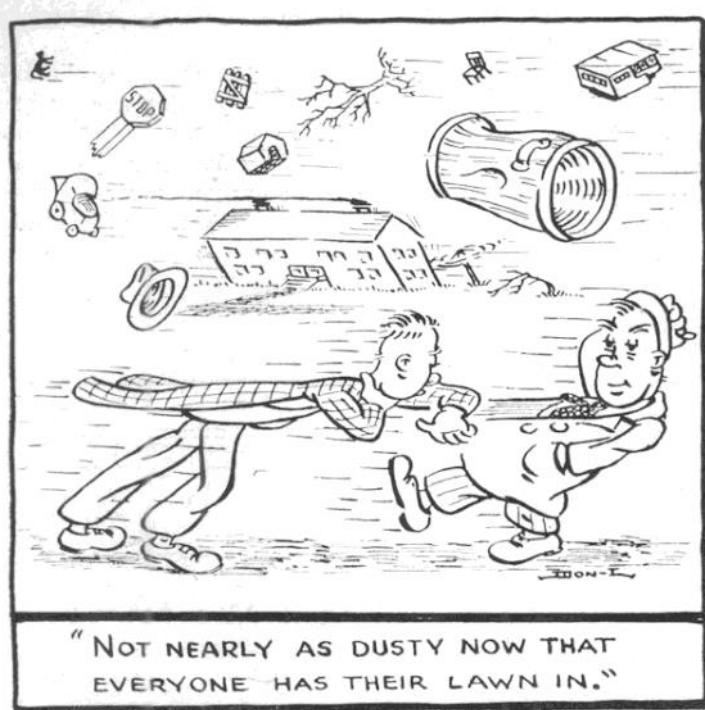
By Burt Pierard, Membership Chair

**2017 BRMA MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOW DUE.** Ur paid membership is 53 people and 2 Organizations (Los Alamos Historical Society & The WSU Hanford History Project). Anyone who has paid and not received their 2017 Membership Card yet should receive it in a separate mailing. To send in your Renewal, the Form is below to Clip or Print and send in.

## BRMA Charitable Contributors

This is a Public Acknowledgement of the generous cash contributions to BRMA. The following list covers the period January through March 2017.

Tony Grambihler  
Maureen Hamilton  
Don Meyers  
Lloyd Piper  
William Porath  
Richard Romanelli  
Gene Woodruff  
Neil Zimmerman



Dupus Boomer cartoon provided by Burt Pierard

## Vital Statistics

### NEW MEMBERS

None this quarter

### IN MEMORIAM

John White

## 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)

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

# Legacies of the Manhattan Project: Reflections on 75 Years Of a Nuclear World

Washington State University, Tri-Cities, hosted a conference in Richland March 15-18 last month, that attracted more than 100 scholars, graduate students, industry professionals, and interested civilians, from throughout the country. Several BRMA members attended, and three of them participated in panel discussions. You can find the specifics of the conference at the WSU Web site:

<https://www.cm.wsu.edu/ehome/220098/>

For example, you can see the agenda for the four days by selecting the Program option. The photo below shows the room during a presentation by Colleen French, Kris Kirby, and Tracy Atkins on the progress of the National Historical Park.

There were about 150 registered attendees who came from a variety of locales and institutions, including 12 universities: WSU, Hiroshima City University, Central Washington University, University of Oklahoma, University of Arizona, University of Athens, Albright College, University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, Georgetown University, John Jay College, Harvard University, and Princeton University.



**Gene Weisskopf:** By the time the conference was over, I was ready to call it (with tongue in cheek) "Four Long Days of the Manhattan Project."

But that was really the best part of the four-day conference, that it was packed full of interesting talks, conversations, thoughts, themes, and, well, the people in attendance. It's not often that we get to gather in such a rich environment.



I especially liked the mix of topics and presentations, including academic papers such as "Early Uranium Procurement Policies and Their Consequences in the U.S. and the U.S.S.R," and more informal discussions such as "Women of the Manhattan Project." The first panel on the first evening was of the conversational variety, the topic being "Preserving Hanford's Past: From B Reactor to the MPNHP." The panel is shown in the photo, and included, from left to right, Robert Franklin as moderator (from the Hanford History Project at WSU, and also the BRMA), Tom Marceau (archaeology at WSU and former cultural resources specialist at Hanford), Colleen French (DOE manager of Hanford MPNHP), former Congressman Doc Hastings, and Del Ballard (BRMA). Together they laid out the long and winding story of how B Reactor was eventually preserved

**Reported by BRMA Secretary Gene Weisskopf** People came from seven government/public institutions: DOE, NPS, Hanford History Project, Richland Public Library, Department of Ecology, Environmental Monitoring Group, PNNL, and Los Alamos National Laboratory.

And attendees represented 12 private institutions: BRMA; CORE (Consequences of Radiation Exposure); Global Policy, Inc.; Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.; Los Alamos Historical Society; Atomic Heritage Foundation; AACCES (African American Community, Cultural, and Educational Society); Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility; Particles on the Wall; Herbert M. Parker Foundation; Indian Eyes, LLC.; Kathleen Flenniken (Friday Evening Banquet). All in all, the conference was deemed a great success.

**For this article, we thank BRMA member Dan Ostergaard for the photographs.**

**Following are perspectives from BRMA members who attended the conference.**

and not only opened to the public, but made a part of the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park. Many in the audience had not really heard that story before, and even to me the story served as a wonderful overview.



Panel discussion called "Preserving Hanford's Past: From B Reactor to the MPNHP"

At the end of this panel's discussion, there were numerous questions and comments that turned the event into a conversation. Most everyone at the conference had certain interests and certain perspectives, which really helped to round out all the sessions I attended.

By the end of the four days, I was teasing that I was just about exhausted of the Manhattan Project – the project itself hardly lasted that long! But it really was a stimulating and enlightening four days. The wide range of topics, their depth, and the stimulating conversations that went on each day, truly showed why this new Manhattan Project National Historical Park was created.

*Continued on page 4*

## **Legacies of the Manhattan Project Conference**

*Continued from page 3*

**Terry Andre:** For me, attending the Manhattan Project conference was an opportunity to be a student again and to indulge in the rich environment (to borrow Gene's words) of academia. This conference was a refreshing blend of those who have been there – sharing stories and expertise from the trenches, with the opportunity to interact with those who view the Project from a variety of lenses outside of our daily experience.



Terry Andre

Where else would we be able to examine a pivotal point in history while interacting with scientists, engineers, politicians, authors, poets, and historians? As much as I enjoyed the formal presentations, the informal conversations generated by the sessions have led to establishing relationships that I look forward to continuing.

Even now, in reflecting on the conference, I find myself marveling at the diversity of the experience. I've been mentally stretched. I've questioned my assumptions (some of which I am more confident and affirmed in, and others I will need to examine more closely). I've generated pages of notes with even more sidebar notes admonishing myself to look further into this or that aspect. I've been inspired to dig deeper. In short, I came away thinking "My brain is full! I need to reflect, absorb, and seek out more!" The Hanford History Project deserves kudos for a job well done.

Note: a "Wordle" was created for the conference. When the attendees registered for the conference, they were asked to submit three words that they associate with the Manhattan Project. The result is essentially a word-cloud image that is computer-generated from that list of words. The size and prominence of each word in the cloud is based on the frequency of its use in the list. What struck me from the conference wordle was the intricacy and the complexity of the words associated with the Manhattan Project – words compelling the eye to continue to look further into and beyond the cloud.



This “wordle” was made from the list of words submitted by conference attendees

**John Fox:** WSU-TC's conference brought widely varied participants to Richland: "Downwinders" with their grievances, locals with anecdotes about working and living in "those days", academics and students from across the country, and even from Hiroshima and Athens. The papers they presented were rich with scientific, historical, policy, and political content. It exposed a wide range of topics for the National Park Service to address as it develops the interpretation program for the new Park, which will be based on its recently published Foundation Document, which you can read about and download:

<https://www.nps.gov/mapr/foundation-document.htm>

I'm sure the conference stimulated broader interest among the attendees, exceeded our expectations. It must have put both WSU-TC and the Park "on the map"—WSU-TC is already planning a second autumn conference in 2018. Now that this known entity, and given the month window for planning, I think this next conference will spur more of a competition for papers and bring a much larger attendance.



**John Fox**



John Fox

My own favorite takeaway is an interactive game being developed by Prof. Todd Timmons, U. Arkansas-Fort Smith, who instead of lecturing, assigns a role-playing game to his class. This one centers on the "Interim Committee" that President Truman set up to decide what to do with the atomic bomb if it were to actually work. Each student is assigned a role and a posture on the Committee or its advisory groups of scientists, military, diplomats and politicians. He is mid-way in development and hopes to market it in the future. I think it could become a popular and appropriate thing to play here.



**Dell Ballard:** On Wednesday, the first evening of the conference, a reception and round-table discussion was the opener to the conference. I was pleased to be asked to represent BRMA on the panel (see the photo of the panel in Gene's article). The question and answer format addressed the passion of supporters of B Reactor preservation and many involved in finally defining the path to congressional legislation that would establish the Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

A session on Thursday featured Una Gilmartin, a structural engineer with the architectural/engineering firm that directed the restoration of the White Bluffs Bank. She

*continued on page 5*

# Legacies of the Manhattan Project Conference

*Continued from page 4*

spoke about the extensive work involved in bringing this structure, built in 1909, back to life. The Saturday tour out to B reactor included a stop at the bank for an up-close inspection. A photo of the front of the bank is shown here. Reconstruction of the exterior block walls, roof, and windows has been completed, as has interior work on the floor and the inside walls. Interior finish work is still under way.



The White Bluffs bank on the Hanford site, after extensive refurbishment. It soon will be open as another point of interest to Manhattan Project National Historical Park visitors.

**Robert Franklin:** As an “insider” to the “Legacies of the Manhattan Project at 75 Years” conference, my experience was a bit different from others. I watched the conference take shape behind the scenes, and was witness to the hard work that our Project Coordinator, Jillian Gardner-Andrews, and our Director, Michael Mays, put into the planning, organizing, and execution of the events. They deserve the lion’s share of the credit and kudos for a job well done. My part was small, but I immensely enjoyed moderating the Wednesday night panel discussion mentioned by Gene. The contributions by BRMA members over the years is a fascinating story about how perseverance and a love of history can do what some think is impossible – turn a nuclear reactor into a National Park.

The overall highlight for me was to see it all come together—to watch people from all different backgrounds discussing how the Manhattan Project interests them, has impacted their lives, and changed the world. We started a number of conversations that I can’t wait to pick up in our follow-up conference, which as John mentioned, will be bigger and better!



**Robert Franklin**

## Government Relations Report

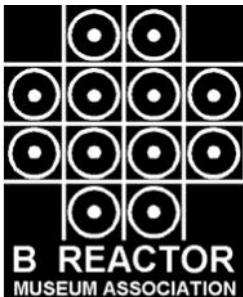
By  
Maynard Plahuta

This being my first report for this section of the *Moderator*, I’m taking it as an opportunity to express my appreciation for the assistance I and BRMA have received from our fellow member Gary Petersen over the past years. Now that Gary has retired from TRIDEC, I publicly thank him for all the work he did in his capacity at TRIDEC toward helping us establish our Manhattan Project National Historical Park. Gary was very instrumental in continuously providing needed liaison with Congressman Doc Hastings and Senators Murray and Cantwell and their staff. He was a key element in providing Congressional updates and suggested actions during our monthly “Park” telephone meetings with Oak Ridge and Los Alamos hosted by the Atomic Heritage Foundation. Gary’s contacts with, and suggested input to, the “Congressional world” were extremely helpful toward achieving the National Park status. THANKS, GARY!

I also thank WSU-Tri-Cities for agreeing to keep and maintain the Hanford-related artifacts BRMA agreed to accept when the Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science, and Technology was dissolved. You may recall that BRMA agreed to hold these items (for preservation purposes) when they were slated for “extinction”. These salvaged items are significant with regard to Hanford

history and the National Park. They will now have a permanent home at WSU Tri-Cities. Thus, they are again available for study and public viewing. We still have a small number of items in our storage unit which we hope to move and formally transfer all the items to WSU Tri-Cities by the end of March 2017. BRMA can be proud to have played a role in preserving these items.

BRMA is again working with DOE to get the BRMA-authored T Separations Plant Historical American Engineering Record (HAER) document finalized. This document is similar to our B Reactor HAER document that is available for sale at the Logston gift shop. Due to a multitude of issues and events (some due to changing classification reasons over time) efforts to get the T Plant document published have been an on-again off-again process. BRMA provided DOE its finished document over 15 years ago. DOE is interested and willing to work toward getting the HAER document published soon, and to help ensure the document as originally presented will remain useful and meaningful. Thus, we are hopeful a final resolution is in the near future. Since the T Plant was authorized as part of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park legislation, it would be great to get the document publicly available as soon as possible.



PO Box 1531  
Richland, WA 99352

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

## MPNHP Tour News

**Gary Busselman, Tour Coordinator**

In the 2016 tour year, there were 429 tours of B Reactor hosting 12,563 visitors, and 75 pre-Manhattan tours hosting 1,034 visitors. This was the first year of unrestricted ages, and we had at least one child of about 6 months old. I am not aware of any "age related" problems. This year the B Reactor tour season (288 tours projected) will run from April 17 through November 18, while the Pre-Manhattan tours (108 tours projected) will run from April 19 through November 4.



National Park on-site person. She is a current NPS staff member at White Sands National Monument, but cannot transfer here until the Federal Budget gets settled. She is married, no children. Her husband is a heavy equipment mechanic. She is about 30 years of age, and was a very pleasant Breakfast companion.

The Logston Ave. Headquarters remodel is going well. It will continue to be the starting point of B Reactor tours for this year.

Gary Busselman

Last month we had a visit from Becky Berghoff, our new