

HISTORIC NEW HARMONY IN NEWSLETTER

HARMONY

Where the Past and the Future are Present

Fall • 2009

Historic New Harmony is a unified program of the University of Southern Indiana and the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites

NEW HARMONY, EDUCATION, AND THE COMMON GOOD

Excerpts from the speech by USI President Linda L. M. Bennett given on July 4, 2009, in New Harmony

"...Thomas Jefferson, the primary (though not sole) author of the Declaration, valued access to education and believed that all free, white males should have access to public education. He and his colleagues were truly "sons of the Enlightenment" and believers in the virtue of reason. His founding of the University of Virginia was among his proudest achievements.

The framers of the Declaration, the Constitution, and later, Robert Owen, another believer in the power of reason, believed that education was the most important engine for change in society. But his belief in education was not one grounded in the value of "natural rights" but rather in the utility that education served for a community and people. His thought aligned with philosophers known as "utilitarianism" or the utility of certain actions or institutions to society. No surprise in this since his friend and business partner was Jeremy Bentham,

one of the key Utilitarian philosophers of the day. So Jefferson's and Owen's goals may have been different, but their understanding of the profound transformative power of learning was shared.

The Owen settlement of New Harmony, brief though it was (1824-1828), was marked by a focus on free, public education and an approach to education that emphasized experience with nature and the immediate world, rather than on a cloistered study of books. Owen believed that character and morality were learned and the sooner you began the educational process the better. His focus was more on the benefits to a community of an educated population than a view of access to education as a right.

Robert Owen's view of education was unconventional for his time. Take this description from his book, *New Moral World*, published in 1842:



Featured speaker Dr. Linda L. M. Bennett with New Harmony Town Council president David Campbell at the Traditional Fourth of July Celebration.

...continued on page 4



HISTORIC NEW HARMONY

"By preserving its utopian legacy, Historic New Harmony will inspire renewal and fellowship between people and communities through its programs and collections."

—Historic New Harmony Mission Statement

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EXPERTS ON CULTURAL TOWNS IN NEW HARMONY IN NOVEMBER

The fifth international symposium of cultural towns will be held in New Harmony on November 11-13. The focus of the presentations throughout the three days will be "Cultural Landscapes: Cultural Towns."

"A key goal for the symposium is to continue exploring the possibility of creating an alliance of cultural towns," said Kent Schuette, symposium coordinator. "This year's presenters add additional expertise to that discussion. A roster of experts in arts administration, architecture and planning, historic preservation, education, and related fields will contribute to this continuing discussion."

Some of the featured speakers include:

- Dr. Linda L. M. Bennett, president of the University of Southern Indiana, to give the keynote address, "A New Strategic Plan for Historic New Harmony: Global Center for the Concept of Community."
- Donovan D. Rypkema, principal of Place Economics of Washington, D. C., "Sustainable Economic Development: The Cultural Town."
- Dee Allsop, president of Heart & Mind Strategies, "Assessing Cultural Values."

...continued on page 2



DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Connie Weinzapfel,
Director

"Dr. Linda L. M. Bennett gave her first official public address as president of the University of Southern Indiana at the 194th annual 4th of July Celebration in New Harmony. You can read portions of the speech in this newsletter. In her speech, Dr. Bennett examines Robert Owen's commitment to education. Over the last six years, I have heard her speak many times as provost of USI and as a political scientist. You'll find that she understands the role New Harmony played in public education in this country.

A week-long inaugural celebration is planned at USI from October 11 to October 16 for students and parents, alumni, donors, and the faculty and staff to interact with President Bennett. Her theme for the inaugural events is "Engaging the Future: Higher Education and the Common Good." Indeed, this could have been the title of a speech by Robert Owen. We're so pleased that New Harmony will be included in the festivities. A reception for friends of Historic New Harmony to informally meet Dr. Bennett will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, October 13, at the Atheneum. The evening also will feature displays of selected treasures from our collections.

I also wish Dr. H. Ray Hoops well as he retires from USI's presidency and continues his advocacy for the University's growth and development.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Since accepting the chairmanship of the USI/New Harmony Foundation in April, I have attended an educational event, social event, and a community event sponsored or co-sponsored by the foundation.

Heritage Artisans Week was in April. More than 3,000 Tri-state children learned about 19th century arts and crafts. I volunteered at the museum shop "Outpost" and demonstrated whirl-a-gigs. My demonstration, compared to the other 20-plus artisans, was not as educational but it certainly was entertaining.

The **Summer Hat Luncheon** in June always amazes me. I never realized that a luncheon table could be decorated in so many ingenious ways! The food was delicious; the style show presented by the Antique Showrooms in the Mews was entertaining. Also, the waiters were cute, and my table didn't win a prize.

Even the rainy weather couldn't dampen the patriotic spirit evident at the traditional **Fourth of July Celebration**. The presentation of the flags, reading of the Declaration of Independence, singing of patriotic songs by the community choir, and Dr. Linda Bennett's engaging speech all contributed to a very celebratory event. (And I didn't even mention the picnic at the park or the golf cart parade.) This day truly is a "slice of Americana."

If you have not attended these events, I highly encourage you to do so. I am looking forward to seeing you at other USI/New Harmony Foundation programs.



Darla J. Olberding
Chair
USI/New Harmony Foundation

Experts continued...

- Ian Hunter, co-founder of Littoral Arts Trust in Manchester, England, "Promoting New Rural Creative Industries, and Art and Rural Regeneration."
- Grover Mouton, director of Tulane Regional Urban Design Center, will moderate a panel on "Arts, Culture and Community Development." Panel participants will be Jeff Soule of the American Planning Association and Mary M. Schoenfeld of Americas for the Arts in Washington, D.C.
- Ruth Knack, editor of *Planning Magazine*, will moderate a plenary session on "The Story of Two Cultural Towns."

Lectures are open to all New Harmony residents, free of charge. Individuals outside of New Harmony will pay a registration fee of \$350 each. The New Harmony Inn is offering single and double rooms to those who are traveling to the event for \$104 (plus tax).

This year the event will be sponsored by University of Southern Indiana; the American Planning Association of Washington D.C.; the Efromson Fund; Robert Lee Blaffer Foundation; New Harmony Artist's Guild; Center for Community and Environmental Design; Jane Blaffer Owen; Kent and Laurie Parker; Mrs. C.A. Bookwalter; Mike Blakely; and Historic New Harmony. For further information see www.newharmony.org.



SAVE THE DATE FOR THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONFERENCE IN 2010

The Preserving Historic Places: Indiana's State-Wide Preservation Conference will be held April 7-9, 2010, in New Harmony. The Indiana Department of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Indiana University, and Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana will sponsor this historic preservation conference, the official forum for preservation issues in Indiana.

The conference will focus on modernism and will include nationally known speakers, an opening reception, plenary and educational sessions, and a keynote speaker. A guided tour of New Harmony's historic sites, an art gallery stroll, and the Owen Award presentation also will take place. Some sessions are free and open to the public, while others carry a registration fee.

The conference will attract architects, preservationists, teachers, historians, city and county planners, and interested citizens. For more information contact Indiana Department of Preservation and Archeology at 317.234.1268.



Outside the David Lenz House, Dr. Michael Strezewski (top left) and USI students participate in an archaeological field school held in New Harmony. During the excavation they found kiln furniture used to stack vessels when firing as well as broken and warped pieces of pottery.

Bill Wepler (not pictured), archeologist for the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, and the students also continued excavations from last season at Community House No. 2.

HARMONIZING ...WITH DON PITZER



Dr. Donald E. Pitzer, professor emeritus of history and founding director of the University of Southern Indiana Center for Communal Studies, is a leading scholar on communal utopias and intentional communities.

Harmonist and Owenite New Harmony became the international focal point for two of the most potent ideas in modern history – millennialism and socialism.

George Rapp built his Harmonist movement on the promise that prophetic world events indicated Christ's soon return. He imagined that New Harmony would hold a place in God's kingdom nearly akin to Jerusalem itself. In his 1824 *Thoughts on the Destiny of Man*, Rapp asserted that his Harmonie Society stood in the vanguard of the inevitable religious, social, and scientific progress to precede Christ's reign on earth. His Harmonists sought both the perfection of the Garden of Eden through communal celibacy and of early Christianity through communal living. They placed their millennial "golden rose" on the Door of Promise of their church and as a trademark on their commercial products. Should we reject millennialism itself because Christ did not return on Rapp's timetable? In fact, the belief remains strong. All Christendom still awaits.

While Rapp's millennium has not materialized, Robert Owen's socialism has been tried by many nations in vastly revised versions. He and his followers coined and printed the term "socialist" in 1827 and "socialism" in 1837 to describe their peaceful, humanitarian social system. Owen did not invent what was later called "utopian socialism," a theory designed to relieve the worst injuries of the Industrial Revolution upon the working poor. Owen did pioneer "communal socialism," attempting the first working model of a secular Utopia, his *New Moral World*, at New Harmony from 1825 to 1827. This town became his showplace for illustrating how progressive education from infancy could form superior human character in a cooperative community of equality leading to worldwide brotherhood. Science and technology were to supply all material needs. Rational religion was to satisfy humanity's spiritual quest. Should we condemn Owen's socialistic initiative because decades later two men—Karl Marx and Frederick Engels—proposed a "revolutionary socialism" called Communism? Owen's benevolent socialism was a far cry from their devastating mutation which impelled peoples and nations to seek reform by class warfare and dictatorship.

Both millennialism and socialism have been utopian and controversial from the start. If and when Christ will return to bring peace and plenty on earth remain volatile questions. Whether socialism in the Owenite sense holds promise for today and tomorrow remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, New Harmony can be proud of its millennial and socialistic heritage. It points in peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable directions for a world standing at urgent social, economic, and environmental crossroads desperately seeking a compass.



Bennett continued...

"Where are these rational practices to be taught and acquired?

"Not within the four walls of a bare building, in which formality predominates... But in the nursery, playground, fields, gardens, workshops, manufactures, museums, and classrooms."



Darla J. Olberding, Dr. Linda L. M. Bennett, and James A. Sanders standing in front of the Utopia Wall at the Traditional Fourth of July Celebration.

Classrooms were places for play and dancing. Murals with timelines of natural history, as well as the history of the continents, natural specimens from the surrounding area, and other exhibits were to be available, but not for guided tours with dry lectures. They were to stimulate questions from children who would learn through their natural curiosity.

You can see the vision that would help his son to be one of the founders of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

That vision of education as an engine for reform continues to this day. Access to public education has transformed this country at critical junctures. Growing access to education was marked by many changes including:

- Increasing acceptance of educating women in the late 19th century.
- African-Americans would have to wait for a century after the Civil War to have their right to equal access to education recognized (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954).
- G.I. Bill of Rights in 1944 – probably one of the top three or four pieces of transformative legislation in the 20th century for the United States. The then president of Harvard testified against the bill in Congress, saying that it would "dilute" the educational climate on his and other institutions of higher learning.

Education was increasingly recognized both as a right in the Jeffersonian tradition, and a benefit to society, in the tradition of Robert Owen.

Today, when we talk about the benefit of higher education we are most likely to talk about career training and the increase in income evident from acquiring each additional degree. These are laudable goals. I often work to help students focus on a future career, and I feel tremendous pride when they are gainfully employed and doing well financially.

But I also believe that we need to return to an earlier sense of how higher education benefits the common good. A focus on the common good echoes Robert Owen, who believed that an educated individual working in the interest of the community was the very definition of happiness.

I would be more likely to blend this view with a Jeffersonian belief in the right of the individual to fulfill his or her destiny in the "pursuit of happiness," but we need to highlight how that destiny can be more meaningful, even profound, when it is connected to a greater good.

What do I mean?

Research over the last several years has shown that those with higher levels of education:

- Have better health habits (more likely to exercise, less likely to smoke – this includes a greater willingness to donate blood). No question this benefits the individual, but society also benefits from wider acceptance of healthier habits.
- Are more attentive to politics and more likely to participate beyond just voting – education fosters active citizenship. The form of government in the U.S. is more complex than most other democracies. Parliamentary systems are somewhat easier to understand than the complex separation of powers system evident in the U.S. It takes an educated and attentive public to maintain democracy in this country.
- Are more likely to contribute to the vitality of the arts in their communities – the arts are vital for community life and economic development.
- And are more likely to volunteer their time to community interests.

Yes, these are things that one is able to do when one is more affluent, which is why I am not critical of praising the monetary benefits of higher education. But income alone does not lead to an inclination to serve the common good, just as years of schooling do not necessarily make an educated person. The value of service needs to be taught and reinforced through experience. That value translates into deeper learning, greater involvement in civic life, and stronger communities with a higher quality of life for all..."



Jane Blaffer Owen with her grandson Jamie Coleman and his wife Monique at the Traditional Fourth of July Celebration.



Kunstfest

September 19–20, 2009

Celebrate the heritage of New Harmony’s original founders at Kunstfest, held September 19–20 in downtown New Harmony. This traditional celebration features German food, music, and various craft demonstrations. The entertainment ranges from the “Big Whopper Liar’s Contest” to pumpkin painting and horse-drawn carriage rides. For more information regarding questions about vendor permits, demonstrations, crafts, and registration, contact Patricia Gosh at 812/319-5300 or patgosh@aol.com.

Lecture of Owen Influence on Smithsonian

Atheneum/Visitors Center

October 9, 2009

7 p.m.

Brown University Visiting Scholar Dr. John F. Sears will lecture on “How the Devil It Got There: The Politics of Form and Function in the Smithsonian Castle.” His lecture will examine the influence of Robert Dale Owen, who was a founding Smithsonian regent, and his brother David Dale Owen, on their involvement in the creation of the Smithsonian as an institution.

Christmas in New Harmony

December 5–6, 2009

Begin the holiday season in New Harmony with the popular winter event **Christmas in New Harmony**. Returning activities include “make and take your own ornament” and Breakfast with Santa. The family also may enjoy a performance of the Nutcracker, which will be performed on Main Street. For more information, visit www.newharmony.biz or email firehouseantiques@sbcglobal.net.

COLLECTIONS CORNER

Amanda Bryden, Collections Manager



Work has begun to make Community House No. 2 more accessible to the public and to provide a safe environment for the artifacts.

The work includes the installation of an elevator that travels to all three floors and a handicap-accessible restroom on the first floor. These measures are intended to make the building more functional for all visitors.

A heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system is being installed to ensure a stable environment for the museum objects, which require constant temperature and humidity levels. Old air conditioner window units and the 50-year-old heating system were not up to the task. The first phase of the project will be completed at the end of 2009.

ENGINEERING STUDENTS OFFER SOLUTIONS

University of Southern Indiana engineering seniors presented solutions to problems faced by local businesses and industries.

Led by new faculty member Brandon Field, Nick Weinzapfel, Adam Bockting, and Nathan Axton reviewed electric and natural gas costs of the Atheneum/Visitors Center, which are approximately \$50,000 per year. The students proposed a geothermal HVAC unit for heating and cooling the building.

This valuable research will be the beginning of a green solution for the Atheneum.

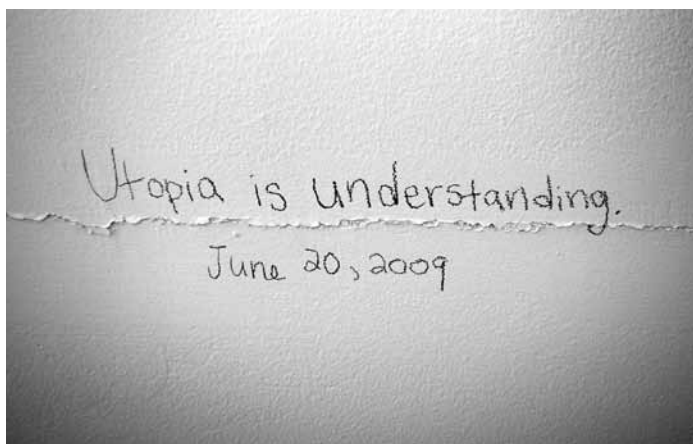
WHAT’S YOUR VISION OF UTOPIA?

Historic New Harmony invites guests from around the globe to share their thoughts on the Utopia Wall at the Atheneum/Visitors Center. Once blank, the white wall serves as a message board for all to share their vision of Utopia.

Excerpts from entries on the wall:

“Finding peace in war. Finding wisdom in chaos, pride in yourself wherever you are.” June 2009

“Utopia is when the sky is filled with the blue of day and the majestic black of night. In Utopia it won’t be filled with clouds of hate.”



Example of one of the hundreds of messages written on the wall at the Atheneum.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AVAILABLE YEAR-ROUND

Atheneum Tour, Exhibits, and Tours

Atheneum/Visitors Center
9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. (open daily)

SEPTEMBER 1 TO OCTOBER 4

Rowland Ricketts

New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art

SEPTEMBER 19-20

Kunstfest

OCTOBER 3

Golden Raintree Antique Car Show

OCTOBER 9

Lecture by Dr. John F. Sears

Atheneum/Visitors Center, 7 p.m.

NOVEMBER 11-13

Cultural Towns Symposium

NOVEMBER 21 - DECEMBER 30

Dan Brawner, Roger Clayton, Alexis Holeman, and Griffin Norman

New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art

NOVEMBER 21

Fall Gallery Stroll

DECEMBER 5-6

Christmas in New Harmony

DECEMBER 12

Holiday Ball

Thrall's Opera House

FEBRUARY 12, 2010

Harmoniefest

Thrall's Opera House, 6:30 p.m.

For information regarding these and many other events, visit www.newharmony.org.

In Harmony is published twice yearly by Historic New Harmony. Letters and comments may be sent to: In Harmony, P.O. Box 579, New Harmony, Indiana 47631.

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Historic New Harmony is a unified program of the University of Southern Indiana and the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites. Information is available at www.newharmony.org.