

Researched and written by
Rotarian Jim Preston

Fifty Years Of Service
1957 – 2007

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Freedom Grove

A logical question might be asked of the Rotarians who had the original idea for another contribution to our area: “What qualification they possessed to see such a community serving construction project to completion?” It is not necessarily a rarity. It is indeed a mental gift to have the ability to perceive something not actually visible. We Rotarians are blessed that we have members who possess a force or power of imagination. Our Constitution affords each of us the environment in which to allow our vision to flourish. A Freedom Grove, owing to the dedicated efforts of Champaign County residents, will be born out of those visions.

It is perhaps appropriate to present this achievable endeavor in the sequential order of events and accomplishments, especially because this project remains in an infancy stage.

This project evolved from long term planning, referred to in the beginning as the “New Project Committee”, during the 2000-2002 Presidency of Richard A. Zechiel and Nicola Selvaggio. The goal was to select a project that would make a contribution to the community, not just be a fund raiser. Rotarians were looking for a project that would develop into a major work project for the club. The committee was searching for a project of the magnitude of the Rotary involvement in the development of the City Park in the 60-70’s and the Rotary Manor Senior Center in the 70-80’s. The “New Project Committee” Members were Alan K. Webster (Chairman), Kim Maley, James J. Shaloo, Donald C. Bauer, Christina Brunn-Horrigan, and Charles L. Sweeting. Early focus was on existing projects such as the parks, bike path, tutoring, and city improvement. Of major consideration by the committee, prior to 09/11/01, was a long range plan for a dedicated effort in trees. Avenues of interest were varied with possible focus being county wide or perhaps a program to strengthen the City of Urbana as “Tree City USA”.

However, the events of 09/11/01 galvanized the Committee’s interests and their focus became a park that would accentuate our personal freedoms, perhaps a patriotic theme recognizing our ancestral history. The New Project Committee now had an idea, a vision for a project that would last for generations. A new committee was formed in 2002, the Freedom Grove Committee, one that could implement the recommendation of the original New Project Committee. Members of the original Freedom Grove Committee 2002-2003 were Alan K. Webster(Chairman), Donald C. Bauer, Christina Brunn-Horrigan, William G. Edwards, Bernie Ray and Rich Fisher, The Freedom Grove project was approved by the Rotary Board of Directors and full club membership January 14, 2002 and presented to the Champaign County Commissioners January 31, 2002. The Commissioners were enthusiastic about the proposal. In early 2002 the committee “brain-stormed” with ideas, concepts of its development and vision for the Park, as well as drawing up the necessary legal documents.

The formal lease was signed with the Commissioners at a dedication service September 11, 2002, the first anniversary of “9/11”, with a ceremony at the site. The lease for the six plus acres is for twenty-five years at an expense of \$1.00 per year, with a potential additional twenty-five year lease renewal option. This very positive contribution to our area by all of Champaign County is one that will last for years to come, measured in generations.

Freedom Grove Park established at lease signing

11 SEPTEMBER 2002

By BREANNE PARCELS
Staff Writer

Champaign County Freedom Grove Park was established Wednesday with the signing of a lease agreement between the Champaign County commissioners and the Urbana Rotary Club.

"This park will enable the community to celebrate the cherished freedoms of the United States of America," said Commissioner Bob Corbett.

The 25-year lease will require the Rotary Club to pay \$1 annually to maintain the five acres of land in front of the Champaign County Community Center as a park.

"The Urbana Rotary was looking for a way to serve the entire community," said Rotary President Jim Wehrman. "After the events of last year, we realized that we take so many freedoms for granted and many members hit on this idea as a place to stop and reflect on what we have as Americans."

"A year ago at this time we were secure in our jobs and our places as

citizens," said Commissioner Phil McCullough. "During the events of the day, we were in disbelief – this couldn't be happening – and as I sat there I wondered what the effect would be on our country for the rest of time."

McCullough said the park is dedicated not only to the people who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001, but to all who have given their lives in the pursuit and defense of freedom.

"I would hope that this is not just a memorial for the events of last year, but a memorial for freedom, the foundation our country stands on," McCullough said.

Wehrman said the Rotary's intention is to create an attractive site.

"We want this to be not just a barren lot, but a focal point for the county," he said. "The Rotary will spearhead the activity, but welcomes support from other groups and organizations that would like to take part and help develop the Freedom Grove."



Citizen photo by Breanne Parcels

Pictured standing, left to right, Commissioner Bob Corbett, Urbana Rotary President Jim Wehrman and Commissioner Phil McCullough address a gathering of people at the lease signing establishing the Champaign County Freedom Grove Park. The project, spearheaded by the Rotary, will turn a green space near the Champaign County Community Center into a park with trees and walking paths.

In late 2003 and early 2004 we involved Ball State students in the Landscaping Department under the leadership of Professor German Cruz and Graduate Student Bram Barth. They visited the proposed site in Urbana and talked to the committee. At a later date each of the twenty-seven students presented their ideas and proposals from which final drawings and plans were taken.

Time and career changes involving relocation of Rotarian necessitated a reorganization of the Freedom Grove Committee. The reorganized committee consisted of members Terry C. Howell (Chairman), Alan K. Webster, Nicola Selvaggio, Francis Hazard, LeAnna Smack, Harold Osborne, Walter Ashbridge, Charles R. Hazelton, Charles L. Sweeting, David C. Martin, and Adam Ward.

January 30, 2006 the Freedom Grove Committee presented the latest construction drawings, recommended a sequence of events for facility construction, magnitude study of cost estimate, and preliminary plans for a countywide collaboration to raise funds.

Park ^{8 February 2006} plans move forward

By RYAN BENNETT
Staff Writer

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The Champaign County Board of Commissioners met with members of the Urbana Rotary Club Tuesday and passed a motion to approve construction of phase 1 of Freedom Grove Park. The park will be approximately six acres in size and located in the open space just north of the Community Center. The space, which has been leased to the Rotary Club by the county, was dedicated in 2002.

"It's a presentation of the values of freedom this country represents," Terry Howell, Rotary Club board member, said.

It will be a space with trees, plants, flowers and walking paths to be shared with family and friends, a "space where we can remember those who gave their lives, so that we can be free today," Rotary Club literature states.

"It really isn't a Rotary project. It's a community project," William Denkewalter, Urbana Rotary Club president, said. He hopes that organizations throughout Champaign County will come together for the construction of Freedom Grove Park.

Members of the Rotary Club plan to raise funds for the project, in part by selling bricks and benches that will be used in the construction of the park. Howell said that those who purchase bricks starting Feb. 20 will be able to engrave a message to honor a family member, war veteran or anyone else as long as it

See 'Park' on Page A-3

Park

Continued from Page 1
is done in "good taste." The cost of the project has been estimated at \$285,000. Denkewalter said completion of the project will be paramount and that some costs included in that estimate may be reduced.

Howell said that there are many members of the community with a passion for the project. The Rotary Club will reportedly partner with 4-H, the Boy Scouts and other service clubs to sell the bricks. Commissioner Max Coates said that selling bricks is something that has worked in other communities.

"I think there are those within the club who think this may take a generation to evolve," Howell said, speaking of the entire project and



Submitted photo

A schematic drawing of Freedom Grove Park (left) along with plaques dedicated to the project are held up by the county commissioners and Rotary Club members on Tuesday. Pictured from left to right are Terry Howell, Rotary Club board member, LeAnne Smack, Rotary Club secretary, William Denkewalter, Rotary Club president, Bob Corbelli, commissioner, Max Coates, commissioner and Adam Ward, Rotary Club member and Freedom Grove Committee member.

not just phase 1. "I think it will be an absolutely beautiful place for the county," Howell said. "It's something that we'd like to see through

and give back to the community."

For more information, call the Urbana Rotary Club at 788-2299.



URBANA ROTARY CLUB FREEDOM GROVE COMMITTEE

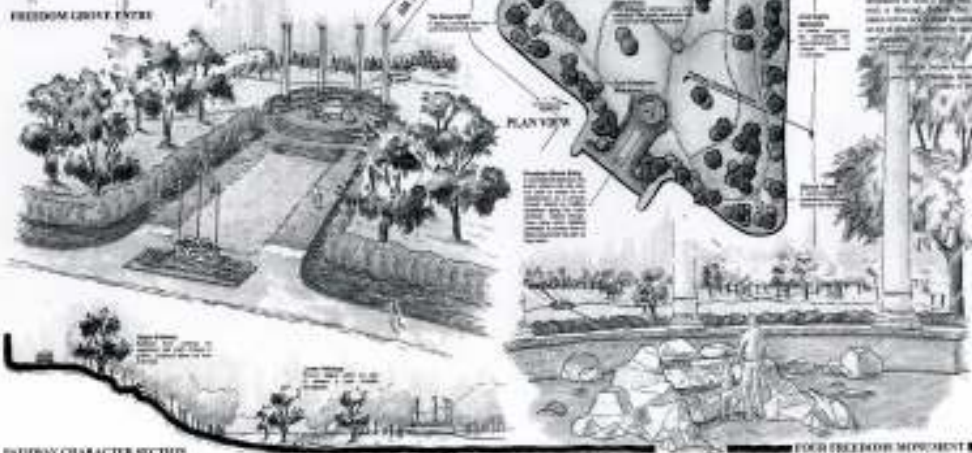
- TERRY HOWELL
- ALAN WEBSTER
- NICK SELVAGGIO
- FRANCIS HAZZARD
- LEANNA SMACK
- HARRY OSBORNE
- WALT ASHBRIDGE
- CHUCK HAZELTON
- CHUCK SWEETING
- DAVE MARTIN
- ADAM WARD
- ESTABLISHMENT OF CLUB PROJECT BY EVENTS OF 9/11/01
- APPROVED BY CLUB 1/14/02
- PRESENTED AND APPROVED BY COMMISSIONERS 1/31/02 BY DON BAUER & ALAN WEBSTER
- REVIEW OF SCOPE
- DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPT
- CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS
- PROJECT BUDGET
- PLANTING OF TREES
- VETERAN RECOGNITION
- FINANCE CAMPAIGN

A COMMUNITY PARK
CELEBRATING FREEDOM

THE VISOR

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THE NEW FREEDOM

For the latest data, please visit our website at www.irs.gov. We look forward to your next business.

The show is based on a great, yet somewhat, forgotten subject.

The number is divided by 100,000,000 to convert it to a decimal value. It has one digit, a decimal point, and six zeros.

The book is designed to be used by students and teachers alike, researchers and social workers, parents, and professionals who work with people in early stages of dementia, providing life to its chapters – research to the world.

The book is divided into five parts, each containing one or more chapters. It is written in a style that is both accessible and scholarly. The book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of the United States.

Freedom Grove

Affidavit Statement

To provide a space where the citizens of Champaign County can celebrate the Freedoms of America. A space with trees, plants, grasses, flowers, walking paths and benches. A quiet space to be shared with family and friends. A space where we can remember those who gave their lives, so that we can be free today! A space where we can be with nature. A space that we can give to all people today, and to future generations so that they may continue to enjoy our FREEDOMS!

What is Freedom Grove?

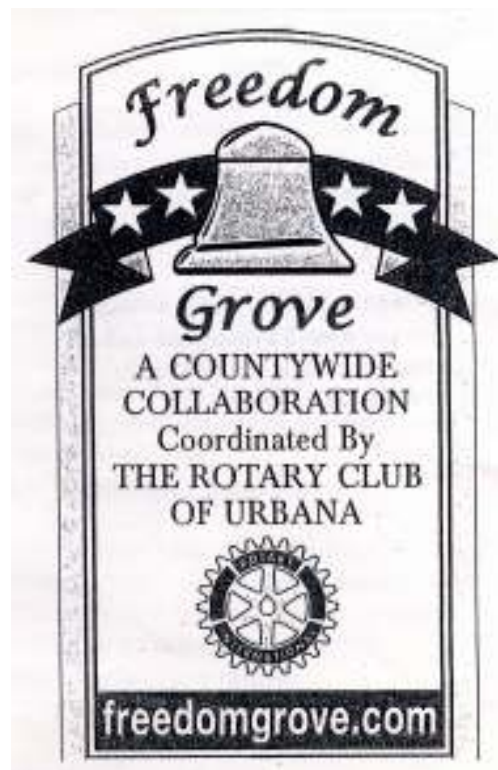
Neatly nestled between St. Route 55 and U.S. Rt. 68 on the south side of Urbana, this beautiful, natural space is the perfect place for reflection and remembrance. Be a part of this countryside collaboration to honor past and future heroes.

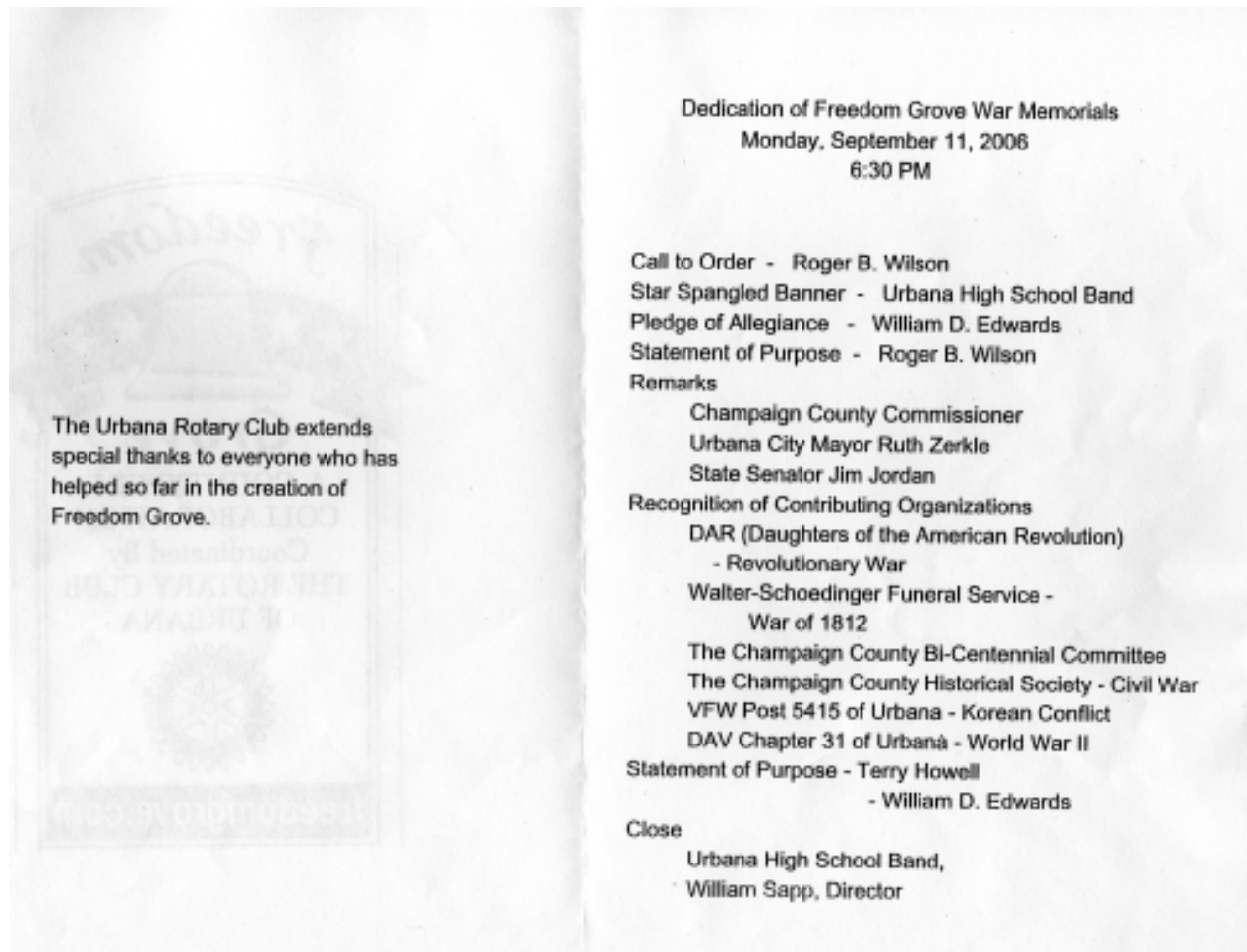
Phase I

Phase I
As this collaborative effort progresses there will be opportunities for you and your family, business, organization, or club to participate in creating memories. Phase I will include a Bell Tower to house the Champaign County Bicentennial Bell. A brick plaza located at the main entrance to Freedom Grove will surround the tower. Granite benches and brick pavers of varying size can be sponsored to memorialize your family, your friends, special events, special dates, or any other person or unique event in your life. See reverse side for sponsorship information.



Bicentennial Plaza





The following sequence of events transformed the location from an empty field into one that resembles a Grave.

Dig Holes for Monuments, August 26, 2006



Look out! LeAnna's driving



Drilling/digging holes for the Monument bases

A crew of Rotarians and their dedicated friends arrived to dig the holes in which to install the cement bases upon which to later install ten Monuments. The work crew for this effort was Rotary President Bill Edwards, Nick Selvaggio, Dave Martin, Freedom Grove Chairman

Terry Howell, Jeff Welbaum, Scott Johnson, Nathan Smack, LeAnna Smack and baby Smack. Wick employees Jeff Welbaum and Scott Johnson also assisted.

Pour ten Cement Monument Bases, September 1, 2006



Bases being poured



All ten bases poured

Forms were ready and the Bryce Hill Inc. cement truck arrived to pour the ten Monument bases. The Rotary Club paid for the pouring of cement for all ten bases. The work crew for this effort was Rotary President Bill Edwards, Freedom Grove Chairman Terry Howell, Urbana Lions Club member Cletus Scott, Dave Martin, Nick Selvaggio, and all the Smacks.

Setting five Monuments, September 7, 2006

Walter-Schoedinger Funeral Home donated approximately \$5,000.00 from their promotional funds to pay for all five Monuments which we dedicated on September 11, 2006. Wayne and Linds Smith, currently proprietors and Urbana Lions Club Members, authorized this actual expenditure following an initial pledge by Kim Maley, the Urbana Rotarian and Walter Schoedinger Manager. This is our largest single contributor to Freedom Grove to date.

We sincerely appreciate their proactive approach to this effort; likewise we are thankful for the assistance given by the Lions Club Members. Roby Monuments of London supplied and installed the monuments. The Plaques were produced through the County Veterans Services Office and produced by Cen Ted Cast Metal Products of Freemont, Ohio. The ten Monuments as recommended by Don Imel, the Champaign County Veteran Affairs Officer, are listed below. The Civic Organizations listed below made donations that permitted them to purchase the Bronze Plaques so as to sponsor the Memorial of their choice.

Revolutionary War
War of 1812
Mexican war (1846-48)
Civil War
Spanish American War (1898)
World War I (1917-18)
World War II
Korean Conflict
Vietnam War
Gulf War; War on Terror

Daughters of the American Revolution, dedicated Sep. 11, 06
Champaign Co. Bicentennial Committee, dedicated Sep. 11, 06
Champaign Co. Bicentennial Committee, dedicated Sep 11, 06
Disabled American Veterans Chapter 31, dedicated Sep. 11, 06
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5141, dedicated Sep. 11, 06
The Grover Foulk Family/(need 1 more sponsor)

Rotarians unveil first monuments in Grove

By SHAUN DUNLAP
Staff Writer

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The first five of 10 planned monuments for the Urbana Rotary's Freedom Grove park were dedicated during a ceremony Monday evening near the Champaign County Community Center.

Champaign County Common Pleas Court Judge Roger Wilson opened the ceremony saying the dedication would be different from other Sept. 11 anniversary events because it was honoring the troops who have fought for freedom, not just as a result of the 9/11 terror attacks, but for all armed forces who have fought for American ideals.

"We recognize the series of conflicts that have so dramatically shaped the destiny of the country, and we recognize those who have given their all in the pursuit of freedom in this country," said Wilson.

Wilson also introduced all the speakers for the day, including Urbana Rotary Club President William Edwards, Urbana Mayor Ruth Zerkle and State Sen. Jim Jordan.

"The Urbana Rotary has identified a need in our community, a



Citizen photo by Shaun Dunlap

Dignitaries helped dedicate the first five of 10 monuments that will comprise Freedom Grove. From left are State Sen. Jim Jordan, Urbana Mayor Ruth Zerkle, Judge Roger Wilson, County Commissioner Max Coates and Rotarian Terry Howell.

need to recognize certain ideals and to have a place for that recognition," said Edwards, of the purpose of Freedom Grove.

"Our monuments and memorials tell us a great deal about America's commitment to life, liberty and the

pursuit of happiness to all. Freedom Grove is that place of recognition," said Wilson.

Zerkle spoke on behalf of the city of Urbana, thanking the Rotary for all it has done in helping preserve the memories of the fallen.

"Let us remember our heroes who died for our freedom in the USA," said Zerkle. "May we continue to be brave Americans and stand up for America for we are a united country, a proud country."

Jordan said the Freedom Grove project is "a worthy endeavor."

"America is such a great country because we have always had people who aren't afraid to wear the uniform of this country," said Jordan. "It's only right that we honor those people here."

Chair of the Freedom Grove Committee Terry Howell explained the plans for the grove. According to him the grove is not meant to be a park of recreation, rather it is to be a park of recognition.

To help pay for future development of the grove, Howell explained the Rotary will soon start a brick-selling campaign.

Groups that were identified for their help with the grove's memorials were the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Walter-Schoedinger Funeral service, the Champaign County Bicentennial Committee, the Champaign County Historical Society, VFW Post 5415 and DAV Chapter 31.

Ground Mounting Frameworks for Signs, October 21, 2006

The need was there and the crew arrived early morning to drill the ground holes and set the previously manufactured metal framework in place. The Bryce Hill Inc. cement truck arrived on time and the completion of setting the framework for the Freedom Grove signs was completed. The work crew consisted of Committee Chairman Terry Howell, Frank Wagner, Jim Preston, Nathan Smack, Marty Carnes, Jeff Welbaum, Dave Martin, Harry Osborne, and Al Webster.



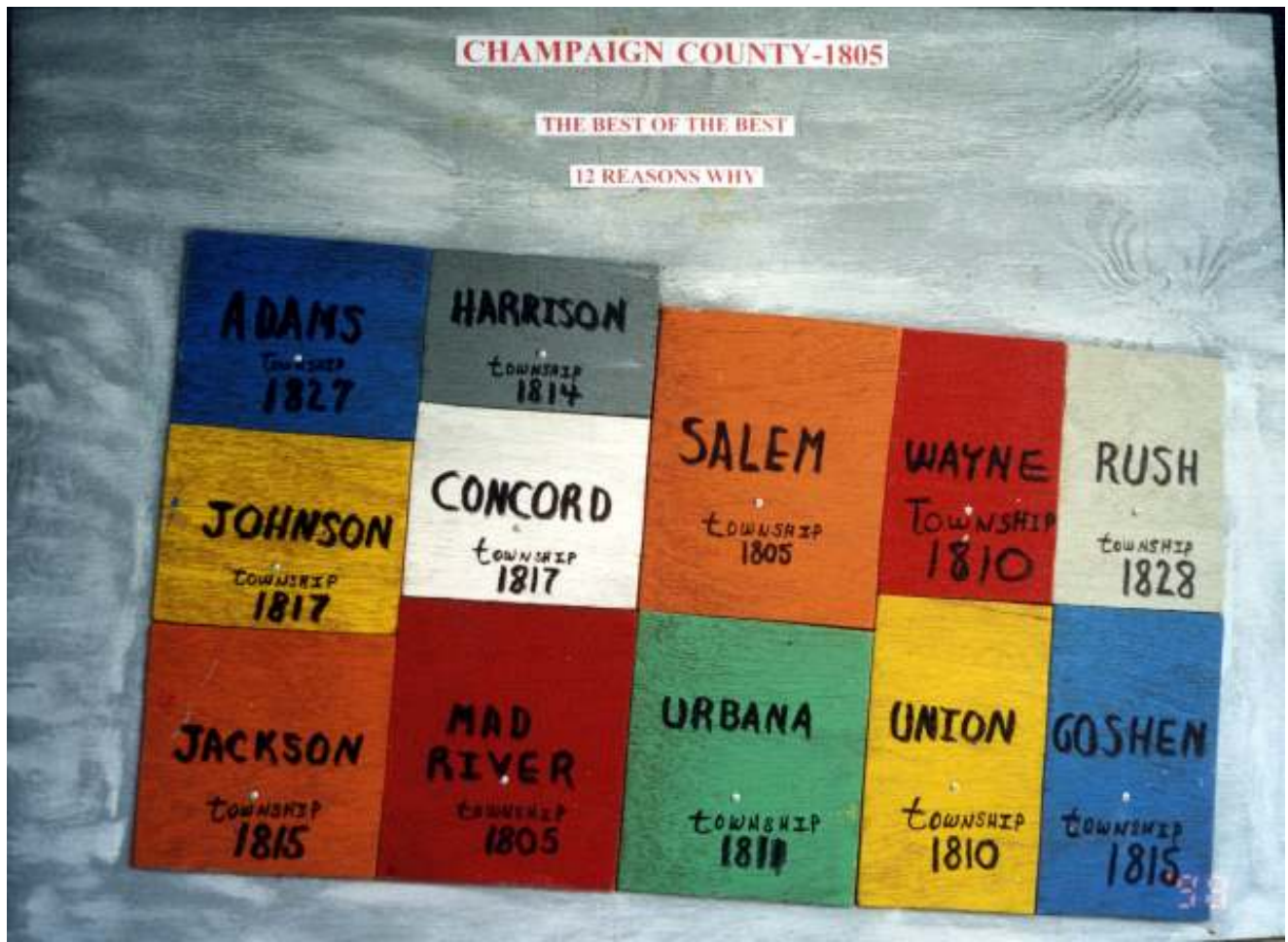
Installation of Freedom Grove Signs, October 30, 2006

Rotarians and other dedicated persons arrived about 4:45 PM for the gala event of mounting the three Freedom Grove signs on the previously ground mounted framework. The towering metal framework was fabricated and donated by Rotarian Harold Osborne, V.P. of Remington Steel; a true dedication of purpose, direction, and vision. Tim West of Superior Paint in Urbana donated the \$200.00 plus charge to paint the sign frames the Rotary blue color. The work crew consisted of Club President Bill Edwards, Chairman Terry Howell, Nick Selvaggio, Jim Preston, John Moody, Dave Martin, Matt McCain, Al Webster, and Roger Wilson. The fabricator of the three signs, Richard Fritz from Vital Signs and Graphics of Urbana, also assisted in their installation. The Rotarians completed their task and joined their comrades at Carey's Auditorium in time for dinner and the suppression of inappropriate behavior as tasked by the Sergeant-at-Arms. They duly noted that Rotarian Roger remained in-tact wearing coat and tie while all others were muddy and showed signs of having been in the barn yard. The Sergeant-at-Arms questioned whether Roger worked or whether the other crew members came to the meeting inappropriately dressed. The crew hung tight, refusing to testify against one another, and the Sergeant-at-Arms departed that conversation without a finding because of "lack of evidence".

During May 2007 much progress can be seen at Freedom Grove. In addition to visual progress, firm plans are in progress for replanting some trees and planting additional ones. The top surface of soil around the entire circumference of the ten Monuments was removed to make way for a gravel base and installation of pavers. The crushed rock was installed and leveled June 12, 2007. The workers were Don Bauer, Terry Rittenhouse, Bill Edwards, Al Webster, Barnaby Ofori, and the entire Smack family.



June 13, 2007 Jim Preston presented a program to a quarterly meeting of all twelve Townships at Christiansburg. The focus of the presentation was to invite all twelve Townships to work with Businesses and individuals in their respective areas to donate \$250.00 per Township. This would allow the Townships to be professionally represented in the Freedom Grove Park with funding from the community and not from Township funds. The plan is to honor all twelve townships as a group once full funding is obtained. The goal is to demonstrate county wide collaboration.



The Best - Twelve Reasons Why