



Constitutional Writes

The official newsletter of Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site

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Partners And Public Attend Visioning Meetings For New Visitor Center



MinniJean Brown Trickey (second from left), one of the "Little Rock Nine" and Jill A. Jones (third from left), with ajc architects, discussing the new visitor center with an open house participant while others view the information generated through the partner visioning workshop.

Carlotta Walls LaNier, another of the "Little Rock Nine" discusses exhibit ideas with Abbie Chessler (center) of Quatrefoil Associates and Paula Beale with the NPS Harpers Ferry Center.



On March 1, 2005, Central High School National Historic Site held a partner "visioning workshop" and public open house to discuss ideas for our new visitor center. The meetings were facilitated by Jill A. Jones of ajc architects. Abbie Chessler with Quatrefoil Associates—the firm who designed the original exhibits in the current visitor center—facilitated the exhibit design session.

A new visitor center is needed so that the National Park Service can adequately interpret the events of 1957-59 and place them in the context of the larger Civil Rights Movement. The current interim visitor center simply is not large enough to tell the whole story and to accommodate the numbers of visitors who come to the site. Congress appropriated \$733,000 in this fiscal year for the NPS to plan and design a new visitor facility. If Congress approves funding to construct a new facility, the plan is to have it completed by September 2007—the 50th anniversary of the events.

Partners who attended the day-long workshop included representatives from the city, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Central High School, UALR, Central High Neighborhood Association, and members of the "Little Rock Nine."

Their task was to generate ideas for how the new building should look and fit into the existing neighborhood. Some of the ideas that came out of the workshop included ensuring that the visitor center serves as a gateway into the area. The building design should encourage visitors to stop and gain a better understanding of the events of 1957-59 and also receive information about how to experience this site that exists within an operating high school and a living neighborhood.

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Superintendent's Corner

September 25, 2007 will mark the 50th anniversary of the integration of Little Rock Central High School. Although that date is more than two years in the future, in some ways it is right around the corner. The National Park Service and many others in the community already are planning special activities, programs, and events to observe the anniversary.

Last year Little Rock Mayor Jim Dailey appointed an 18-member city commission to lead the community's commemoration of the 50th anniversary. I am honored to serve as a member of that commission. Under the guidance of co-chairs Nancy Rousseau (principal of Central High School) and Virgil Miller (vice president of Metropolitan National Bank), the commission has outlined a mission focused on reflection on the past, examination of the present, and promotion of future reconciliation and growth. Specific goals of the commission relate to education, citizen and community engagement, exploration of the impacts of the 1957 crisis, and creation of a legacy for continuing dialogue and understanding. As the commission and the community work to achieve these goals, 2007 promises to be exciting and inspirational.

Much of the National Park Service's (NPS) anniversary planning efforts currently are concentrated on design and construction of a new visitor center. We hope to have the facility open by September 2007. To design and construct the facility in two and one-half years is an ambitious goal.

Everything must go smoothly, and we must avoid any surprise that could result in a delay. The entire Park Service team (the staff of the historic site, other NPS staff, our architects, and our exhibit designers) is committed to doing whatever is necessary to achieve the goal of opening by the 50th anniversary.

As is reported elsewhere in this newsletter, the most significant piece of the puzzle that must still fall in place is the funding for actual construction. Because the visitor center has strong support from members of the Arkansas Congressional delegation, we are optimistic that funding will be approved.

Thanks to everyone who participated in our March 1 "visioning" workshop and open house. Your input provided valuable guidance to our architect and exhibit designer. We hope to make a draft building design and exhibit concept available for public examination sometime in early summer. Watch for future mailings or visit our website for more information on this opportunity.

R. Michael Madell, Superintendent

Mendez v. Westminster

In 1954, the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision outlawed legal segregation in education. Seven years earlier in 1946, *Mendez et al. v. Westminster et al.* set the precedent for the historic *Brown v. Board* case.

Thurgood Marshall, a prominent civil rights lawyer, and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Inc. were instrumental in arguing the *Mendez* case, which ultimately overturned legislation that segregated Latino children in Orange County, California.

The *Mendez* case was initiated by tenant farmers Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez. The Mendez family and other Latino families sought the same quality of schools for their children as those for Anglo-American children – especially considering that many Latinos fought and died in World War II along with their Anglo-American counterparts.

Segregation was not limited to schools for Latinos. There were other aspects of society that remained separate for Anglo-Americans and Latinos. There was "housing on the 'Mexican side of town', 'Mexican seats' in movie theaters and 'Mexican days' at the

public swimming pools, usually on the day the pool was to be drained and cleaned. But perhaps the most tragic and painful form of segregation was in public education." (*Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1997) A class action lawsuit was filed in 1945 in federal court against four Orange County school districts, seeking an injunction that would order school integration.

With the legal guidance of Thurgood Marshall and other NAACP lawyers, they won the *Mendez* case. Latino children could now attend schools with Anglo-American children, and have access to an equal education.

The *Mendez* case served as a base for the arguments in the *Brown v Board* case. There are also significant ties to the cases because the Governor of California in 1945, Earl Warren, later became the Supreme Court Justice who handed down the *Brown* decision.

Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Inc. went on to fight many more civil rights cases pertaining to ending segregation in education.

The Westminster School building is now used as a community service center. The building stands as a concrete symbol of the historic *Mendez v. Westminster* case that ended *de jure* school segregation of Latinos in California's public schools

Spirit Trickey, Park Ranger



Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez

Visioning Meetings For New Visitor Center, continued from pg. 1

One of the primary issues of concern was how to handle traffic at the site. Participants discussed the need for providing adequate parking for cars and buses while remaining respectful of our adjacent neighbors. One challenge for the architects will be to design the building and site so that they complement the architectural elements of the neighborhood, while at the same time serve as an obvious first stop for visitors to the area and create a spatial relationship with the school and the Commemorative Garden.

On the exhibit side, participants discussed the need to place the events at the school in the broader context of the larger Civil Rights Movement and also to highlight the story's relevance to civil rights issues today. They also felt strongly that the center's design needed to serve as a forum for visitors to be able

to discuss the issues taking place in their own communities. Participants suggested that it is important for visitors to be able to better understand issues such as race relations in the past and present, and be encouraged to think about them in the future.

In particular, they felt that the idea that one individual can make a difference in the world is an important concept for visitors to understand. According to Carlotta Walls LaNier, one of the "Nine" who participated in the workshop, "if [the exhibits] inspire people to be challenged to make things better in their communities, [that] would be wonderful."

During both the visioning workshop and the open house, many people provided valuable information that will serve as a guide to our architects and exhibit designers as we plan for this new visitor center. Keep an eye on our website, www.nps.gov/chsc, because we will post information about progress on the new center there.

Laura A Miller, Chief of Interpretation & Cultural Resources



Open House participant looks over ideas and comments gathered during the visioning workshop and open house.

Calling All Vounteers!



Volunteering is an American tradition that over the years has made immeasurable contributions to communities, organizations, and individuals throughout the country. Today's volunteers are active, dynamic, creative individuals of all ages who possess the skills, desire, patience, and time to accomplish a wide variety of tasks. As a Volunteer- In -Parks (VIP), your job can be to help rangers preseve and protect America's natural and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of all generations. If you love visiting America's National Parks, here is an opportunity to be part of one!

Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site is looking for volunteers to work at the visitor Center. Currently, we have openings for volunteers in our bookstore, interpretation and historic research. Contact Lea Baker, Volunteer Coordinator, at (501) 374- 3067 for more information.

40th Anniversary of Voting Rights Act

March 7, 2005 marked the 40th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday." Bloody Sunday took place in Selma, Alabama in 1965 when hundreds of marchers gathered for a peaceful march to pressure Governor George Wallace to remove voting restrictions so that African-Americans could vote without fear of reprisals. The U.S. Constitution guarantees equal rights that African-Americans were being denied in Alabama. For example, voters had to pay poll taxes and pass "literacy tests" to vote. On March 7, hundreds gathered at Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church for a peaceful march. They intended to march from Selma to the state capital in Montgomery, Alabama.

Among the marchers was John Lewis, Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee national chairman, and the Southern Christain Leadership Conference President Hosea Williams.

When the marchers walked across the Edmund Pettus bridge, they were met by state troopers who attacked them with billy clubs, tear gas, and whips. People all over the country saw



Photo of "Bloody Sunday" marchers attacked by state police by Charles Moore

the peaceful march erupt in violence on television. The brutal images shocked the nation.

Both African-Americans and whites joined together for another peaceful march and on March 21, 1965 nearly 3,500 people marched 54 miles from Selma to Montgomery. President Lyndon Johnson called out the National Guard to protect the marchers.

On August 6, 1965 President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, passed partly in response to the violence in Alabama. President Clinton commemorated Bloody Sunday in 2000. He said, "It was signed in ink in Washington, but it first was signed in blood in Selma."

In 1996 the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail was established by Congress to commemorate the events, people, and route of the 1965 Voting Rights March in Alabama. To learn more about the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail visit www.nps.gov/semo.

Spirit Trickey, Park Ranger

Jefferson National Parks Association

Central High School National Historic Site welcomes Jefferson National Parks Association as its new non-profit support partner in education. Building on a legacy of excellence by Central High Museum, Inc., the Association assumed responsibility for management of the visitor center gift shop in January 2005.

In the coming year, new displays will house an increasing assortment of publications and educational products and allow visitors easy access to browse on their own. Proceeds from the sale of all items in the gift shop will continue to support the educational and interpretive needs of the site.

The Association's board of directors voted unanimously to welcome Central High School National Historic Site as a new partner in the summer of 2004. Then chairman, Jack Goldman, said "Jefferson National Parks Association is privileged to support some of the finest national parks and historic

sites in the Heartland of America. We can think of few places that have a story that is as powerful and important for the future as that of Central High School NHS.

forward to offering the park our experience in non-profit museum shop management and are pleased to support the planning efforts for the new visitor center."



David Grove, Executive Director/CEO of Jefferson National Parks Association said, "The Association is honored to work for the benefit of Central High NHS. With each visit, our knowledge, interest, and enthusiasm for the site increases. We look

Jefferson National Parks Association has over 40 years of experience in providing education and inspiration to visitors of America's national parks and historic sites. The Association has provided nearly \$20 million dollars of support to its national park partners since 1961. Other JNPA partners include: Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, site of the first Dred Scott trials; Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, the St. Louis home of Ulysses and Julia Grant; Mississippi National River and Recreation Area based in St. Paul, MN; Lewis & Clark State Historic Site, first site on the Lewis and Clark Trail; and two U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Visitor Centers in South Dakota and Illinois.

Congratulations and Farewell!

The staff here at Central High School NHS will like to say congratulations to Park Ranger Spirit Trickey, Park Guide Julie Jackson and Park Guide Quincy Watson. In May 2005 Spirit Trickey will graduate from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) with a B.A. in Radio, TV, Film, Journalism. **Spirit Trickey** will continue to work at the historic site as a Park Ranger and will work closely with management on events surrounding the 50th anniversary.

Julie Jackson will also graduate in May from UALR with a B.A. in Spanish and will pursue her master's in public administration at UALR. Julie will continue to work as a Park Guide and is currently working to translate one of the park's site bulletins into Spanish.

Quincy Waston will graduate in May with a B.A. in Business Administration from Philander Smith College. After graduation Quincy will leave Little Rock to attend audio engineering school in Phoenix, Arizona. Quincy has been a park guide at the site since November 2003. Quincy is the president of the Phi Beta Sigma fraternity at Philander Smith College, president of the honors academy, and a recipient of both the Rotary Club and the UNCF (United Negro College Fund) scholarships.

Quincy said he has made lifelong friends at the site. "I will leave with a wealth of knowledge and memories," said Watson. "I have seen 'living history,' and met living historical heroes -- working here has been one of the best experiences of my life."

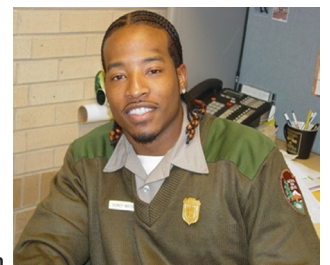
From all of the staff: Thanks for all your hard work and dedication and we wish you the best of luck in the future!



Spirit Trickey



Julie Jackson



Quincy Watson



Education Corner

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: ‘What are YOU doing for others?’”

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tolerance and Diversity: Embrace It All Year Long!

Why do we celebrate Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Native American History Month, and others at only certain times of the year? Shouldn’t we, as Americans, recognize the diversity of our country throughout the year, as well as maintain tolerance and respect for our differences and similarities? After all, embracing people of different nationalities, religious backgrounds, and ethnicities, is a characteristic of a democracy like the United States, as is social equality and respect for the individual within the community. Commit to learning more this year and practice tolerance and diversity by:

- Read a book or watch a movie about another culture.
- Take a civil rights history vacation – visit key tour sites and museums.
- Teach an adult to read.
- Participate in a diversity program.
- Research your family history – share information about your heritage in talks with others!

We’re Going to the Movies! Summer Workshops 2005

This session will focus on the impact that movies had on the American public and their perception of race, gender, and regionalism during the mid and late 20th-century. Segments of several movies will be shown, along with video of desegregation crisis that appeared on national television will be used as a tool for discussion. Materials and movie analysis worksheets will be distributed to each participant. In-service credit will be given:

June 13: Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative, Monticello, AR
June 14: Crowley’s Ridge Education Service Cooperative, Harrisburg, AR
June 21: Northeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative, Walnut Ridge, AR
June 22: DeQueen/Mena Education Service Cooperative, Gillham, AR
June 28-29: Little Rock, North Little Rock, Pulaski County School Districts, Clinton Presidential Library, Little Rock, AR
(registration for this workshop, 501-374-3067)
June 30: Western Arkansas Education Service Cooperative, Branch, AR
July 20: Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative, Beebe, AR
July 27: Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative, Plumerville, AR
July 28: North Central Arkansas Education Service Cooperative, Melbourne, AR
August 9: Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative, Springdale, AR

Registration for the workshops, excluding the Little Rock date, must be done through the individual education service cooperatives.

Lea Flowers Baker, Education Specialist

For a **FREE** teacher’s package from the historic site for the 2004- 2005 school year, contact:

Lea Flowers Baker (501) 374-3067 (phone)
700 West Capitol Avenue, Suite 3527 (501) 301-7762 (fax)
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 Lea_Baker@nps.gov

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the
Interior

This newsletter is brought to you by
the staff of Little Rock Central High
School National Historic Site.

Editor

Tarona A. Bennett, Park Ranger

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Scheduled Programs

Tuesday, May 17

Program 11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Topic: Legal History of School Desegregation

Saturday, July 9

Program 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Junior Ranger Rally
Central Arkansas Library System - Sue Cowan
Williams Branch

Tuesday, June 14 and June 28

Movie Night - 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Sue Cowan Williams Library

Tuesday, August 2

Program 11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Topic: Faubus and the Crisis
6:00-8:00 p.m. - National Night Out

Tuesday, August 16

Program 11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Join Park Rangers for a special tour of Central
High School.

July-August (Monday and Friday at 10:00 am)

Ranger-led walking tour at 10:00 a.m. Join a Park
Ranger and learn about Little Rock and the 1957
Crisis.

September 17-22

Constitution Week Activities

September 25

48th Anniversary Commemoration

Park Rangers are available to give tours
of the visitor center exhibit,
commemorative garden and the
exterior of Central High School.
Off-site visits for classes or groups can
be arranged as well. The Visitor
Center features the exhibit, "All the
World is Watching Us: Little Rock and
the 1957 Crisis," as well as a bookstore
with a wide selection of educational
materials.

Contact a park ranger for more
information on program topics and
scheduled events. Reservations are required
for tours and can be made by calling the
park at (501) 374-1957.