

The MODERATOR

Issue 1
Aug./Sept 1992



B REACTOR MUSEUM ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Message from the President

Don Sandberg, President

I'm really pleased that the B Reactor Museum Association is now able to produce this newsletter to keep members and others who are interested informed of our plans and activities.

What and who is BRMA? The B Reactor Museum Association is a non-profit Washington corporation that also has tax exempt (and tax deductible!) status per IRS 501-C3. We are now officially about 15 months old, although there was a lot of activity before we were incorporated. We have chosen the articles in this first issue to try to give you an understanding of what BRMA is and what it's doing. Our primary goals are on the membership application that is included in this issue. If you are not a member, we welcome you to join and members are encouraged to recruit someone new.

The lead article discusses B Reactor's acceptance to the National Register of Historic Places. Let me emphasize that we need to continue to be aggressive in working to make B

Reactor a museum. It is important to realize that this honor, while lending some credibility to our efforts, is not any particular assurance that B Reactor will become a museum or even be kept from destruction. The intent of BRMA is to seize on the momentum of this recognition to move forward as rapidly as possible.

Moving forward takes energy. In an organization like BRMA, *you*, the members and potential members, are the source of this energy. This is the same plea that every volunteer organization puts out from time to time... "Please get involved!"...in any way that you can. Recognizing that your time for participation is limited, BRMA is making it easy through the Job Jar. You'll find it described in this issue also.

In closing, this is to be your newsletter. It is our intent to give this newsletter very wide distribution and to provide information that is interesting, informative, and meets your needs. So, if you have any ideas, suggestions, or contributions for "*The Moderator*," please let us know.

Hope to see you at the next meeting!

Making History and Preserving It at B Reactor

Charles Pasternak

On April 3, 1992, the National Park Service added the Hanford B Reactor to the National Register of Historic Places. Already recognized by the American Society for Mechanical Engineering as a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark, the B Reactor played an important role in the birth of the atomic age. Although not quite 50 years old, this single-pass, water-cooled, plutonium production reactor met the nominating criteria because it is associated with events that contributed significantly to American history.

What Does Being on the National Register Mean?

In 1966, Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act. The goal of this Act was to recognize places and structures having national or local historic importance. Indeed, Section 110 of the Act requires federal agencies to identify and nominate such sites or structures on federal lands that might be deemed worthy of preservation.

Addition to the Register, however, is not a guarantee

that the structure itself must be preserved forever--as long as its legacy, its contribution to our history, is preserved. Section 106 of the Act stipulates that, if a decision is made to destroy the landmark, steps must be taken to mitigate the loss. For example, B Reactor could still be dismantled, but the Department of Energy would have to provide some kind of permanent model or exhibit for the public to learn about the reactor's role in the development of nuclear physics. Blueprints, reports, and other artifacts would need to be collected and archived, perhaps at the Smithsonian.

What Is B Reactor's Legacy?

The theory, design, and construction of the B Reactor was a massive cooperative effort combining the skills of physicists, engineers, chemists, construction workers, and military men and women. The speed with which this project reached fruition was phenomenal, and may be unequalled in the history of science and engineering. The dedication of these workers provided proof that controlled nuclear fission was possible. Fear of this power may have also prevented

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global-scale warfare during the last half of the 20th century. In addition, the theoretical problems resolved at B Reactor made future nuclear production of electricity a reality.

B Reactor has left an important local legacy as well. Although the project's original purpose was to support the war effort, B and the other production reactors that line the Hanford Reach continued their defense mission for many more years, attracting scientists, engineers, and other professionals to the area. Over time, the Tri-Cities became a major technological center. Today, the programs carried

out at the Hanford Site range from environmental restoration to global climate change studies to information management technologies. It is obvious that the region's economy and demographics would be very different if B Reactor had been a failure.

The second part of this article, which will appear in the next issue, will describe the construction and operation of the B Reactor--including the story of how close it did in fact come to being a failure.

Stick Your Hand Into That Job Jar!

Madeleine Brown

The Job Jar program will let BRMA members and supporters take on small tasks to support BRMA objectives. Pitch in! Lend a hand! It will spread around the workload more widely and let people lend their talents a little at a time.

The Job Jar's based on the principle of "time bites." You decide what kind of help you'd like to give, and how much, and the job jar will have a task that fits just right.

Could you give an hour a month to the BRMA? Would you like to do more than attend meetings? The job jar will let you do what you do best...for a great cause!

How does this work?

Simply!

BRMA board members and leaders of Board-approved projects (e.g. the women's history project) will define the tasks to go into the Job Jar. They will describe what the job takes in terms of time and talent. Kinds of tasks in the job jar can range from gathering information to staffing booths to, maybe, installing exhibits!

As Job Jar Foreman, I'll gather and distribute tasks. I'll keep a roster of job jar helpers, match tasks to helpers, and tell the project leader who his or her helpers are. I'll also learn to use a database to help with all this!

Job Jar helpers will request and accept tasks, work with project leaders as much as needed to get the job done, and tell the foreman when the task is completed.

We'll need all sorts of skills, from proofreading, to analyzing, to running errands, to envelope stuffing--you name it. If you have a special talent or resource, let me know, and we'll find a way to put it to good use.

Requestor: Gary Fetterolf

Date needed: 9/14/92

Task duration: 2 hr

Task description: design page format for policies and procedures

Tools needed: computer or drafting equipment

Skills needed: design

Remarks: perhaps use BRMA logos and masthead

Requestor: Ann Fillion

Date needed: 8/14/92

Task duration: 1 hr

Task description: visit local businesses for patronage

Tools needed: phone, car

Skills needed: charm, clerical

Requestor: Pam Novak

Date needed: 9/20/92

Task duration: 2 hr

Task description: fold, address newsletters

Tools needed: none

Skills needed: ability to talk and work at same time (have fun!)

Remarks: The more the merrier! Will need this help every 2 months.

Interpretive Center Planned

Del Ballard

In early 1991, BRMA began planning the development and installation of a regional interpretive center. Exhibits will depict not only the regional history and developments relating to Native Americans, Hanford site geology and homesteader and settler history, but also the Manhattan Project and B Reactor history.

The preferred site for the Interpretive Center is on the grounds of State Highway 240 rest stop located near Vernita. That area is just over three miles west of the Hanford 100-B Area and will provide easy access to the reactor. Washington State Department of Transportation has granted approval for locating such a facility at the site, which is already equipped with restroom facilities.

The BRMA considers such a location as temporary and would plan that a permanent Interpretive Center be located within the reactor area or within the city of Richland at some future date. The Vernita facility will be a large

"manufactured unit," more commonly known as a mobile home, equipped for displays and public access. It will contain exhibits, photos, maps, and other historical information, as well as a small theater for showing videos of interest. The BRMA plans to initiate public tours of the reactor, pending approval from DOE.

It is the intent of the BRMA to have an Interpretive Center up and running in time to coincide with the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Manhattan Project during calendar year 1993. Those willing to help in the development of this interesting history project should contact Del Ballard on 946-6401, Lyle Wilhelmi on 946-4082, or Miles Patrick on 545-8928.

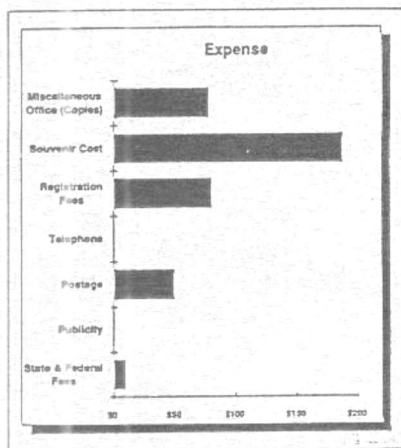
Where Your Money Goes

Gary Fetterolf

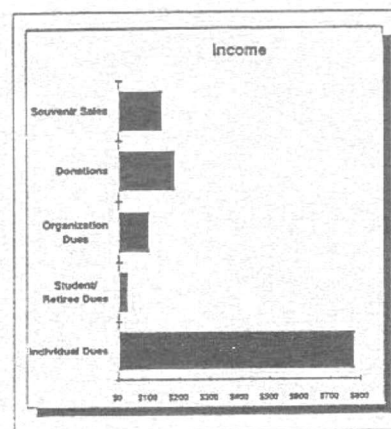
We first started collecting dues in January 1991. (No, I wasn't the first member--Wanda Munn handed me her check before I could get mine written out!) The general income and expense categories are shown in the two accompanying graphs. We are about to break even on the souvenirs, with less than half of the items sold.

However, all this is a drop in the bucket compared to what we are going to need to complete our projects on time. Our two current projects are the filming of the oral history and a temporary interpretive center for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the B Reactor and the Manhattan Project.

The filming of the oral history project has been progressing, thanks to the efforts of members Greg Greger, Jim Acord, and Tom Putman. Tom, of North Pacific Film & Tape of Seattle, will be reimbursed for some of his out-of-pocket expenses, but there is much more that needs to be done.



The second project, the construction of the temporary interpretive center, is similarly languishing for lack of funds. We have a need of approximately \$80,000 for a 28 x 66 foot mobile structure that will meet codes for public access plus another \$10,000 to get it installed. Add to this the \$58,000 for the exhibits (half of which can be donated time and materials) and we have a long way to go. This assumes, of



course that we will be able to place the structure on state, city, or DOE property so that there will be no charge for the lot on which the structure is to be placed.

State agencies are being hit hard, and the foundations that I have contacted are being inundated with grant applications. In short, to accomplish our goals we are probably going to have to rely on our ability to raise money from local resources.

Your membership dues, purchases of souvenir items, and other contributions are the key to our success. We appreciate your support and encourage you to "spread the word" about BRMA.

The B Reactor Experience

Jim Stoffel(s)

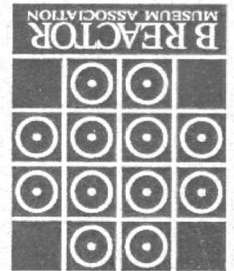
Were you ever in a place that made you tingle with a combined sense of awe, excitement and eeriness? I was, several years ago, when I toured Hanford's first plutonium production reactor, the historic B Reactor. I felt awe at seeing that huge reactor face, massively scaled up in a matter of months from Enrico Fermi's first critical pile. I felt the excitement that must have been felt back then by the participants in the Manhattan Project, the excitement of a deadly race for the survival of a free world. And I felt eeriness, as if the ghosts of Fermi and his co-workers still inhabited the empty control room.

Some people, myself included, want to see B Reactor preserved as a national historic museum. Others see B Reactor only as nuclear waste and want to see it torn down and buried.

The important thing, in either case, is that B Reactor should be able to be *seen*. Because of the wartime secrecy in which the Manhattan Project was born, many Americans of the present do not know the history of the atomic bomb. This will be even more true of future generations unless we save some of the relics for their immense historic and educational value.

(Editor's note: If there is sufficient interest, BRMA can arrange for a group to tour B Reactor. Contact: Pam Novak [376-1243].)

The B Reactor Museum
 Association
 P.O. Box 1531
 Richland, Washington
 99352
 Supporting the
 50th Anniversary
 Commemoration of the
 Manhattan Project
 1943-1993



Women at Hanford

Valorie Claphan

The BRMA is looking for individuals and organizations to get involved in a project to document the role of women in the early history of Hanford.

Many women's organizations and societies were formed during the last 50 years, and many women labored in both traditional and non-traditional roles to build Hanford. These are the sources for the stories and pictures which are needed to complete the whole story of Hanford. The BRMA is specifically interested in the women at the Hanford Construction Camp, but this history cannot be isolated from the history of the women pioneers at Hanford and White Bluffs, the early women pioneers in and near Richland, and the women who, in wartime and after, helped to shape the Richland we know today.

We would like to hear from women who were a part of this history. Even if you did not work or live at Hanford during the early years, but are interested in interviewing people, researching and collecting memorabilia, please call me at 943-2077, evenings.

Calendar

(contacts in parentheses)

August 27	Hanford Future Site Uses working group "reactors on the river" subcommittee public meeting. Location tbd (Madeleine Brown)	October 1	Public scoping meeting/workshop for Hanford Remedial Action EIS, Pasco Red Lion (Madeleine Brown)
September 9	Hanford Reach draft EIS public hearing, Richland Federal Building (Madeleine Brown)	October 8	BRMA Board meeting, Richland Public Library (Don Sandberg)
September 10	Board meeting, BRMA, Richland Public Library (Don Sandberg)	October 9	Hanford Reach draft EIS public comment period closes (Madeleine Brown)
September 17	Monthly membership meeting, BRMA, Richland Public Library (Don Sandberg)		Do you know of activities or events in which BRMA members and supporters would want to participate? Phone Madeleine Brown, 946-4082.
September 24	"Graphite" BBQ (Pam Novak)		

The BRMA Moderator

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