

# The BRIDGE

Volume 27: Issue 11 November 2014

The Newsletter of the Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park

## News from the Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park (FoRB)

Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park is a membership supported 501 (c)(3) organized to promote understanding, appreciation, enjoyment and preservation of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park and the surrounding area. email: [weaverjc@missouri.edu](mailto:weaverjc@missouri.edu), address: FoRB, P.O. Box 7642, Columbia MO 65205-7642 website: <http://www.friendsofrockbridgemsp.org/>

### President's News – Kevin Roberson – Fall Changes, More Improvements for Hickam Cabin

Greeting Friends, I hope that you are snug in your homes and ready for some cold weather. We are having our first hard freeze tonight...Happy Halloween! I imagine that this freeze will knock most of the leaves off the trees, but I have enjoyed the fall colors in the park especially this year. A good combination of moisture and temperatures, I suspect.

The cooler weather should actually make it nice for the 2014 second round of Rock Bridge Renewal (no ticks or chiggers this year). We are meeting at the Devil's Icebox Parking lot at 8:30am on Saturday November 1. I hope we have a nice turn-out because this incremental improvement work that we do helps us to keep the park in good shape. We are making a positive change in the invasive plants, trash, and old fence categories and the park shows better for all of the work.

The FoRB board has approved the raising of money to pay to install a wood floor in the Hickam Cabin and will vote on the actual plan by email. The results may already be in. The flooring will be yellow pine planking and this will complement the rest of the cabin and show well.

We are in need of new members on our board. This is a relatively low time-cost obligation 2-10 hours per month with the possibility of doing some good for the park and the community. If you are interested, please email me or call me at 573-673-3068 and I will fill you in on the duties and perks of the positions.

If you wish to work with us to improve our community and help support the park and park staff, drop me an email and we will sign you up. [robersonkw@gmail.com](mailto:robersonkw@gmail.com)

Enjoy the park! Kevin Roberson, President, FoRB Board

### NEXT FRIENDS BOARD MEETING: Monday November 10, 6:30 pm, Location TBA

**Officers and Directors** - 2014 Officers: President: Kevin Roberson; Treasurer: Jan Weaver, Secretary: Open, 2014 Directors: Sue Tillema, Scott Schulte

**Rock Bridge Renewal – Saturday November 1, 8:30 to 11:30, Devil's Icebox Parking Lot**  
**Help take out Invasive Plants, Old Fencing, and Trash.**  
Please email Jan at [weaverjc@missouri.edu](mailto:weaverjc@missouri.edu) or call 573-424-9438 to register

## News from Rock Bridge Memorial State Park

### Park Superintendent News – Jim Gast: Brian Cottle Receives Masterpiece Award, Busy October Weekends, Route N Cell Tower, First Day Hike Coming Up January 1

Congratulations to Brian Cottle who won the 2013 Masterpiece Award for best Missouri state park volunteer. Brian has been helping out at the park with invasive species control and other stewardship duties. He's been a real asset working with State Park Youth Corp (SPYC).

October weekends in the park were extremely busy. The Devil's Icebox parking lot was packed on most weekends. Cars were parked on the county roads at all of the satellite trailheads with the exception of the Karst trailhead. It's good that people are getting out and visiting their park. I'm also pleased that more people are seeing areas of the park other than the boardwalk trail.

The proposed cell tower on Route N jumped a hurdle. It was determined that the cell tower would not have an impact on any cultural or archeological sites within a mile. Verizon is planning on building the tower.

January 1<sup>st</sup> is fast approaching and we'll be leading another "First Day" hike. If you have any suggestions on destinations, let me know at [jim.gast.dnr.mo.gov](http://jim.gast.dnr.mo.gov).



Brian Cottle, second from the right, pulling fence at the 2013 Spring Rock Bridge Renewal with Ethan Peterson, Jacob Pohlman, Scott Schulte, Kevin Roberson, Bill Pohlman, and Jeffrey Friel

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

**Naturalist News – Roxie Campbell and Kathryn Foxfire: Do You Know About the Mansion Atop Rock Bridge?**

It was a well-known community landmark often referred to as “The Big House on the Hill.” The mansion measured about 56’ x 72’ and contained about 4000 sq. feet on the ground level, plus a partial second story under the steep-pitched roof. The black walnut used for siding was brought to Providence landing by steamboat and then hauled to the site by mule and oxen teams. It had two staircases (a main staircase and a smaller one for the servants which were primarily black slaves until the end of the Civil War), five fireplaces, a large hall used for dancing, and another hall used by servants for eating. The dance hall, which featured pictorial wallpaper, was said to be large enough for 40 couples to “cut a pigeon wing,” a dance move which may be similar to an allemande right or a right-hand turn. Rambling porches surrounded three sides. A barn reported to be the largest in Boone County once stood across the road from the mansion house.

The mansion was originally built in 1838 for David Lamme, then-owner of the Rockbridge Mill and distillery. The architect, Brightberry McAlester, also built the Boone County courthouse, the Boone County jail (1856), and two buildings for the university: the president’s mansion (1865) and the scientific building (1872). The Rock Bridge mansion was later owned by James McConathy, then the Emmitts, and then various other owners. Not only was it of grand design, the big house on the hill was a place where its owners could entertain in a style befitting the wealthy social class. Situated on the ridge top of the Rock Bridge (imagine few if any trees on the ridge and being able to see the view in all directions), its owners could overlook their own private kingdom, the Rock Bridge valley.

A fire in 1943, believed to have been caused by a defective flue, destroyed the house and its contents save a few articles that the residents were able to rescue. One might conclude that this piece of history is gone forever, but I suggest that a small part of it lives on in those of us who know its story and can imagine it. Keeping that story alive is part of the mission of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park.

**Connor’s Cave is closed for the winter hibernation season**

FoRB Membership: To join, clip and mail this section with your check to : FoRB; P.O. Box 7642; Columbia MO, ^5205-7642	\$15	park staff/volunteer, senior, student
	\$20	individual
	\$35	family
	\$100	supporting
FoRB is a 501 © (3) organization and donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law		
Name _____	Phone # _____	
Address _____	Email _____	

**FoRB**  
**P.O. Box 7642**  
**Columbia MO 65205-7642**

**November 2014 Issue**

President’s News: Rock Bridge Renewal, Floor in Hickam  
Superintendent’s News: Brian Cottle wins Park Masterpiece Award  
Naturalist News: Mansion on the Hill