

THE FORUM

Board Meeting

Board upgrades its focus. Story on Page 2.



Community of Christ
Historic Sites Foundation



*Preserving & Sharing
Church Heritage*

To Make a Donation

Preserving and sharing church heritage and telling the sacred story is both a privilege and a responsibility.

To give to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, call (217) 453-2246.

An alternative is to send donations to P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354. You also can give at www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org.

The website also features updates on news and historic sites.

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Wonder Workers



The RV Association has spent much time at Liberty Hall over the years.

RV Association a Boon to Historic Sites

By Greg Clark

"I can't overstate the impact the RVA's volunteer efforts have had on our historic sites. They have completed major projects, saving the church many thousands of dollars.

They also have focused on small items that cumulatively have a major impact on a visitor's first impression.

"They don't just talk discipleship, they live it."

—Lach Mackay
Joseph Smith Historic Site

Obviously, Lach Mackay thinks highly of the Community of Christ RV Association.

He's not alone.

Other site directors, board members of the Community of Christ His-

See RVA on Page 4

Piepergerdes Savors History on Multiple Levels in Life

By Greg Clark

Much of Mary Lou Piepergerdes' life revolves around the past. And because of that focus she has some definite ideas of what she'd like in the future.

Mary Lou, 69, has spent more than a decade as a board member with the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation. The position fits her the same way her custom

See Piepergerdes on Page 7

Sally Roth Accepts Position on Board

Sally Roth is joining the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation Board of Directors.

She fills a vacant slot with the term ending December 31. Her appointment also was made for a term through 2015

Know Your Past, Understand Your Future

By Barbara Walden
Community of Christ Historic Sites
Foundation executive director

Earlier this year, I had the joy of spending time with a teenager who had just returned from Nauvoo, Illinois. She beamed with excitement as she pored over the details involving her first archaeological dig with Paul DeBarthe outside Joseph and Emma Smith's Homestead in Nauvoo.

What was once a dull subject in the classroom had suddenly become an exciting afternoon of investigation, solving mysteries, and a newfound passion for church history. She felt like she was taking part in a historic moment in her church's story, and she couldn't wait to return to Nauvoo to "dig up history" all over again.

This young woman's experience was similar to that of many young-adult interns who have immersed themselves in church his-

"She felt like she was taking part in a historic moment."

—*Barbara Walden*

tory at the historic sites. What begins as a summer job for undergraduate and graduate students turns into a newfound passion for church history and a sense of pride in Community of Christ.

As I review the student interns from the past 30 years, I am amazed at how many are now Community of Christ leaders. Past interns are now pastors, young-adult leaders, mission center

presidents, and international church leaders.

My time with the teenager reminded me of how giving to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation is more than helping preserve a historic place; it's investing in the future leadership of the church!

Your contributions help produce learning experiences for youth, resources for congregations, guest ministry at reunions, student internships, and educational programs that emphasize historic connections to today's mission initiatives.

Today, I invite you to consider investing in the future with a generous donation to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation. Like the young woman experiencing her first archaeological dig, your gift will impact tens of thousands of people by providing the resources needed to breathe life

Foundation Emphasizes the Future

The Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation wants to do even more.

Long a supporter of preserving and maintaining many of the church's historic treasures, the foundation now will emphasize the future, too.

Essentially, members of the board, meeting recently in Nauvoo, Illinois, agreed that the importance of historic sites is as much about the future as it is the past.

They agreed to work toward providing more attention to education, ministry, developing church

leaders, and congregational retreats.

Barbara Walden, executive director of the historic sites foundation, mentioned how important the sites are in developing an appreciation of church heritage among young adults.

She listed many current church leaders who found inspiration early

in their development by interning or visiting at historic sites.

Board member Alma Blair summed up the importance of the added emphasis on education and development.

"Knowing the past is key to understanding the future."

Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation

Executive Committee

President: Jeff Naylor

Vice president: David Byrn

2nd VP: Karen Graham Wade

Secretary: Pat Spillman

Treasurer: Kirk Cross

Past president: David Ettinger

Board Members

Tim Baller, Alma Blair, Bob Dimmitt, Steve Jones, George Lund, Tom Morain, Mary Lou Piepergerdes, Sally Roth, Mark Scherer.

Exec. Director: Barb Walden, bwalden@HistoricSitesFoundation.org

Island Girl Finds a Home in Kirtland

French Polynesia Sends Volunteer to Mid-America

By Greg Clark

The island of Manihi in French Polynesia sits in the South Pacific Ocean, a long way from Kirtland, Ohio, where the nearest big body of water is Lake Erie.

But a 24-year-old lady, after making the journey, found a part of her heritage that she had never known existed. More important, she found warmth, caring people, and a closer relationship with God.

Now Eliane Faura Lahaina is back home, just minutes from seafood, beaches, and the ocean. Now she's on a mission.

"I have many things I want to do," said Eliane, whose three-month stay as a volunteer at the Kirtland Temple ended in late June. "I'm sharing my testimony, and I want to teach the history of the Kirtland Temple to my congregation. I want to bring the young people at home to help the guides. This is my idea."

Eliane, who hooked up with Kirtland through the Community of Christ World Service Corps, gave tours and helped with other work. She found English daunting, but received help from Ron Romig, the site director. Along the way she learned about the Temple's history.



"Early in the morning of her first day at the site, we went into Kirtland Temple," Ron said. "As we walked into the lower court sanctuary, she pointed to her arm and said, 'What is this?' She had goosebumps all over her arm."

The impact of her stay was undeniable.

"The people in French Polynesia do not speak of the history of the church," she said. "When I heard the history—wow, it's very, very beautiful!"

Ron said it's extremely important for people from other cultures to experience elements of heritage such as the Temple.

"World Service Corps is a foundational program helping young

adults understand that they are part of a truly international body."

Not only did Eliane find joy in telling the Kirtland story, she discovered friends in the Kirtland Congregation, the Temple staff, and visitors. Among them was Anne Romig, Ron's wife.

"The powerful memory of Eliane, in her native dress, sharing her testimony still brings tears to my eyes," Anne said. "She bonded with all of us and had many American adventures.

"Eliane was an observer and took many pictures. Everything was of interest, and she especially loved to watch people...It was a bit challenging to get from one place to another without her taking less than 100 pictures. I loved seeing the world through her eyes."

Some things, however, were difficult. At first Eliane missed her family. And, well, Lake Erie just wasn't the same as the ocean.

"I wanted to swim in Lake Erie, but I could not because it's very, very cold. But now I no longer miss my family; I miss the Temple."

Tell Us How Historic Sites Have Impacted You

Eliane Lahaina isn't the only person inspired by her contact with the church's historic sites. We'd like to hear your story about how the sites have affected you.

E-mail your story, name, and place of address to Greg Clark at gclark@CofChrist.org. If you'd like, you also can include a photograph of yourself. Stories should be 300 words or fewer.

We look forward to hearing from you!

RVA

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toric Sites Foundation, staff members, and guests all hold this group of dedicated volunteers in incredibly high esteem.

Need more proof? Check this excerpt from a memo written by Steve Jones, presiding bishop and a member of the foundation board. He wrote it in 2010, but then, he writes a similar memo every year. Each reflects sincerity while acknowledging the RV Association's contributions through incredible generosity.

"As I read this past year's list of accomplishments I marvel at the loving ministry of expertise for the mission of the church that is demonstrated in the hours of devoted service. Over 10,000 hours of service is like the church having five full-time staff hired and out doing all these projects.

"In-kind dollars total nearly \$200,000 of dedicated service contributed by RVA.

"I know these numbers are interesting to the work of RVA but do not adequately tell the story of fellowship, fun, and passion that you all share as you go about your wonderful ministry and testimony.

"Please tell your members that church leaders hear, see, know, and appreciate all that RVA is doing for the church."

Without the RVA, the Community of Christ's historic jewels would not shine so brightly or carry such value as they inform and inspire new generations about the story of the church.

Bob Dimmitt, president of the association, quantified the value to historical properties with an estimate off the top of his head.

"I estimate at \$25 per hour, we did the equivalent of \$250,000 worth of work this year. The four



Installing a historic fire escape was a crowning touch for the barn.

historical properties are our prime goal."

A Look Back

So just how is it that a group of RV owners, all of them retired, came to play such a quiet, but important, role in the maintenance and beautification of historic sites?

RVA Secretary Barbara Fears says the organization was founded in 1998 with Dimmitt as executive director. Then, the group was called the RLDS (Roaming, Laboring, Devoted Servants) RV Association.

Most years, members travel about 7,500 miles—sometimes many more—while frequently working in Nauvoo, Illinois; the Kirtland Temple site in Ohio; the Plano Stone Church in Plano, Illinois; Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa; Heritage Plaza in Independence, Missouri; and more.

The group claimed 136 dues-paying members in 2012, with 25 participating on the trips. Not all trips, however, are history related.

Two of the most rewarding, Fears said, had nothing to do with the historic sites.

"The single greatest joy we've experienced while working on a project was building a shower house one summer at Lake McGowan Campground in Ontario. Previously, they had 18 outhouses and a two-hole shower house. They had 35 people help us. We had 18.

"The local people were all in tears when we left. The campground had existed for 50 years. They were so delighted that within three weeks they had a beautiful building with showers, stools, and lavatories."

The most satisfying project, however, was working in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina. The World Church asked if the RVA could help.

"We drove to the mission center office," Fears said. "They recommended we park around the Escatawpa, Mississippi, church so we could have electricity and water. We began to call the RVA members. Thirty-three helped.

"We worked in 11 homes, installing new insulation, Sheetrock, and then mudding the seams. Then we moved to the next home. Three of the homes were owned by elderly people, who needed cabinets removed be-

RVA

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fore we could do our regular work. In seven weeks, we worked on 14 homes.

“This experience brought joy and satisfaction, not only to those where we worked, but to each of our members.”

That joy and satisfaction form a recurring theme.

“The RVA provides an opportunity for its members to share generously of skills and abilities gained through years of training and work experience,” said Jeff Naylor, president of the Historic Sites Foundation. “For others, it’s the joy of fellowship and the satisfaction of hard work rewarded by the knowledge that the fruits of their labor are supporting such noble purposes.”

Mackay added: “They really enjoy each other’s company as they travel, live, and work together. RV Association members must feel a great sense of satisfaction for a job well done.”

A Look at 2012

This year, the RVA has visited all of the biggest properties supported by the Historic Sites Foundation. At each stop, members have taken two sets of tools. One contains things such as hammers, saws, and screwdrivers. The other holds love, faith, and generosity.

By using both toolboxes, the RVA has laid sidewalks, removed fences, worked on roofs, installed floor joists, put in toilets, painted all sorts of things, replaced windows, and, well you get the idea.

So why do people who are retired take on such muscle-aching work?

“We love the opportunity to travel, to see new places, and to meet new people,” Fears said. “How pleasant it is to work with people we enjoy and to spend our energies doing



Besides working at Liberty Hall this summer, the RVA also stopped in Independence, Missouri, where it labored at Heritage Plaza; took time to visit and work at the Kirtland Temple complex in Ohio; and went to the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois.

things that make a difference. In doing so we find great joy!”

Perhaps the RVA’s biggest project this year was at Liberty Hall. When Site Director Steve Smith would walk into the parking lot, he would gaze back toward a large, unused barn, built in 1920 and fallen into decay. He envisioned it as a site for community gatherings and all sorts of activities.

Now, thanks to the RVA, that vision is reality.

In the first of two trips there this year, the RVA ran electricity to the barn, sealed it against wildlife, removed three grain bins, took out rotten wood, built a stairway to the second floor, installed a new

wood floor and access ramps, painted the exterior, and more. In September the RVA returned to place a new floor in the hayloft and install a fire escape.

The fire escape itself is a historic artifact. It originally was the exterior fire escape for the Administration Building at Graceland University.

“Steve Smith and his staff at Liberty Hall are eagerly looking forward to hosting community events and Graceland-sponsored activities in their newly renovated space later this year,” said Barbara Walden, executive director of the foundation.

Appreciation

Though the RVA doesn’t seek a high public profile, it leaves fans at every stop. Some testimonials:

- Tom Morain, foundation board member: “Amen to the great work of the RV Association. The barn looks great. I arranged for the leaders of the Graceland Student Life program to meet with Steve Smith for a tour. They seem enthusiastic about letting Graceland groups know it is available. It would be a great meeting spot in good weather.”

- Naylor: “The quality of work that RVA members provide is as good as any professional and allows for the many historic properties to put their best foot forward in telling the story of the church.”

- Walden: “It is absolutely amazing how much labor this group of RVers does for our historic sites. If you know of anyone in the RV Association, please thank them on behalf of the foundation.”

- Mackay: “When the RV Association pulls into town, it feels to the site’s staff like the reinforcements have arrived. Long-delayed projects are going to get done, and by the time the RVs pull out, many months’ worth of work will be accomplished in just a few weeks.”

History Is Special Down Under!

Mark Scherer, Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation board member and World Church historian and archivist, recently toured Australian links to church history and heritage that hold great meaning for the folks Down Under. The sites have a place in telling the sacred story of a church blessed with spreading Jesus' mission globally.

By Mark Scherer

I am pleased to provide these reflections on my journey in Australia from late December through January 2012. What a privilege to be with the Australian people in reunion and camp settings at Kallara, homes, and congregations.

Our church identity has so many wonderful affiliations. Friendships, common beliefs, and lasting attachment through history are just three. The church in Australia finds all of these connections and more. But especially it finds interconnectedness through extended families.

If I were to draw a figure that best represents my experience in Australia, it would be a huge oak tree with a hundred branches and a sturdy trunk. The tree symbolizes endurance and beauty by standing against powerful spring storms, and its green leaves are the most beautiful in the forest.

The Reorganized Church taproot of this mighty oak extends deep into the rich Australian soil.

The tree was planted when Glaudd Rodger and Charles Wandell arrived at Sydney Harbor on January 22, 1874. The oak tree symbolizes wonderful church family heritage, important friendships, and intertwined family networks.

Ken Barrows, my travel partner and truly a pastor to the entire Australia Mission Centre, was far more than a chauffeur. He was organizer, guide, counselor, minister, and friend.

Though I was his navigator, he frequently and patiently showed me our location on my map, and not the other way around.

With others we visited historic sites where generations of dedicated people walked—hallowed

worshiped in the congregation farthest from Independence, Missouri. This reinforced my understanding that although International Headquarters is important for World Church decision-making, in Australia the “real church” is expressed in daily living.

From Perth we flew to Brisbane, where we encountered the same powerful indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Then coursing our way down Australia's east coast we



Mark Scherer (center) toured Hastings Harbor in Victoria, Australia, where Glaudd Rodger landed in 1878 and baptized the first person in the Reorganization there. He's flanked by Shirley Davies and Glen McClellan, respectively the former and current presidents of the Saints' Historical Association of Victoria.

places like Hastings, Glen Forbes, Queensferry, Avalon, and Silver Fern. We visited old church buildings no longer in use but rich in heritage, such as Bowraville, Argent's Hill, and Nambucca.

We visited camping sites past and present, including Mountain Hut, Willow Bend, Kallara, and Tiona. I heard voices break with emotion as they told how the Holy Spirit touched them on sacred grounds. One easily could appreciate the “power of place.” Spiritual giants surely dwelled there.

I enjoyed a wonderful evening with the Saints' Historical Association of Victoria—seasoned historians all. I also spent considerable time in a professionally supervised mission archives, housed in the Drummoyne congregation.

We shared in wonderful congregations in the Melbourne area, Adelaide, then Perth. In Perth, I

shared sometimes in three congregations per day. Everywhere, we found friendly faces and heard rich testimonies of faith and heritage.

At historic Laurieton and Broken Hill I spent hours interviewing two little-recognized “sheroes.” I knew their amazing stories but did not know them. I heard incredible details absent in World Church archives documents.

More than 100 oral interviews yielded profound testimonies. I also heard excellent advice for future church members! The Australian legacy provides powerful shoulders on which the entire World Church may stand.

Now I review my experiences and find that wherever I offered ministry, I received much more. I leave no stone altars in tribute nor inspired poetry, but only my thanks for your graciousness. Best wishes on your sacred journey.

Piepergerdes

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frames fit around her husband's gallery photographs: with beauty and grace.

Her story started as a girl, where she grew up in a mostly RLDS community, Stewartville, Missouri, and attended the Maple Grove Congregation.

"I've always been interested in history, especially church history," she said. "I had that root."

It's manifested itself in different ways and different times. For example, when she was older, living in Independence, Missouri, with her husband, Dennis.

"Our circle of friends was pretty much all church. I felt the need for another outlet. In our church bulletin one Sunday was a blurb about volunteers for the Bingham-Waggoner Estate."

The Bingham-Waggoner Estate is a Victorian manor just a few blocks from the Temple and Auditorium. Soon, Mary Lou was volunteering at the site and serving as a guide. Within a few years she was president of the board of directors.

But it wasn't until a few years later—and a move to Lamoni, Iowa—that she found her real niche.

"I own a gallery frame shop," she said. "I'm a potter. I learned to frame to do Dennis' photos. And I do antiques, so now it's an antique store, frame shop, and gallery."

She and Dennis also have made friends with many in the area's Amish community, and they're active each Labor Day in a Civil War re-enactment. "I have to be in costume when we take Dennis' photos out to sell."

Her love of history also spills into her work with the board.

"I think we're doing better (with younger adults). I think it's real important for our kids if we're go-



Mary Lou Piepergerdes enjoyed a stint behind the famed Plano pulpit at the last World Conference.

ing to keep them with the church. These places aren't just old museums that nobody cares about. I would like to see us have more child-friendly things going on like with the Spurrier School and Liberty Hall in Lamoni."

That's one look toward the future. To achieve it, she knows the foundation must continue to raise financial support. "People take ownership when they've invested their money or time in it."

A second vision rests within dreams of another time and place.

"If we didn't have to make a living, Dennis and I would love to go to Nauvoo and volunteer," she said, referring to the Joseph Smith Historic Site.

Such dedication hasn't gone unnoticed.

"Mary Lou has been a dynamo in the energy and enthusiasm that she has brought to her role as board member for the foundation," President Jeff Naylor said.

"She and her husband have a deep affection for the sites and a passion to share that with others."

Jeff especially praised her board participation, on-site volunteering, board and volunteer recruitment, and sharing of financial resources.

"She speaks her mind and is not afraid to roll up her sleeves and get to work," Jeff said. "I really appreciate Mary Lou's desire to push the board toward the best solution—not the fastest or easiest one. She holds us accountable."

Jeff especially appreciates Mary Lou's views as a small-business owner and artist.

"She brings a necessary and welcome perspective that broadens our understanding and helps us make better decisions. Her involvement has been—and continues to be—a blessing to the church and the many visitors who experience our history every day."

Make a Donation, Aid Preservation

Preserving and sharing church heritage and telling the sacred story of our journey is a privilege and a responsibility.

To help the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation fulfill that mission, call (217) 453-2246 to make a donation.

Another alternative is to send donations to P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354.

You also can donate at www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org.

Volunteers Needed

To volunteer at a historic site, contact Lachlan Mackay at (217) 453-2246 or at lmackay@CofChrist.org.

Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation

P.O. Box 338
Nauvoo, IL 62354

Congregation Feels Nauvoo's Magic

By Greg Clark

It was magical, informational, inspirational, and just plain fun.

When nearly 30 members of the Beacon Heights Congregation of Independence, Missouri, visited the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois, they enjoyed a special experience.

Not only did they feel links to their heritage, they learned from Lach Mackay about how the Mission Initiatives of today played roles in the past. Mackay, director of the historic site, provided a wealth of wonderful stories.

In addition the congregation visited many of the key places preserved and re-created from Nauvoo's heyday.



Finally, members even enjoyed an 1840s-style magic show in the upper room of the Red Brick Store. It helped cap a wonderful visit.

The importance of such visits isn't lost on Mackay, director of the Joseph Smith Historic Site.

"We are hosting a number of congregational retreats this fall," he said. "It is gratifying to see our veteran members reconnecting with our history and heritage and our newer members hearing the stories for the first time.

"A visit to our historic sites in Kirtland, Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa reminds us of something that we know but sometimes forget. Building community, building Zion, takes more than talk. It requires action. To see our brick-and-mortar efforts from years past really drives that point home."