

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

Winter 1994

Message from the President

Progress toward our goal of preserving B Reactor has been made since the last issue of the *Moderator*. The petitions that were circulating with the last *Moderator* came in with over 1200 names, thanks in large part to the organization and diligence of Madeleine Brown. The petitions were sent to Assistant Energy Secretary Thomas Grumbly, probably arriving at his desk at the same time he arrived in the Tri-Cities for the Hanford Summit Conference! Del Ballard, Secretary of BRMA, took the opportunity following the Summit, to talk with assistant Secretary Grumbly who stated his support for the preservation of B Reactor as a museum. Also at the Hanford Summit, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary toured B Reactor and was overheard to say that B Reactor should be preserved.

Furthermore, after receiving a copy of our letter to Assistant Secretary Grumbly, Congressman Jay Inslee wrote that he is actively working to develop continuing support for B Reactor preservation.

This support is only the beginning, however, It must be nurtured and maintained over the next several years. In these early stages, we continue working with the City of Richland and the Department of Energy in the development of the evolving concept of an Interpretive Center associated with Richland's Cultural Center. The Interpretive Center idea will lead to the B Reactor Museum itself. While our BRMA representatives are involved with these negotiations, there is still the need to carry forward the Oral History project, capturing the stories of the "old-timers" who were active in B Reactor startup. This takes money. Raising money takes a lot of things, not the least of which is people power. The newly elected 1994 officers would like all the help they can get. Whatever you can contribute in time or financial assistance will be warmly welcomed. Call any of us for a list of jobs, large or small, from which to choose.

Your 1994 officers, most of whom are continuing from the past, due to urgent persuasion, if not duress, are

President	Fran Berting (967-3924)
Vice President	Jim Stoffels (946-8087)
Secretary	Del Ballard (946-6401)
Treasurer	Roger Rohrbacher (783-0251)
Committee Chairs:	
Fund Raising	Pam Novak (943-9511)
Health, Safety & Engineering	Miles Patrick, P.E. (545-8928)
History, Artifacts, & Exhibits	Lyle Wilhelmi (946-4082)
Membership	Joe Hedges (943-1076)
Public Relations	Wendy Keegan (946-7404)

Please drop in at our monthly meetings, the second Monday of each month at 4:45 p.m. at the Richland Public Library. Enjoy a historic video or presentation from 4:45 to 5:00 p.m. and stay for the meeting, almost guaranteed to last only an hour, to see what's going on.

B Reactor - A Civil Engineering Landmark

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has recently designated the Hanford B Reactor as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.

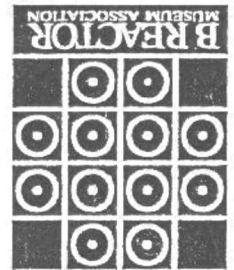
At their October 1993, meeting in Houston TX, the National Board of the ASCE approved the nomination by the Columbia Section to recognize B Reactor for its historical significance in the civil engineering profession. The nomination had been reviewed and recommended by the ASCE National Committee on History and Heritage. Civil Engineers were responsible for construction management, design of structural features, shielding, water treatment, and other aspects of the Hanford reactors.

ASCE Landmark designation places B Reactor on the same list of historic structures as the Brooklyn Bridge, Hoover Dam, New York City Subway, etc. Only two other such Landmarks exist in the state of Washington; the Snoqualmie Falls Power Plant, and

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



the Mullan Road. The Historic Civil Engineering Landmark program was developed by ASCE as a means of bringing deserved public recognition to historic civil engineering projects, structures, and sites.

The Columbia Section plans to present a "Landmark" plaque (a very impressive 12" X 18" bronze piece) to the Department of Energy at a public ceremony on March 26, 1994. A public tour of the reactor will be held in conjunction with that ceremony.

It should be recalled that the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the American Nuclear Society have previously awarded similar recognition to the B Reactor; the worlds first full scale production reactor. The B Reactor was entered in the National Register of Historic Places on April 3, 1992 by the National Park Service.

Hanford Legacy Died

The man who helped build the Hanford legacy died of cancer December 3, 1993. Colonel Franklin T. Matthias died in his sleep at the age of 85.

In 1942, while a lieutenant colonel for the Army Corps of Engineers, Matthias was chosen by General Leslie Groves to investigate locations for the nation's

first plutonium production site. Matthias chose what we now know as the Hanford site, and was instrumental in the timely completion of the B Reactor and others.

Groves also chose Matthias to manage the construction at the site. For the next three years, Matthias managed over 150,000 workers on the project and the world's first three production-scale nuclear reactors were built.

In 1945, Matthias was honored with the Distinguished Service Medal for his management of the Hanford Engineer Works.

When the war effort was complete, Matthias stayed a Civil Engineer, and went to Brazil to construct dams. He retired as Vice President of Kaiser Engineers after 50 years of engineering.

Those who knew Colonel Matthias considered him a great leader, with concern for those around him. Matthias' former secretary Valairi Rossetti still resides in Richland, and would like to see the Colonel honored for his accomplishments.

Mrs. Rossetti is looking for ideas and suggestions for a "rememberance" named after the Colonel. If you have any ideas, pleas call her on 946-4296. Her address is 1411 Johnston Avenue, Richland.