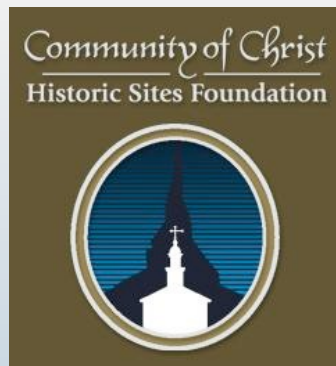


THE FORUM

New Directors:
Crafts take reins
at Heritage Plaza.
p. 6.



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Forty Years and Farewell

By Greg Clark

The Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois, has a lot of fixtures. Rick Savage is not one of them.

It just seems like it.

He has spent nearly 40 years—since May 1976—working and walking on the same grounds once covered by Emma and Joseph Smith Jr. The im-

pact of all his time and effort?

“Through his work maintaining the site, Rick has touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people,” said Lach Mackay, director of the site.

But aside from God’s love, nothing stays the same forever. Come June 3,

See Savage on page 7



Board Member Peter Smith leads the singing of spirituals on the fall bus tour.

New Tour Expands View of History

By Greg Clark

For Barb Gilbert the decision to go on a second bus tour was easy.

After all, she had an incredible time on her first tour in 2014, visiting properties supported by the Community of Christ

2016 tour set

When: October 3–16.

Price: \$1,799 per person for a double-occupancy room or \$2,599 per person for a single-occupancy room.

Included: luxury bus, hotels, admissions, most meals.

Contact: visit HistoricSitesFoundation.org or call (217) 453-2246.

See Tour on page 8

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You Can Contribute to Don Albro Benches

The late Don Albro spent years helping present, preserve, and promote properties supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation.

A fund to help honor his memory has raised \$1,555 to provide two benches along the Mississippi River at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois.

If you'd like to contribute to future benches, please contact foundation Executive Director Barbara Walden at bwalden@HistoricSitesFoundation.org. You also may mail donations to P.O. Box 3308, Nauvoo, IL 62354.

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Crafting Service at Heritage Plaza

By Greg Clark

In early December Jim and Cheryl Craft, pausing from decorating for Christmas, talked about spring plans to leave their Olathe, Kansas, home—a move of about 35 miles and 108 years.

At first glance the move to Independence, Missouri, seems perplexing. After all, the Crafts worked hard in their careers, settled into a spacious, modern house, and then retired. So why are they giving up their stylish digs for a home built in 1908?

Put simply, they see it as an adventure.

You see, that old home, the Joseph Luff House, comes with the responsibility of serving as the new site directors of Heritage Plaza, just west of the Temple. After some repairs are made to the Luff House, they'll move in time for the crowds brought by Community of Christ's World Conference, June 4-11. Heritage Plaza's other properties, two of the oldest in Jackson County, are the F.M. Smith Study and Flournoy House. They date from the 1830s.

So what led up to this move?

"We've been volunteering in Nauvoo (at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Illinois) for eight to 10 years," Cheryl said, noting that their daughter, Christin Mackay, works there. "We really enjoy that." Jim explained further: "I retired in '07, and we started going two or three weeks at a time, on occasion. I have gone over in the morning, and given tours."

They know the move will present challenges, but they're excited.

"In a way, it's like stepping back," Cheryl said. "It's unique. It

wouldn't be for everybody, but for us it will be just fine. I think life is the great adventure. What better could you do with your life than serve God?"

Their backgrounds prepared them. Both majored in history in college at Graceland College, "so we enjoy sharing the legacy with visitors," Cheryl said. "This will be fun for us."

Cheryl spent her career as an educator. Now that Jim has retired from General Motors he occasionally substitute teaches. For both, that experience—and of having served as volunteers—will prepare them for helping visitors at Heritage Plaza.

"When I taught history, I told students they were part of history every day," Cheryl said. "We choose how we react to that. A big part of history is determining where we want to go in the future. When we have volunteered at Nauvoo the witnessing is amazing. It's amazing to hear their stories and share our stories, and quite often it leads to a conversation about the church.

"I think that's probably at the root of why we're doing this."

Jim added: "We have an opportunity...to tell what these buildings mean to us. Sometimes those are the best experiences you can have."



He said there would be expanded hours throughout the busy summer season for tourists, with lessened schedules in the spring and fall. In addition the Crafts, both elders who are former pastors, will spend time working at the Temple.

Though the move won't happen until spring, they've already spent one night in the house. It was a bit scary. They kept hearing spooky noises. At first they thought somebody was trying to break in. Turns out the wind was whipping some overgrown bushes against the house in the wind.

The Crafts survived that, and now they're looking forward to their adventure...and another blessing.

Their son, Jim, is an attorney with the church. A few months ago he became a father, so now the Crafts will be near their new grandchild. It's a wonderful way to look to the future while dwelling in a piece of the past.

Savage

Continued from Page 1

Rick will say goodbye to the Homestead, Mansion House, Nauvoo House, and more. Shortly thereafter he'll head to St. Louis, get married, and begin a new part of his life.

He'll take with him decades of memories, lots of good wishes, and the respect of people who have worked with him.

"He knows how to fix anything, said Linda Etchison, a staff member. "He knows what's under and what's over every site on the property."

On his first day of work, Savage said he probably was thinking: "Am I ready for this? I had no idea what maintenance was all about. You learn as you go. I learned an awful lot in last 40 years."

And it hasn't all involved carpentry, landscaping, roofing, and snow removal.

"I've seen growth in my spiri-

tual life."

He explained that he had left the church as a teenager when his parents divorced. "I started going to church in Nauvoo, and my spiritual life turned around."

He spent nearly 30 years as a deacon and now is a priest. He credits God with getting him through a lot of tough times, including the death of his wife 11 years ago.

"I couldn't go through what I did with the loss of my wife if I didn't have God on my side."

Rick's fingerprints are on virtually every building at the historic site. Lach said he also has been responsible for more than 40 acres of grounds and various pieces of machinery.

He's especially adept at wood-working and has enjoyed making many items sold at the Red Brick Store. And through it all he has built a reputation for reliability.

"I have always taken great comfort in knowing that no matter what time of the day or night, Rick was not far away and would answer the call, whether it was a false alarm or a maintenance crisis," Lach said. "I am thrilled for Rick that he has found a life-partner, but I'm sorry for the site and church that we will lose his expertise and knowledge."

"The site can't operate without people like Rick to keep it beautiful and well maintained."

Lach noted that Rick, a descendant of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith, has seen a lot of changes (such as the opening of a Mormon temple) during his time



in Nauvoo.

Rick's impact has been felt beyond the boundaries of the historic site. He's been a volunteer firefighter for over 20 years and an EMT about 15 years. At 65, he said he won't pursue those jobs when he moves. "Being a firefighter is a young man's game."

He does hold out the possibility of landing a part-time job, continuing woodworking, traveling ("I like the outdoors, hiking, and spending time in God's beautiful nature"), and singing.

But he'll always carry with him respect for the people he worked with.

"Without volunteers this place couldn't run. We need volunteers to share our story. We need people to realize that history is part of our life as a church."

How to Help Preserve and Share Heritage

People give to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation for many reasons.

Some give because they're impressed with the properties the foundation supports. Others give because the sites have been a key to their religious development.

Still others give for many other reasons.

Your donations are appreciated. To give to the Foundation, call (217) 453-2246, visit www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org, or send mail to P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354.

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Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation

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Tour

Continued from Page 1

Historic Sites Foundation. She and the other travelers also caught some fall foliage, stopped at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, and visited Niagara Falls.

She knew it would be tough to top that trip, but the one in the fall of 2015 was even better. Besides the church-related history sites, it broadened its itinerary to fit the theme borrowed from a hymn: “For Everyone Born.”

That meant adding stops to the Gettysburg battleground in Pennsylvania; the Women’s Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York; Colonial

Williamsburg in Virginia; Washington, D.C., and more.

The event was so popular that another tour is scheduled October 3–16 this fall.

The sites were entertaining, educational, and inspirational. But Gilbert, from Independence, Missouri, found another benefit.

“I don’t think you ever can experience something like that without growing spiritually and theologically. We’re never the same when we come back.”

Because she had been to church-related historic sites multiple times, she was particularly drawn to the new attractions (though she admitted she still got a lot from stopping at the church sites again). Gettysburg captivated her, especially because of the ef-

forts of a reenactor who helped the group.

“It was amazing. This fellow... knew all the information. He really made the battlefield come alive.” Other sites also thrilled her, especially the women’s suffrage museum. “The idea of women and the different cultures...we were all excited about that. It opened up a lot of new doors, new thoughts.”

But Gilbert found that half the fun was getting there. The educational movies, the stories, and the camaraderie all played roles.

“Just being with the group was really special. It was people from all over—different personalities and types—and yet everybody seemed to kind of fit. They accepted each other and went together.”

Just like the hymn.