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Don Albro Shifts Focus of Service

Longtime Historic Sites Figure Bids Fond Farewell to Board, Becomes Pastor

By Greg Clark

For Linda Etchison, it's crab bisque and a beautiful singing voice.

For Lach Mackay, it's sandbags and a wedding prayer.

For David Ettinger, it's grandchildren.

For Mark Scherer it's a reunion grounds.

They all remember the ways their lives were touched by Don Albro, who recently stepped down from the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation board. Most of all they remember the spiritual presence he now takes to his 90-mile, roundtrip com-

mutes to Dennisport, Massachusetts, where he's serving as pastor.

In November, when his colleagues heard he was declining another term, they showed sorrow while speaking with respect, admiration, and sincerity.

See Albro on Page 5



Pam Robison (left) gets help from her husband, Charlie, as Steve Smith watches. Pam was playing in the Luff home at Heritage Plaza during a break of the Historic Sites Foundation meeting. See story on Page 4.

John Baller Joins Foundation Board

By Greg Clark

The simple act of boarding a bus changed John T. Baller's life.

Because of that trip, Baller now finds himself as the newest board member of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation.

But though the bus tour of foundation-supported historic sites led directly to the position, a lifetime of events made it seem natural.

Baller, from Sioux City, Iowa, has a long history of church involvement. He spent 30 years

as a pastor, served on the World Church Finance Board for 13 years, and already knew some key players.

Now he's in a position to help in the board's mission of preserving and

See Baller on Page 6

Kirtland Volunteer Finds Fulfillment

*Bill Bauman
Encourages Others
To Join in Serving*

By Greg Clark

The Kirtland Temple is special. Each year thousands of guests visit the northeast Ohio site for religious reasons, tourism entertainment, and a love of history.

But the Temple needs help. More specifically it needs volunteers. And it needs them year-round.

So do other places supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation. They include the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois, and Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa.

"We need volunteers—not just summer, but all year," Barbara Walden, the foundation's executive director, said at a November board meeting. "Kirtland especially needs help right now."

Nobody knows that better than Bill Bauman. Last fall he often found himself as the only full-time volunteer at the site.

"I just can't understand why there aren't others volunteering," Bauman said. "I know different people are called to different things. But this community is special. Who wouldn't want to be part of a faith community that's so active and so involved?"

Make no mistake, some members of that community volunteer a few hours each week. But leaders at Kirtland—as well as in Nauvoo—also are seeking others who can help for two weeks, two months, even longer.

Count Bill as one who has stayed even longer—14 months as of late November. His dedication and performance, site director Ron Romig said, earned him the award

as September's Volunteer of the Month.

Bill credits his experience at Kirtland to a longtime interest in history, the *Herald* magazine, and his mother.

"I've always thought Kirtland was just totally *it*. There was an article my mother referred to in the *Herald*. The more I thought about it, I thought, 'Oh yeah.' So I applied."

He sees his time at Kirtland as a treat, not work.

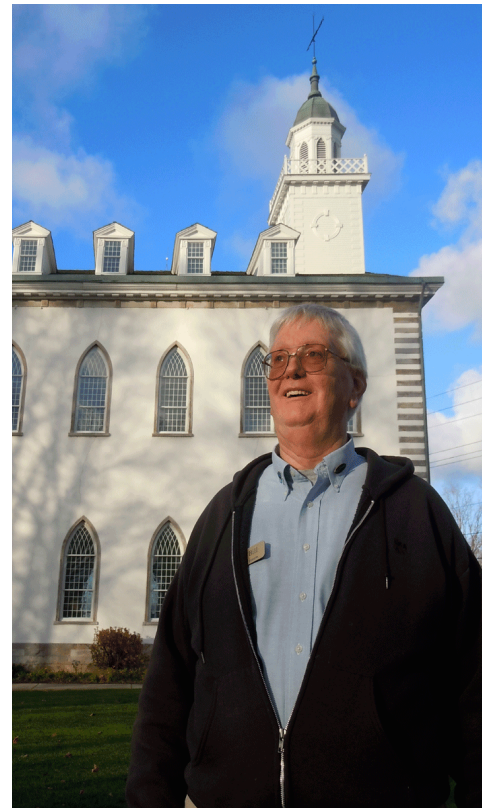
"This is not a situation where I have to get up and go do tours; I *get* to do tours. I get to share some of the most important things that happened to the church. We are so fortunate to have a living place where so many of the wonderful things that happened in the early church occurred. It's inspiring, and it's essential to our people that they know who and what we are."

Of course, guiding tours isn't for everyone. No problem. The historic sites have many other needs: gardeners, maintenance workers, store workers, and more. Two sites—Kirtland and Nauvoo—even provide housing.

Almost everybody who volunteers claims the experience changes them. Some find it draws them closer to their church heritage. Others get the satisfaction of helping a worthy cause. Bill has found still other benefits.

"It's made me confident. It's empowered me to not be afraid to share my testimony of Jesus Christ and what happened here at Kirtland. I am a happier and much more focused person."

The importance of volunteers isn't lost on John Kester of Topeka, Kansas. He recently took a bus tour that visited numerous sites. "It would be a big struggle for any of them to make a go of it and be presented as they are if not for volunteers and donors," he said.



David Byrn, vice president of the foundation, believes such bus tours will help bring more volunteers.

"The way you get volunteers is you get people to the sites," he said.

At Liberty Hall, site director Steve Smith, who is expanding programs and events, said: "The biggest need we have going forward is for additional volunteers. We have a dedicated corps...but we need to expand. We'd like to set up a training program and a volunteer coordinator to help schedule and shepherd them."

Lach Mackay, director of Visitor and Heritage Services for Community of Christ, applauds Smith's efforts. But he's worried. "Our concern is that we don't want to wear out the staff."

To do that, people like Bill Bauman need lots of company. The historic sites can't afford to let their volunteers get lonely.

Bus Tour Rolls Back into History

By Greg Clark

They came for many reasons.

Some thought it would be fun. Some wanted to learn more about historic sites. One couple even came to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

But although their reasons for joining the bus tour led by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation varied, their

responses were similar in one way: They overwhelmingly glowed about the experience.

- Dolores Vest of Pensacola, Florida: "It strengthens your faith when you go. It was a most enjoyable trip and I would highly recommend that anyone who can, go on the April tour. It will be outstanding."

- Mary Lou Bolt of Coleman, Michigan: "I just experienced such a wonderful sense of redefining who I am in the church and what we're all about."

- John T. Baller of Sioux City, Iowa: "I gained a little more appreciation for church history and heritage, and I came to better know Joseph Smith Jr. and Joseph Smith III."

- John Kester of Topeka, Kansas, who went with his wife, Cheryl: "It was a fascinating trip, and we thought it was a wonderful



The October bus tour savored a stop in the sanctuary of the Stone Church in Plano, Illinois.

way to give an anniversary gift to ourselves."

The tour, which ran from October 10-19, covered eight states and made many stops. Leaders didn't restrict it to Community of Christ sites. It also stopped at Shaker and Mennonite locations, Niagara Falls, and the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

And don't get the idea that the bus meant hour upon hour of tedious travel. David Ettinger, who led the tour, and Barbara Walden, ex-

April bus tour

The next bus tour will be April 16-25. To learn more, visit www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org, or contact Barbara Walden at (440) 477-9562 or bwalden@cchsf.org. The cost is \$1,300 per person for double-occupancy rooms, or \$1,800 for single occupancy.

ecutive director of the foundation, taught classes and showed videos about the sites as the miles rolled away. In addition, each is a gifted storyteller.

Each of the more than 50 persons brought away at least one special memory. For Vest, it was a worship service in the Kirtland Temple.

"At the Communion they opened it to prayer

and testimony. There were wonderful experiences and not a dry eye."

For Bolt, the Plano Stone Church, brought an unexpected impact. "If there is a surprise, it was how much Plano touched me and how beautiful and important our beginnings were. Being there made things so real to me."

Ettinger understands that response. "The power of our sites and pilgrimage—there's nothing like it. There probably will be some guides who come out of this."

Bolt might be one of them. "After visiting all of the sites...I had an overwhelming sense that I needed to volunteer. It won't just end at the bus tour."

Walden saw the pride and impact in comments received after the trip. One said, "You now have a bus full of ambassadors for the historic sites." Someone else responded: "A sleepy Saint has been awakened."

Economic Turbulence

Foundation Advances Despite Hard Times; Sites Still Need Support

By Greg Clark

Times are hard. We see the economy's woes reflected in job losses, lower incomes, housing problems, and more.

Non-profits are no exception. Leaders of many organizations are working harder than ever to find support, but donations are slipping as people see discretionary income slide.

In one way, the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation is no different. Its leaders are laboring mightily to find financial support. But here's a difference: Despite the economic problems, giving to the foundation in support of historic sites is up.

It's not a gigantic increase, but it is positive news. Board members were pleased to hear it when they met November 4-5 in Independence, Missouri.

In other action, the board heard reports from each historic site, discussed its strategic plan for the future, and passed a preliminary 2012 budget. It was down slightly from 2011, when it helped observe several historic anniversaries.

The board also unanimously passed its slate of officers: Jeff Naylor, president; David Byrn, vice president; Karen Graham Wade, second vice president; Pat Spillman, secretary; Kirk Cross, treasurer; and David Ettinger, past-president.

But the main topic was the need for fundraising to help the board in its mission to preserve and share church heritage.



Jeff Naylor, David Byrn, Steve Smith, and Bob Dimmitt addressed the board discussion at their November meeting

Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation

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Secretary: Pat Spillman

Vice president: David Byrn

Treasurer: Kirk Cross

2nd vp: Karen Graham Wade

Past president: David Ettinger

Board Members

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

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

Potential Board Members

The Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation is always on the lookout for strong candidates to join the Board of Directors. Talented parties are encouraged to send a letter of inquiry and qualifications to the board president at P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354.

Experience in non-profit fundraising, history, and historical preservation with business/finance and public relations/marketing is valued. Positions typically span three-year terms. The Community of Christ corporate body makes appointments.

"To date, fundraising is a little over \$35,000 with 45 new donors," Byrn said. "Last year the entire year was \$33,000. The goals for next year are to increase number of contributors, as well as the base contributors' amount."

Barbara Walden, the executive director, said the last year has crys-

tallized her thoughts on the importance of continued support.

"I realized the important role we play as keeper of the fire," she said. "We need the church, but the church needs the historic sites, as well. We play an important role with the enduring principles and mission initiatives."

Albro

Continued from Page 1

But they also responded with great appreciation for his decades of service to the historic sites. Even more, they talked of his love and passion for history and people. Those qualities carried him through three stints as director of historic sites (spanning 1992-2005) before he joined the board.

His journey began in 1956 when he became a part-time caretaker at the Kirtland Temple in Ohio. Over the years he earned a degree in mechanical engineering and became a standout as a regional sales engineer.

"I always wanted to work for the church," Don said. "It just never happened that way."

Maybe not directly, but most are quick to say that Don, 80, is continuing a lifetime spent serving the church. Consider again those memories.

Etchison, who works at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois, recalls the pastoral nature he often displayed while leading the staff there.

"He has such an aura about him. He is just very spiritual. He was very interested in everyone and everything. He was a great listener. He would help you with anything."

And, of course, there was his culinary skill. "He used to cook breakfast or dinner for everybody. He makes some great crab bisque."

She also she admired his voice. "I loved to stand next to him when he was singing in church."

For Scherer, the World Church historian, Don always will be linked to the Onset Reunion Grounds, where he lives in Massa-

chusetts. "My parents honeymooned on that campground, and he knew them.

"I also supervised part of his term when he served as director of the Nauvoo historic site, and he really took it to the next level in the way it was presented."

That care also plays a role in the memories of Mackay, the current site director in Nauvoo.

"He wasn't just an administra-

Mackay and his wife, Christin, are so close to Don that they asked him to offer a pastoral prayer when they got married.

Ettinger, past-president of the foundation board, also holds a strong connection with Don. They worked together on several key projects, but the personal touch made the biggest impression.

"My favorite memories are of my children, who were very young, pre-grade school. Don and his wife, Elsie, kind of became like grandparents to my children. It was almost like he was family to me."

Just as others hold special recollections of Don, he has poignant memories, himself. One is of when workers raised the Mansion House to put in a basement and foundation.

"They had to bring one section up so we could dig out a basement," Don said. "For us to move that building, we had to tear down all the chimneys because they were interconnected to the floor joists. We numbered all the bricks of the hearths in the inside of the building and then stored them so the bricks are the original ones.

"I would go to bed at night and wonder whether I'd wake up and the building would be there in the morning."

Now, Don is turning his focus from the historic sites to the half-dozen or so people who form the congregation in Dennisport.

"It is probably the oldest continually operating group on the East Coast," Don said. "We will celebrate our 146th anniversary in April.

And how are things going?

"I just made some crab bisque for the folks, and I still sing at church."



Don Albro (second from left) helped sand bag a levee when a flood threatened the Joseph Smith Historic Site in 1993.

tor; he physically did the work with the maintenance staff."

That was never more evident than during a great flood in 1993, when he fought the Mississippi River to preserve the Nauvoo House.

"I remember him filling and throwing sand bags and monitoring the levee at all hours of day and night to make sure it held."

Ground Radar Peers into Nauvoo's Past

By Greg Clark

Geophysicists, geologists, and anthropologists from Brigham Young University and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recently learned a few things in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Their team learned ground-penetrating radar can work in the Midwest—in the right conditions.

And it learned there's more to the Joseph Smith Historic Site and other areas than the naked eye can see. As a result, this summer Graceland University students will receive a special experience.

The team, working from October 7-15, sought to see if the ground-penetrating radar could

"Come June it's a prime candidate for exploration."

—Lachlan Mackay

help find buried foundations that disappeared long ago.

Previously, damp weather and a high amount of loess in Midwestern soils had thwarted attempts.

But from two site visits in late 2011, the team found that in dry conditions, where rivers have scoured loess from the soil, the technology works.

"On the Theodore Turley site they found features that have yet to be excavated," said Lachlan

Mackay, Joseph Smith Historic Site director. "Come June it's a prime candidate for exploration."

So that month Graceland students will get a rare opportunity when they return with Paul DeBarthe, who was involved in Nauvoo digs in the 1970s and '80s.

Mackay is especially interested in the Turley site, where one of the first buildings was erected.

"What the radar shows is something...a cistern, tree roots, or foundation," Mackay continued. "On the LDS site they found a beautiful brick floor."

The students won't be the only people who can join the archeological experience.

"Others will be welcome to pick up a trowel," Mackay said.

Baller

Continued from Page 1

sharing church heritage, tasks that have become dear to him. Specifically, he wants to kindle a passion in young people.

"I think it would be helpful and important to get our youth and young adults more aware of our history and heritage, more excited about it," Baller said. "I've been told our young people who volunteer at these sites...come back quite enthusiastic about the heritage of the church in general."

Baller also believes retired seniors hold great potential as volunteers.

In addition, he holds the conviction that fundraising is a key to the foundation's mission. He cites a conversation with Barbara Walden, the foundation's executive director, on the bus tour.

"Barb was talking about the money it took to re-enforce the

walls of the Kirtland Temple. If we hadn't had the money to do that, it would have fallen down."

The lectures Walden gave on the tour, as well as the connection with the historical sites, helped motivate Baller to take the board position.

Walden explained: "He was alive and on fire with history. Once we got to the Community of Christ sites he began asking about how they're maintained and managed. In Kirtland, he gave me ideas for fundraising. By the time we had reached Nauvoo, we were addressing the needs there. He said, 'Well, we're going to have to raise more to get that covered.'

"I've been hoping to do this, wanting to do this. I feel I have the talents for this."

Baller, a cardiologist, plans to do more than serve as an administrator. Lachlan Mackay, team leader of Visitor and Heritage Services for the church, said the doctor and his

wife, Lynne, plan to volunteer at Nauvoo this summer.

That kind of passion, makes Baller a good fit for the board.

"He has been a quiet fan of the historic sites for some time," Board President Jeff Naylor said before the group voted. "This is an opportunity. You have someone with interest and passion."

More than that, friends like Presiding Bishop Steve Jones vouch for Baller's people skills. One thing's certain: He's not one-dimensional. Besides his deep church involvement and career in medicine, he's found time to finish two marathon races.

However, his running career may be over, at least for a while.

"I think running helped me keep my sanity," he said. "But a year ago I sustained a stress fracture in my right knee."

So next time, instead of running maybe he'll just take the bus. It certainly proved rewarding last time.

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