

THE FORUM



Tahitian custom at Kirtland

Community of Christ
Historic Sites Foundation



Preserving & Sharing
Church Heritage

November 2010

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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 frequent updates on news and historic sites.

On the Web

To stay up to date with foundation events, view striking photographs, and learn contact information, visit www.historicsitesfoundation.org.

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The popular social network also is a big hit with many historic-site fans. Visit www.facebook.com.

Donors Praise Programs

By Greg Clark

It started with a frayed pew cushion in the mid-1990s.

For Velma and Ray Cain those faded threads led to a passion for church history and a growing understanding of the important role donors play in supporting historic properties.

Heritage Club

A new Heritage Club will give members perks for supporting historic church properties. For more information see the story and chart on Page 6.

Today the Cains, both 85, live in Independence,

Missouri, and support the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation as it strives to preserve and share church heritage. They want to see an understanding of the church's historic properties grow, especially among

See Donors on Page 2



CONFERENCE CROWD: Cutouts of several Community of Christ historic figures joined Carol Jourdan (left) and Christin Mackay before this year's World Conference. Story on Page 4.

"The Great Alma Blair" Still Teaching

By Greg Clark

Some people call him Al. Others Alma. Still others Mr. Blair or Professor Blair.

But Barb Walden, executive director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, insists his name is "the Great Alma

Blair."

People use such nicknames with sarcasm or sincerity.

This isn't sarcasm.

Barb was among the estimated 8,000 to 10,000 students reached by Blair

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Donors

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the younger members of Community of Christ.

So what does all of this have to do with pew cushions? It started this way:

“Back in the mid-’90s, two board members on the old Restoration Trails Foundation contacted us about the cushions in the Kirtland Temple, which were deplorable,” Ray explained. “They got about a dozen of us to go together and replace those cushions. Some of us made three trips.”

The job was more complex than it sounds, Velma said, because each pew was a different size.

“They came back to our congregation at Pleasant Heights,” she said. “We set up tables and rolled out the material and numbered them to the pew. We spent three or four days up there, and that’s how we got interested.”

Soon that interest translated into long stints as volunteers. And when they weren’t guiding tours, cleaning, or painting, they enjoyed the area’s beauty.

“I love to sit outside the Sidney Rigdon home on the porch—it’s beautiful country—and look across at the Temple and just imagine what people were like in the olden days,” Velma said.

“Kirtland was my passion,” said Ray. I just loved that place.”

And he loved the people—the students who worked there and the busloads who came on tours. That helped lead to his conviction about providing donor support for the historic properties.

“You only get one crack



Ray and Velma Cain know the important roles donors play with the church’s historic properties.

at keeping these historical properties,” Ray said, “and if they get away from you, that’s the end of it. I think we should push them more. The new Visitor Center (in Kirtland) is fantastic.”

Board President Jeff Naylor agrees with that outlook.

“Without donors, the support activities of the foundation would be marginal, at best,” he said. “Through their generosity, donors make it possible for the foundation to develop multigenerational education materials, provide fellowships that help sites during lean volunteer months, and cover all general maintenance costs for the historic sites.

“There’s no question the state of the church’s historic sites and the foundation’s ability to promote church heritage would be highly compromised without donors.”

For example, Naylor said gifts received in 2010 are making it possible to develop resources that support youth caravans to the church’s sites.

“What a fitting legacy for our donors,” he said, “to share their love of heritage and the historic sites with following generations.”

Lachlan Mackay, team leader for the church’s Visitor and Heritage Services, put it bluntly: “Financial contributions to the Foundation are critical to preserv-

ing our sacred and historic landmarks.”

That’s where people like the Cains come in.

“Ray and Velma understand the long-term needs of the historic sites and have given generously toward ensuring that our powerful story will be heard for generations to come,” said Barb Walden, the foundation’s executive director.

“They are sincere stewards of our heritage whose generosity reminds us that our historic sites are not just old buildings; they are inspiring places where people’s lives have been touched and where they feel their voices have been heard.”

Ray sees the importance of preservation extending beyond the sites themselves.

Without the sites “we lose a part of our history... we need to work with the young or middle-aged families to put some emphasis there. It’s not only going to impact the church historical properties, but church membership.”

Donations Help Preserve, Share Heritage

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Van Buskirk Answers Call of the Road

Foundation Volunteer Racks up Big Miles

By Greg Clark

Wanderlust always held Glenna Van Buskirk in its grasp.

She and her late husband, Bert, put down roots in Stillwater, Oklahoma. But they couldn't resist the allure of the road.

Over the years they held a vacation church school in Grand Cayman; served in the kitchen at the Buckhorn Campground in Idyllwild, California; ran the Olive Branch Inn in Independence, Missouri; gave tours at the Kirtland Temple in Ohio; and helped at Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa.

Bert died in December 2008, but Glenna's traveling days were far from over. Beginning in the spring of 2009, she and Barb Walden embarked on a series of road trips that would have put Bob Hope and Bing Crosby to shame.

Over the next several months, they covered thousands of miles together, visiting campgrounds, reunions, and the World Conference in Independence.

"Kirtland is where Bert's heart was," said Glenna, now 72. "In the summer of '08 he got up one morning, and he said, 'Pack the car; we're going to Kirtland.' We knew we couldn't, but his heart was there.

"Last year, after his passing, I decided that's what he'd want me to do. So I went back to Kirtland. I went in May and stayed into November."

During an earlier stay at Kirtland in the late '90s, Glenna said she had met and become fond of a summer intern: Barb. Their friendship continued after Barb became Kirtland's site director.

Then in November 2009, Barb became the new executive director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation. One of her first tasks was to visit some winter reunions, and she needed a traveling companion. She asked Glenna.

"She said, 'I think you'll be the one



Though Kirtland is Glenna Van Buskirk's favorite historic property, she still took time to look at the Luff Home at Heritage Plaza during the church's World Conference..

to get volunteers.' I was almost ready to back out...then I decided to do it," Glenna said. "I guess I've got an adventurous spirit."

In January they visited the Deerhaven winter reunion in Florida. In February they went to the Phoenix, Arizona,

How to volunteer

The Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation needs volunteers for the properties it supports. The experience can be greatly rewarding.

For more information about volunteering, contact Lachlan Mackay at (217) 453-2246 or lmackay@CofChrist.org.

See Van Buskirk on Page 4



During their travels, Glenna VanBuskirk (left) and Barb Walden found time to enjoy the view—or at least the mist—at Niagara Falls.

Van Buskirk

Continued from Page 3

reunion. After that, Glenna stayed for a week with some other Kirtland volunteers—Barb’s parents—in Ridgecrest, California.

In March Glenna went to the foundation meeting in Independence, and then she and Barb traveled to the Bluff Springs Campgrounds in McDavid, Florida, for the Azalea reunion.

“We had a wonderful time, an adventure,” Glenna said. “We drove off the beaten path a time or two to look at something.”

Next it was back to Independence for World Conference. Then she returned to Kirtland in May “to plant flowers.”

Add it up, and Glenna owns a travel record that would make some over-the-road truckers envious.

Along the way, she preached about a personal passion: volunteering at the historic sites.

“I wanted to let people know that not everybody wants to give tours, but there are so many other things you can do.”

Barb said Glenna was a natural for the job.

“She loves people, getting to know them, and hearing their stories,” Barb said. “I’ve traveled thousands of miles with her...and we haven’t gone anywhere she doesn’t know someone.”

Barb said Glenna “feels called to serve. Wherever she’s needed, she just rolls up her sleeves and goes to it: cooking in a potluck, helping in the kitchen, and presiding all on the same day in the congregation in Kirtland.”

Despite all the travel, Glenna still yearns to make one more trip in particular. It’s because of Bert.

“He used to brag, ‘I’ve been to 50 states, and you’ve only been to 49.’ I haven’t been to Alaska yet, but I might make it this fall.”

Tree Planted to Honor Bert Van Buskirk

The staff from the Kirtland Temple Visitor and Spiritual Formation Center joined in June for a tree-planting to honor Bert Van Buskirk, who died in December 2008. Among the many people attending were Van Buskirk’s widow, Glenna, who continues to volunteer at the site. Bert served as the site director for two years.

Old Times Are Good Times at Conference

By Greg Clark

When Steve Veazey strode to the old, wooden pulpit in the Temple Sanctuary at World Conference he stepped into a piece of history that began 150 years earlier.

The pulpit was from the Plano Stone Church in Illinois, one of several properties supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation. Officials gently moved it to Independence, Missouri, so Veazey could share in a bit of heritage that dates from the Reorganization in 1860.

With Veazey’s address, every president now has spoken from the famed pulpit.

But this wasn’t just a catchy kickoff to the Conference. It emphasized to delegates from around the world the importance of the church’s history. Throughout the week the foundation played a key role in highlighting the church’s heritage and historic properties.

The pulpit was just the start. Not only did Veazey make history by speaking from it, he met history as he stood behind it. More pre-



Cathy Loving portrayed Emma Smith.

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Historic Meeting

John Horner (left) kicked off the 2010 World Conference by posing as Joseph Smith III and extending greetings to church President Steve Veazey. They met behind the famous pulpit from the Plano Stone Church in Illinois, where the Reorganization began 150 years earlier. The other members of the current Presidency, Dave Schaal and Becky Savage, looked on as the historic meeting took place.

He met John Horner, who portrayed Joseph Smith III, the first president of the reorganization.

Joseph” underscored the importance of the pulpit—the same one used when the church was formed. He spoke briefly to delegates and then left.

Veazey couldn’t resist a couple of quips: “I’ve always wanted to meet him.” And, “I can have my picture taken with him.”

Activities throughout the week underscored the importance of the church’s heritage.

Among the early arrivals for the conference were historic figures such as Emma Smith, the mother of Joseph Smith III; Chief Kirtland, a Cheyenne minister who served as a translator and counselor at key events; George A. Graves, the church’s first missionary.

They came in the form of posters and displays spread throughout the Temple and Museum. They were such a hit that several churches and other celebrations later asked to use them.

The foundation, which sponsored a luncheon at the World Peace Village at Conference, displayed the displays and their accompa-

nying information panels to hold informational scavenger hunts. The activities sent people scurrying to learn more about the “giants” who built the church’s foundation.

And the foundation didn’t leave out the younger set. It held daily coloring contests and displayed some of the entries.

Finally, the booth, helped introduce delegates and visitors to opportunities to celebrate and support the historic properties in Plano; Independence; Kirtland, Ohio; Nauvoo, Illinois; and Haun’s Mill and Far West in Missouri.

It also gave people a chance to learn how they can donate to the foundation and volunteer at the sites.

“We set out with the goal of ensuring that every delegate at Conference was introduced to the name and mission of the foundation,” Executive Director Barb Walden said.

“I feel confident that we accomplished our goal. In fact, it feels as though the foundation name was involved in nearly every facet of the Conference.”



Lach Mackay expressed his appreciation to volunteers and donors at a luncheon.

Heritage Club Brings Benefits

By Greg Clark

Foundation leaders soon will begin an annual program that will encourage donations to support historic properties while rewarding those who help make it happen.

It's called the Heritage Club, and it will begin January 1.

"We are energizing it as a membership program," said Barb Walden, executive director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation.

"In terms of importance this ranks very high," Walden said. "Our mission is to preserve and share church heritage, and this allows us to do both."

She said the membership benefits will encourage people to experience the sites in a new way.

"A behind-the-scenes tour of the Kirtland Temple, or a tour of Rose Hill Cemetery will have the power to change lives," Walden said.

The program will offer five graduated levels, bringing assorted benefits. People will be able to participate regardless of age or affluence.

For example, at the beginning level, a donation of \$50 will earn recipients free admission to Community of Christ historic sites, a 10-percent museum-store discount, and a subscription to the foundation newsletter, *The Forum*.

As donations increase, so do the perks. Among them at the top level of \$2,500 or more is a weekend stay in a historic property in Kirtland, Ohio, or Nauvoo, Illinois.

Other perks at that level include special tours from site directors, a museum tour with the World Church historian, and a private luncheon or dinner in Kirtland or Nauvoo.

"These are new opportunities we didn't have before," Walden said.

Heritage Club Membership Program

Friend of Foundation (\$50)

- Free admission to all Community of Christ historic sites.
- Ten-percent museum store discount
- Subscription to *The Forum*

Contributing Member (\$250)

- All of Friend of Foundation benefits
- Invitation to special events and programs at Community of Christ historic sites
- Family pass for free admission to any Community of Christ historic site for your family (including grandchildren)

Sustaining Member (\$500)

- All Contributing Member benefits
- Autographed book from the museum store
- Fifty-percent discount on all specialty tours at the historic sites (e.g., behind-the-scenes tour of the Kirtland Temple, candlelight tour of Heritage Plaza, private tour of the Nauvoo House, cemetery tour of Lamoni's Rose Hill, etc.)

Patron Member (\$1,000)

- All benefits of a Sustaining Member with a 15-percent museum-store discount
- Extended private tour of a historic site of your choice with the site director
- Community of Christ Museum tour with the Community of Christ historian

Leading Member (\$2,500)

- All benefits of a Patron Member
- Weekend stay at a historic home in Kirtland, Ohio, or Nauvoo, Illinois (examples include Joseph and Emma Smith home in Kirtland, Sidney and Phoebe Rigdon home in Nauvoo)

March board meeting sets up busy year

By Greg Clark

A busy March weekend at the Auditorium in Independence, Missouri, helped the Community of Christ Historical Sites Foundation's board set a course for the coming year.

The board addressed numerous topics, including its annual budget, its role at World Conference, responsibilities of the new executive

director, and more.

The board passed a budget set at \$182,465, which included \$2,860 to help the Conference celebrate the church's sesquicentennial while calling attention to the board's mission of preserving and sharing church heritage.

The board also amended bylaws to enable the executive director to

enter into contracts of up to \$5,000.

Also, the board accepted the resignation of Pat Spillman as treasurer. He received profound applause in appreciation of his work.

He'll continue to help with day-to-day operations while Kirk Cross, the newly elected treasurer, assumes some of the office's heavier

responsibilities.

Also, board members heard reports of leaders from historic sites and reviewed a 10-question survey of board members. In several areas, the survey highlighted board interest in fundraising, communication, and education.

Leaders reemphasized the need for all members to continue to press ahead

Blair

Continued from Page 1

over a 39-year teaching career at Graceland College, now university, in Lamoni, Iowa.

Blair's love of history hasn't waned in retirement. He's one of the longest-standing foundation board members. And Martha McKain, the site team leader at Liberty Hall, says he volunteers 40 to 50 hours a week, helping things run smoothly at the former home of Joseph Smith III.

Blair brings passion, a love of history, and a belief in making the world a better place to his work.

Walden says Blair, 81, brings a great "institutional memory and credibility to the board as one who has been involved in the restoration of Liberty Hall and continued interpretation. He's also been involved with the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo."

Blair knew early on that he wanted a career in history. He won a Daughters of the American Revolution contest when he was in the seventh grade, and that set him on his course.

"It was reinforced after I went to Korea," he said, referring to the war. "I had thought about going under church appointment, and they said, 'Wait until you finish the service.' Then I decided what I really wanted to do was teach history with the grand goal of teaching people about the world so there wouldn't be any more wars.

"I don't think I can do it by myself. I think history is a good background for people to understand that things do

change."

And that goes for life in the church, too. Alma is quick to point out that life in the church is different today than it was in Joseph Smith III's time. And, because things change, it will be different in the future than it is today.

"We draw out of the past what we think is important, and we use that, but changes constantly take place. Some are good, and some aren't, and we have to learn to judge that. We determine our future, and the past gives us the perspective we need."

One of his greatest joys, he said, is seeing his former students—like Walden and fellow board member Tom Morain—take esteemed positions in the history profession.

And now he can count McKain among his students, too.

"He's been very patient with me on the computer," she said. "He's really a whiz. He's trying to teach me, but I'm not very good at it."

She finds his personality to be a big plus.

"He's a very interesting man," she said. "I don't think I've ever known anyone that's interested in just about anything you bring up. I admire him a great deal.

"I enjoy his sense of humor and his knowledge, the church history. If he makes a mistake he readily says, 'Oh I was wrong.' He can visit with anyone."

In volunteering at Liberty Hall, Alma often focuses on two things of great importance to him: children and history. And that's fine with him. He says it's critically important to maintain the historic sites.

"I think it's very impor-



Alma Blair enjoys one of his favorite rooms at Liberty Hall.

tant for the average person who doesn't sit down and read a lot of history books. When they come in here, they enter into another world. They are stimulated by the visual, as well as the words and sounds.

"Children see it, and they're always thinking and looking. (When I was at Nauvoo) I told the guides: 'Don't ignore the kids. It's amazing to them.

"For children to come to a place like this (Liberty Hall) is maybe even more important than adults."

He wants Liberty Hall to be better than the first time he saw it in the 1970s.

"It was in pretty bad

shape."

Though there's always work to be done, the 5,000-square-foot hall now is attractive in many ways. The upgraded building itself, the furnishings, and the knowledge of the staff all help make visits fascinating.

Blair sees church members and the foundation joining at the historic sites to maintain our past as we move into the future.

"We need people in the church to appreciate and come to them," Alma said. "Then I think they'll support them. If we can get the people to come and experience it, then I think they'll contribute."

Make a Donation, Aid Preservation

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

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You also can give by visiting the online site at www.historicsitesfoundation.org.

New site directors

Pam and Charlie Robison will become the new site directors of Heritage Plaza in Independence, Missouri, sometime near the first of the year.

They'll replace Ken Muliken, the director for a decade.

Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation

P.O. Box 338

Nauvoo, IL 62354

Your Aid Helps Sites

By Greg Clark

The World Church funded key maintenance recently at several historic sites.

But much remains to do, and officials have asked the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation for help.

Projects have included painting at the Kirtland Temple (left), painting at the Mansion House in Nauvoo (upper right), and application of an anti-ultraviolet film to windows at Liberty Hall (lower right).

In addition, workers repaired a hole in the roof of the Luff House at Heritage Plaza in Independence, Missouri.

To help, you may give at www.historicsitesfoundation.org.

