



THE FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

The Newsletter of the McNeill Street Pumping Station Preservation Society

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Fall 2020

Hi-tech Tour

The leaders guiding the development of the old water plant through its lifetime were never bashful about adopting new technology, so turning to technology to help with the museum is a natural. In this case, we have subscribed to a system that uses cell phones to offer visitors an alternative way to see the museum.

The best way to tour the historic water works is with a personal guided tour with one of SWWM's tour guides. But.....since money for staff is almost nonexistent, there's only one tour guide on duty most of the time! So, what do you do if there is more than one group of visitors on hand, which actually happens fairly often during busy seasons like summer and even spring break? Up until now our tour guide would have to greet the arriving visitors with a quick orientation and send them on their way through the plant with a paper self-tour leaflet in order to be ready for new arrivals. This was workable, but now we can use a service called Guide-By-Cell that is an even better way.

Guide-By-Cell offers a narrated tour to visitors who wish to use it as they walk through the site, and no app is needed. To do this a local phone number is provided that can be "dialed" on a cell phone, and at each point of interest they will see a small numbered sign which they can then enter on their phone to hear a narration that is similar to what a tour guide would tell them at that location. The system is intended to help with busy times, but in this era of social distancing a fringe benefit is that visitors can listen to the narration at their own pace without having anyone else around.

If you're curious, come on out and give it a try!

Welcome Back

A bright spot during the summer was welcoming back Tatjana Cotton for another stint as an intern at SWWM. Tatjana is a history student at Dennison University in Ohio who for a second summer volunteered her time during June and July as a tour guide and helper at the museum.

Tatjana gets "credit" at the university for her work, but we're definitely sure that her time is a lot more valuable to SWWM than whatever credit she gets! Although not so true this year during the pandemic scare, summer is normally a busy time and extra help is always very welcome. Thank you Tatjana and remember SWWM again next year!

THE HUNT IS ON

Want to have a little extra fun while you visit an amazing historic site? The museum is now offering a "scavenger hunt"

game (designed by summer intern Tatjana Cotton) that visitors can play while they tour.

We'll give you a list of questions to answer or objects to look for while you go through the SWWM (hint: they're not all "gimmies"!), and if you get them all you get an attaboy plus a small gift to keep. There is a version for both adults and kids, so don't be bashful about asking to play, it's free!

Special Gifts

Brenda Watkins has made a gift in honor of father James Mohr's birthday. James, of course, is a former board member and has appeared regularly in your newsletter in connection with his varied contributions to the well-being of SWWM. James has had a significant number of birthdays, but he's not quite ready for his Presidential letter! Brenda says James loves the old Pumping Station and encourages everyone to embrace its preservation. Thank You Brenda!

A special Thank You also to Bill Wiener and the W.B. Wiener, Jr. Foundation for the award of a much needed grant to support the museum this year. Donations like these make it possible to have the Shreveport Water Works Museum.

Summer Happenings

Summer at SWWM is normally a busy time with lots of travelers and locals who come by to look and learn and with also maybe an event like last year's Food Trucks party in June. Nothing else has been normal this year and summer wasn't either. Visitors came, but only about 25% of normal, and our planned Railroad Day event didn't happen. So, things were quieter than usual with not a lot going on.

We did get a visit from a group of Mazda Miata enthusiasts from a club in the Baton Rouge area who caravanned up specifically to see SWWM. They stayed quite a while and asked a LOT of questions! Visitors like this are always fun.

The local Orchid Society has become a weekend regular since they rented our meeting room and resumed their monthly gatherings. Our meeting space is a great place for gatherings like this and is available for rent for birthday parties, Boy Scout events, or whatever. Just call and inquire to learn more.

One final tidbit is that we've added a few new items to the offerings in our souvenir shop. You can get a can/bottle koozie, or a drink coaster, or, particularly nifty, chose from several varieties of tote bags, all crafted for the museum. These can be purchased online too if you tell us what you want and use the Donate button to pay.

[Editor's Note: We hope you won't mind that the format of your newsletter is more abbreviated than usual. News was slow during the summer, and we can save a little money with a smaller newsletter!]

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You Can Help.....Make A Donation!

The Preservation Society needs money for restoration and operation of the museum. Your donation can be put to good use!

Name _____

email _____
(If you provide your email address, we can send you occasional updates on activities)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to MSPSPS, P.O. Box 957, Shreveport, LA 71163. Checks payable to MSPSPS.