

# SRS Heritage

*SRS Heritage Foundation Newsletter*



JULY 2008

## HISTORIC TOURS AT OAK RIDGE

*By Walt Joseph*

*The SRS Heritage Foundation is working with DOE to establish guided tours of the site of the former town of Ellenton on the SRS. We expect to have approval to begin these tours in the near future. The Foundation also proposes guided tours of C Reactor at a later date. We have studied similar tours and historic activities at other DOE sites as we developed our plans. This article describes historic tours at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.*

Oak Ridge regularly conducts guided tours that leave from the American Museum of Science and Energy in downtown Oak Ridge. The standard tour of DOE facilities is included in the \$3-5 cost of Museum admission. Tours are open to US citizens at least 10 years old with photo identification. Visitors fill out a registration form prior to the tour. Tours leave the Museum at 12:noon and return about 2:30pm Monday through Friday from April to September. Tours are conducted on 24- or 36-passenger buses owned and operated by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Guides on the buses are volunteers; most are former Oak Ridge employees.

The tour buses drive past the Y-12 plant where uranium-235 was separated from uranium-238 by the electromagnetic method. The tour stops at the new K-25 overlook where a marker and exhibits describe the gaseous diffusion process carried out in the mile-long plant with a footprint of 44 acres. The building is being torn down but DOE has issued a memorandum of agreement to preserve 8 converter cells, with a footprint of about 135,000 square feet, including all contained equipment to provide an authentic visual representation of K-25 operation. The K-25 site is one of several being considered by the National Park Service for possible inclusion in a proposed Manhattan Project National Park.

Continued on Page 2.....

## *The President's Corner*

The transition period for the new management and operation contract for the Savannah River Site will be completed August 1<sup>st</sup>. On that date, responsibility for Site operations other than waste management will pass from URS Washington Division to Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS).

The SRS Heritage Foundation takes this opportunity to thank the management of URS Washington Division for their support and encouragement and to welcome the incoming SRNS management team. We look forward to a rewarding relationship and continuing progress as we tell the SRS story to stimulate interest in engineering and the sciences and to foster heritage tourism. *Welcome aboard.*

*By Bill Mottel, President*

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## SRS HERITAGE FOUNDATION SPONSORS THANK YOU

The SRS Heritage Foundation is a relatively new organization but, thanks to our strong base of supporters, we are growing steadily. We are particularly pleased that several organizations have such faith in our future that they have made substantial financial contributions to get our programs started. Among these supporters are:

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*A special thank you to the individual members for their continued support the Foundation*

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## HISTORIC TOURS AT OAK RIDGE



Oak Ridge National Laboratory Bus



K-25 Overlook

The tour proceeds to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory where passengers leave the bus to visit the X-10 Graphite Reactor. The air-cooled reactor was built in 1943 to transmute uranium-238 into plutonium-239. The reactor produced the first significant amounts of plutonium and was the basis for the design of the production reactors at Hanford. The loading face of the reactor and the control room of the National Historic Landmark are accessible to the public. A small exhibit room depicts a variety of activities at ORNL.

Other tours, including Y-12, the displaced Wheat community, and worker housing in "Happy Valley" are offered occasionally. Oak Ridge has a well-established program of tours that establish precedents for similar tours at the Savannah River Site.

Tour Guide at X-10 Graphite Reactor



Graphite Reactor Control Room

Mannequins Simulating Loading Graphite Reactor



View of K-25 from the Overlook

# Reunions Celebrate Memories of Dunbarton and Ellenton

By Gayle Bumgarner

The recent Dunbarton and Ellenton reunions were huge successes judging by the size of the crowds. When the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) announced the site selection for the Savannah River Plant on November 28, 1950, the incorporated town of Dunbarton had a population of 231, and the incorporated town of Ellenton had a population of 600. Little did these residents suspect there was a tie that would bind them together in a most unusual way—as citizens displaced by a cause not fully understood. The highlight of these reunions is always in the faces and voices of those remembering life prior to the AEC announcement and how deeply affected they were at having to move from their homes. The delicious catered barbeque luncheon is not as important when reminiscing over scrapbooks and recalling events that occurred “back then.”

Ellenton residents were to be evacuated by March 1, 1952. The 36<sup>th</sup> Ellenton reunion was celebrated June 8th at the Silver Bluff High School Commons Area with approximately 125 former residents, family and friends in attendance. One couple came from Indian Head, Maryland, and have attended every year since the first Ellenton reunion was held at the Aiken State Park in 1972. A former high school agriculture teacher from Camden, SC, also attended.

The residents of Dunbarton were to be evacuated by June 15, 1952, and the first Dunbarton reunion was held the following year.

The 55<sup>th</sup> Dunbarton reunion was celebrated May 14th at the Barnwell State Park with 147 former residents, families, and friends in attendance. Dunbarton attendees have contributed photos of homes and businesses for a virtual museum of their beloved town.

George Wingard attended both reunions. George is on the staff of the USC SR Archaeological Research Program and is a member of the Heritage Foundation’s Ellenton Heritage Trail Committee. Mr. Wingard has attended these reunions for years and has helped with the identification of homes and other buildings from his archives. George enjoys sharing information on the displaced towns with anyone who is interested. Walt and Paula Joseph and Foundation Board member Joanne Zobel attended the Ellenton reunion; Walt brought a large map of the former community. Attendees enjoyed pointing out who lived where.

*Check out a couple photos from the reunions on the next page.*

## Summer Intern Assists Heritage Foundation

Caitlin Buxton, a rising junior at Wofford College in Spartanburg is spending part of her summer working for the SRS Heritage Foundation. Caitlin’s background in history led her to volunteer to do research for us during her summer break. She is collecting information on a dozen specific sites along the Ellenton Heritage Trail and will develop this material into potential exhibits for the Trail. Thank you, Caitlin.



Brinkley Family at Ellenton Reunion

Walt Joseph with members  
of Foreman Family



## SRS HERITAGE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED

***IT'S OFFICIAL...*** We are pleased to announce our SRS Heritage Foundation Membership Committee is up and running. Merrilee Anderson will Chair the committee. Alice Boni, Mindy Mets, Tom Parkinson, Gayle Bumgarner, Ben Burnau, Bill Willis, Karen Bonavita, Earl Lowe, Walt Joseph and Paula Joseph making up the rest of the committee. Just another step closer in the growth of the Foundation!

Left to right -Paula Joseph, Alice Boni, Tom Parkinson, Merrilee Anderson, and Karen Bonavita. Missing from the photo are Mindy Mets, Gayle Bumgarner, Ben Burnau, Bill Willis and Earl Lowe. Photo taken by Walt Joseph.





## A White Crow?

In 1955, not long after the fuel separations facility at 221-F started up, some of the operators began gathering daily on the loading dock for their brown-bag lunches. After some weeks they made friends with a crow who came up every day to join them for lunch. The operators tossed out bread and other things for him, and he seemed to really like that.

This was enjoyed by all until one of the operators came up with a mischievous plan. They set a simple trap, baited with food, and indeed trapped the trusting crow. They then spray painted him white and set him free. He never did come back for lunch again, but there were wide-spread reports of an albino crow on the site, and the folks at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory organized groups to survey the entire site in search of this remarkable creature.

They never verified his existence, and the F-Area operators never confessed. I wonder what that crow's friends and relatives thought of him.

By Mal McKibben

## **New Logo**

We hope you like the new logo and associated colors that make their debut in this issue. The old logo served the Foundation well since 2005 but the identity of the object in the right-hand side puzzled a number of people... guesses ranged from "fish" to "hand grenade". (Real answer below.) Hopefully, the new logo better suggests the scope of SRS, including both atomic and environmental activities.

*Answer...It was intended to be a pine cone*



## **SRS Heritage Day Planned for October 11**

The second SRS Heritage Day will be held Saturday, October 11 in New Ellenton. On that day, we will record stories about the early history of SRS, scan photographs and documents and collect artifacts for the permanent collection.

Our first Heritage Day attracted an enthusiastic crowd to the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center. This year we will meet in New Ellenton as part of the Atomic City Festival.

Put the date on your calendar. Details will follow in the next newsletter

**REQUEST FOR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**—If you have a humorous story about working at the Savannah River Site that you would like to share with our membership, please sent it to Walt Joseph at [qualityprt@aol.com](mailto:qualityprt@aol.com).

## BOOK REVIEW



Cynthia Kelly at the Secret City Festival in Oak Ridge

### **The Manhattan Project Edited by Cynthia Kelly**

This recent book, edited by Cynthia Kelly, is a readable yet comprehensive, story of the Manhattan Project. It describes how fundamental research in 1939 led to the enormous project that eventually employed more than 125,000 people, most of whom did not know what they were building until atom bombs fell on Japan in 1945. The editor, who is President of the Atomic Heritage Foundation, weaves together writings and oral histories of scientists, military men, workers, politicians and historians to tell the amazing story in the words of the people who lived it.



## FEATURED ARTIFACT: ASM MATERIALS

By: Caroline Bradford, Curator

Security concerns at the Savannah River Plant prevented many employees from engaging in professional debates beyond their work group or outside the scope of a particular project. To make up for this lack, technical workers on site have always been enthusiastic joiners of professional societies. One such society is the Savannah River Chapter of the American Society for Metals, which was formed in 1953.

Charter members of the ASM chapter believed that fraternizing with likeminded professionals was as important as expanding their scope of knowledge. Monthly meetings took the form of dinner and a keynote speaker, with a second “coffee” speaker breaking the ice while members finished their drinks and conversations. One month a year, on “Ladies Night,” members (male until the later 1970s) brought their wives along for variety acts and dancing.

The chapter banner was a fixture at early meetings, and hangs behind the club officers pictured (see page 8). Another treasure is the collection of meeting scrapbooks, which feature meeting notices, photographs, tickets, and other ephemera. When the local chapter hosted the Southeastern Metals Conference, they saved newspaper clippings, hotel booking cards, meeting notices, and biographies of technical speakers in addition to photographs. A photographic copy of the telegraph sent by President Eisenhower, expressing his regrets on missing the conference, is also included.

[See the back page for photos of artifacts from the ASM collection.](#)

**Photos from ASM Scrapbook:**



Chapter Banner



Photograph—Circa 1959, Officers and Committee members, Roger Mittelberg, Frank Dennis, George Beckman, Les Worth, ?, and Bill McDonnell



A page from the 1960-1961 scrapbook



Materials showcasing the 1959 SMC include a postcard of Augusta's Bon-Air Hotel and a meeting reminder card with red yarn.

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