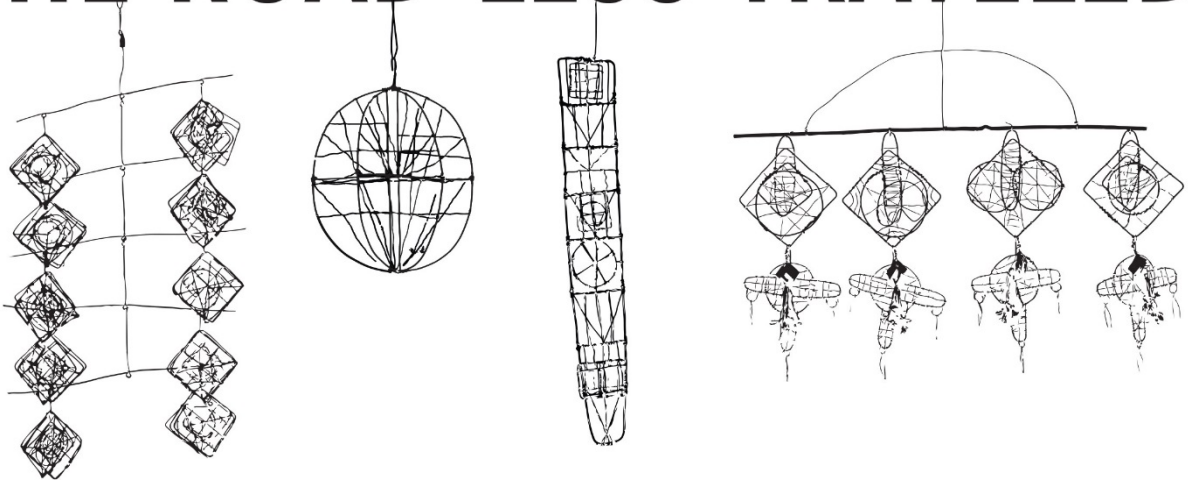


# THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED



Sheboygan, WI      September 27-29, 2017

## Cross Country Drive Session

Anne Pryor:

This panel will focus on the community side of conservation, a part of the overall formula for success that has always been a key aspect in the Kohler model of restoration and preservation. My name is Anne Pryor. I'm the former state folklorist at the Wisconsin Arts Board. I have been enjoying hearing people's origin stories, so I will offer mine, especially because it will help to introduce the panel. In 1996, the Wisconsin Arts Board was preparing to celebrate the Wisconsin sesquicentennial by presenting the artistic traditions and cultures of the state on the National Mall in the 1998 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. I was hired as a field worker to research religious folk traditions in Wisconsin that might become a part of the festival. That led me to the Dickeyville Grotto, where the highly supportive pastor, Father Jim Gunn, pulled together parish elders to relay their stories about being pulled out of school sixty years earlier and put to work by Father Wernerus when he needed extra help in constructing the grotto.

That human element transformed how I viewed the stone and embellished concrete so that I never saw the art as an act of a single-named creator but as a collaboration between many community elements and actors. Long-term preservation of art environments requires multiple types of efforts. Not only is the physical conservation, restoration, and protection of the sculptures themselves of major import, so too our community folks get efforts that educate and build allies. While less technically demanding, this side of conservation still requires tremendous skill and care. Without it, these art environments would not survive and our shared cultural heritage would be diminished. Over the years, my conservations with managers of several different

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art environments across Wisconsin have revealed key elements that are needed for the community side of conservation to be successful. These include, but are not limited to, skillful negotiation with local and super local governmental entities regarding services, regulations, and fees.

Positioning the art environment as a valued community asset within local and regional tourism efforts. Nurturing sustained volunteer commitment and skills. Building interest and dedication within next generations of leaders and volunteers, and undertaking continuous fund-raising even if it's located in rural areas with limited financial resources. This panel will focus on efforts undertaken that art environments from across the country have utilized and other community building efforts required for the environment's survival. Panelists will discuss sites in Wisconsin, Maine, and Louisiana. We hope that discussion at the end of their presentations will draw out ideas and practices from additional sites. We hope for a creative exchange of ideas, especially if that exchange can bolster future efforts at these and other art environments.

Our first presenter is Rich Gabe, who holds a masters degree in museum studies from John F. Kennedy University in California. His current research interest is the intersection between art environments and cultural tourism. Whenever possible, he himself is a traveler visiting art environments and other idiosyncratic spaces, which he then writes about on his blog, *The Land Behind, a Field Guide to America's Lost Wonders*.

Rich Gabe:

Hi. Good morning, everyone. I am so humbled to be here. This is great. Thank you very much Kohler. Thank you, Terri Yoho, for forgetting that I, someday, will be one of your favorite people maybe. I can hope for that. In the fall of 2009, I went through two monumental life-changing moments. Monumental life-changing moment number one. Sunday, October 4, 2009, almost exactly eight years ago today on a vacation in Los Angeles, I and my beautiful wife, Susan, were headed to the airport and we decided to stop at the Watts Tower. It was a last minute thing. It wasn't planned. If it fit into our schedule, cool. If not, I had the time. I knew almost nothing about them.

As many of the people here can attest to, once you get there, it is amazing. It was overwhelming. I was so in awe and inspired about Simon Rodia's achievement, his mania, his obsession, his creativity. I was so moved that as soon as I got home from our trip a couple days later, I ran to the computer and I started researching this thing. At the time, there wasn't much information, but I did find a couple websites and I found out there was a name for this kind of place—art environment. In fact, there are many names for this kind of place, self-taught art environment, visionary art, folk art, outsider art.

I'm not going to go into that here and all the different names and the confusion that creates, but I will say this. This is a true story twice now, when I told friends of mine, when I'm into this thing called art environments and this has happened to me twice. They've been like, "Oh, like Mt. Rushmore?" No, no. Not like Mt. Rushmore. Then I have to explain for fifteen minutes and get them on board,

but I'm happy to do it. I'm happy to do that. At the time, I found, as I was saying, there was a lack of information. I basically found a couple of websites, Kelly Ludwig's great site, NarrowLarry's great site, a couple books, the passion book, a couple articles. There wasn't a whole lot going on. Since that faithful day, almost eight years ago, I have spent a lot of time and a lot of money traveling around this country, visiting over a hundred art environments. I have met tons of great people from artist and stewards.

I've taken thousands of photos. I've interned at SPACES Archives and I've done some writing for them. I wrote about this, about art environments for grad school. I make a lot of maps and I make a lot of lists. Then I grab my wife and I drive around this country, skipping the boring places like Hawaii and Disneyland, taking her to amazing locales like the St. Louis suburbs, rural Ohio, and the flat eastern half of Colorado. Monumental life-changing moment number two, November 15, 2009, almost exactly eight years ago today. While I was at an antiques store, I came across some old, tiny shaving equipment. It made me wanted to start shaving like men did in the roaring '20s.

If you're familiar with the badger hairbrush, and the mug, and a safety razor or the straight razor. When I got home, I ran to the computer and I started researching this thing. I found out there is actually tons of information on how to shave like grandpa. There's a name for this kind of shaving. It's called wet shaving, sort of a gross name. I don't know. Unlike art environments, there's actually dozens of websites with tons of really active chat rooms and forums. I found this forum here. People have written over a million comments about safety razors. When I say people, I mean men, because only half the adult population shaves. Not only is there one podcast, I found five podcasts about shaving. This one here has over thirty-nine episodes in the last year, which is arguably thirty-eight episodes too many.

What could they possibly be talking about at this point? Anyway, so I went out. I got my badger hairbrush. I got shaving. I went on YouTube. I learned how to do it. That brings me to three months later, monumental life-changing moment number three, January 15, 2010. Almost exactly seven years and nine months ago, I grew a beard and haven't looked back. The reason for my presentation is not to compare and contrast shaving in art environments for forty-five minutes. I'm taking the whole time. I do want to talk about the distinct lack of recognition that art environments get in the public space, online, and, even now, there's only about five or so really active websites. We have NarrowLarry's sites, Kelly Ludwig's Detour art site. SPACES Archives has, in the last eight years, become this incredible resource. Fred Scruton's great website of photography.

It's actually pretty minimal if you add [Atlas Obscura 00:09:15], couple other sites. You have a couple more, but there's really no forums. There's no podcasts. There's no chat rooms where people are really actively talking about this. I guess I could say the one saving grace is that there's really no active-like conference or anything like that for shaving. At least, we have this Road Less

Traveled. Wrong, there is a shaving conference and it's annual. Folks, why do we even compete with shaving? They've got us beaten.

That brings me to what I'm going to be talking about today. Due to this lack of recognition from the local community, you get sites that are victim to the county and city bulldozer. You get a local community that just doesn't appreciate the art. We just made it to vandalism or neglect. There's no one there to take care of the site. You find it tough to find a volunteer workforce. Why it is so important to get the community involved, get that recognition raised so that the community comes on board? As you all know this quote from Seymour Rosen, "To preserve the site for future generations to enjoy requires that a site is made a center of pride and enjoyment in a community."

What I did for my graduate thesis a couple of years ago is I tried to merge my two obsessions, my two passions, art environments and road trips, and shaving. Note shaving. I wanted to study something that would connect them all. It came to cultural heritage routes, themed trails is another name for them. That was the focus of my site. That's what I'm primarily talking about. Now, as you see here, here's a couple examples of cultural heritage routes or basically driving routes or walking routes that are built by maybe a convention visitor bureau, by a state, by obsessive fans. Could be built by all sorts of people including just a bunch of like-minded folks who get together and build a theme route. We have the Mississippi Blues Trail as an example, which covers historical sites in Mississippi. We have an artisan trail like this one in the lower right-hand corner, the Hopi Art trail that links multiple places and multiple spots based on the map.

We can go to artisan culinary trails are very, very popular. It took me almost no time to find a Wisconsin wine trail. There's the Wisconsin ale trail. I found a dairyland trail. Finally, making it possible to cheese and alcohol in Wisconsin. Now, I'm going to be talking about themed trails and art environments from three stakeholder perspectives. I'm going to start with the local community and, then, I'm going to talk about the visitor's perspective. Then lastly I'm going to talk about the art sites themselves, and the partnerships that are created, three stakeholders. I want to start off talking about the kind of tourist that goes to or who uses cultural heritage trails, it's quite a mouthful, and they're the cultural heritage tourist.

Cultural heritage tourists are probably like most of the people in this room. When they travel, they go to see museums. They go to see festivals. They go specifically to see heritage and history. Convention centers or, excuse me, visitor centers and states love this kind of tourist for many reasons, mainly because they stay longer in a place. They spend a day-and-a-half longer on average. They spend more money, and they spread it around. They want an educational experience. They want to shop. They want authenticity. They want a compelling experience, which is why I think art environments would be so great to link cultural heritage tourism with them.

It would be a great link. The first stakeholder is the local community and how are maps good for local communities. Themed routes are good for local communities. Many travels are actually created by a state or county for the specific purpose of bringing in tourism, bringing in a new economic stream. This is so appropriate for art environments and so many are located in rural areas. You're dealing with brain drain, with a younger population that goes away. You're dealing with loss of job, maybe due to corporate agriculture. You're dealing with a community that's maybe losing interest or the stewards themselves are getting older. By bringing in manageable tourism, you are bringing people to the local gas stations and restaurants. You've having an economic impact. That house with the crazy statues is no longer so crazy to people.

Another thing that really good maps do, good theme routes do is they reach out to the local community. They reach out to the leaders, to the storytellers. They reach out to the local businesses. They get the insider perspective. This helps lead to community pride. Erika Nelson has talked about how Lucas, Kansas, is a great example of a small town that has been helped—not necessarily saved, but helped due to the economic stream provided by tourism. Erika has talked about how Lucas, Kansas, has brought in a lot of tourism, has brought in a lot of money. Last night Terri Yoho even mentioned the fact that Pasaquan in Buena Vista, if I'm saying that correctly, has been able to bring back jobs. It's adding an economic string, adding a little more money.

The second perspective I want to go over, the second stakeholder, is the visitor and the visitor experience. I want to explain why these themed routes are really good for them. I'm actually coming from a visitor perspective. I'm basically a tourist. I'm basically a traveler. Theme routes or heritage trails do a couple things very well. Critical mass. Critical mass is when you highlight multiple places on the map in an area, and what that does is it makes that area more desirable for people. Dispersal. Dispersal is where you actively, by having a theme route, you're moving people around the city, around the county, around the state. You're moving people from bigger areas often to areas they may not have known about. Rural areas and the like. For example maybe, "Oh, I like drinking beer in Milwaukee. According this map, I can drink beer in Oshkosh." That's dispersal.

"Also according to this map, not only can I drink beer but I can get bratwurst and cheese." That's critical mass. Why would they call it the Wisconsin hat trick? Add bowling and there's no stopping you. I don't know if anyone here is familiar with Tinkertown. It's a wonderful art environment in New Mexico. It's on a heritage route between Santa Fe and Albuquerque. As you see on the left is the highway, on the right is Tinkertown. It's located in an area that gets people, disperses people off the highway through the Turquoise Trail. This is interesting. Tinkertown was created by the late Ross Ward and his wife, Carla Ward. The Turquoise Trail was likewise created by Ross Ward and Carol Ward in 1983. It was actually Ross Ward's idea to create a tourism route.

Now, before I get into the third stakeholder, the perspective of the partnerships of the site owners themselves, I do want to talk about the fact that they started two kinds of maps. This here, this Wisconsin Gangster tour map was created by Travel Wisconsin, and it's great but it's a curated map. Meaning, historians or whatnot went through and picked out sights that Dillinger and Capone have been to and they put them on the map. The sites on this map, on this theme route aren't necessarily part of the map itself in the sense that they have no skin in the game. They may not even know they're on the map, the different lodgings or the different restaurant. I can create a map that links up, and I try to do that with my blog, that links different sites but it doesn't connect the sites per se. The kind of map where I think the real magic lies is the ones that were created as partnerships.

This is where I'm going to talk about Wandering Wisconsin. These routes are usually a little trickier. They take a little more sweat equity, a little more work, maybe even money, but they're where all the sites get together. They are connected because either they pay a due or they meet up at annual or quarterly meetings, or the people on the route actually actively get together and work programs or something. The places on the map have a stake in the map and have a stake in being on the route. Wandering Wisconsin, I don't know if anyone here has done the trip yet. There are theme routes here. They were one of my case studies. It is amazing. There's eight sites and the John Michael Kohler Arts Center all across Wisconsin. If you haven't done it, I implore you, do it now. Leave right now if you want. They might be offended. I won't be offended.

The consortium that created the Wandering Wisconsin map, as I said, took the eight routes and put them on the map. One of the aspects I want to talk about that I have found when I was interviewing art environments is that many of them are isolated. Not just the sights in Wisconsin but all across this country, talking to different artists, talking to different stewards of many of these places, many of the people had not been to other art environments, aren't familiar with other art environments. I've spoken to artists who have not even visited the same art environment one town over. These places that we know as art environments have really unique challenges. They have challenges with conservation. They have challenges with dealing with the city and county, of going from being a private entity to being a public space.

Often, they have no one to talk to. Literally, they don't know who to reach out to for help. By building these partnerships, they are able to share resources, share their challenges, share ideas. They're no longer alone in the wilderness. Another great benefit of building a partnership map and this one, the great things that the Wandering Wisconsin map did—get this map if you haven't already—is they were able to collectively bargain. They were able to get a joint effort marketing grant. They went to the state in 2008 and 2009. What is so cool is not only were they able to introduce that money from the state to help put this together, but they were able to introduce that these strange grottoes, these strange art sites are a great resource for the state of Wisconsin. They let the

state know we are an organization. There's many of us. There's strength in numbers.

In the first year of the route, they estimated it brought in despite doing the Wandering Wisconsin, little shy of a 10% jump in visitors. That led to almost \$400,000 in economic impact to local communities. Another really great thing that they've been able to do by being on the route together is now they are not isolated. Now, they can plan together. They can plan the route together. They can also plan their individual and collective destinies together. Programming is so key and that's what they were able to do here in Wisconsin. Several of the sites for several years did a Plein Air painting contest, other contests, so we could get together. By doing that, they were able to bring in new visitors. They were able to bring in a different kind of visitor, maybe more artists. They were able to introduce people to the different sites and create a better visitor experience.

That's really it, but in conclusion I want to say not every art environment is going to work for a themed trail. As we all know, there's somewhere just the family members or the artists themselves just don't want the foot traffic. There's many sites where the community, no matter what, they're just never going to give in. They're never going to let people, tourists go through their streets. There are some areas where the places on the map would be too far apart. For example, I only know about two art environments in Wyoming. They're 400 miles apart. That's a terrible map. Of course, Wisconsin is one of the more obvious sites. There's a lot here, but southern California, I think there's a lot in Ohio, Atlanta, Alabama. There are areas where this could all be made possible.

Now, are heritage routes the key to making art environments more popular than shaving like an old man? No, it's not magic, folks. Nothing beats shaving. It's just a tool. It's a tool that environments can think about when building partnerships and marketing themselves and bringing in visitors and money to the community. My hope is that in the future, when I tell people that I love this thing called art environments, they will say, "Oh, you mean like Mt. Rushmore? Like the one in Kansas, the little one, the Kohler one?" I will say yeah, that's it. Thank you.

Anne Pryor:

We got early copies of each other's PowerPoints and I was wondering how that shaving fit in. All is revealed. Our next co-presenters include Hannah Blunt, an art historian and the associate curator at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum in Massachusetts. She previously served as the Langlais curator for special projects at the Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville, Maine. She and her partner, Robin Mandel, gained special insights by living in the Langlais's home in Cushing, Maine, from 2010 to 2012. Her co-presenter, Ron Harvey, has worked in conservation at the Milwaukee Public Museum and the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology at Harvard. Relocating to Maine in 1990, he founded Tuckerbrook Conservation, a private conservation practice working

with both private and public collections throughout the U.S., Mexico, and Ethiopia.

Hannah Blunt:

Is this on? Yeah. Thank you Anne. Thank you to the conference organizers. It is really a pleasure to be here, an honor to be here. The project that I am about to talk about, my involvement with it actually ended about three years ago. I've been delving back into this and I'm just reminded about what a special thing it was and my passion is rekindled, so I also have to thank you, Ron, for bringing me back in. As Anne outlined at the beginning, I think that artist-built environments and these preservation projects are all about community and so, the story that I'm about to tell, I think, has parallels to many of these preservation projects. It's not unique in the way that many, many different constituents were brought together. I think there are stories of courtship, and heartbreak, and compromise, and victory in all of these projects. This is just one story.

At a ceremony at the Maine State House in 1971. Sorry, I just want to make sure I'm talking. There we go. At a ceremony at the Maine State House in 1971, Scott Nearing, the grandfather of the back-to-the-land movement, received the Maine State Award given that year by the Maine State Commission on the Arts and Humanities. Beside him, on that day, receiving the same award was the artist Bernard Langlais. The dedication read, "The imprint of Maine upon the work of Bernard Langlais is as clear as tracks in fresh snow." Indeed few artists nurtured by the state express more clearly its earthy heritage. Working in the prime material of this timbered land, Langlais creates, with wit and power, his personal images of the creatures of the earth. Under his hand, the rough scraps of forest and sawmill of abandoned structures and implements are brought to a new and an unexpected life."

Langlais was born in 1921 in Old Town, Maine, a logging and lumbering community comprising several islands in the Penobscot River. Here he is as a young boy in his parent's backyard drawing on the stoop of his home. Langlais took an interest in art at a young age. He left Maine after high school to pursue a career in commercial art and soon gravitated toward fine arts, attending the Brooklyn Museum Art School and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. He also received a Guggenheim fellowship to study in Norway, and traveled and studied throughout Europe. He eventually settled in New York in the 1950s.

He soon gained rather prestigious gallery representation and had a solo exhibition at the Castelli Gallery, a really, really important gallery space in New York in the late '50s. In the spring of 1966, in the midst of commercial success in New York, Langlais left behind the emerging epicenter of the art world in favor of making art outdoors on the land in his native state of Maine. With proceeds from his art sales, he purchased an 80-acre feral farm in the tiny coastal town of Cushing, Maine. In the last decade of his life, he built on the land more than 100 wood reliefs and sculptures including many monumental artworks depicting



athletes, notorious politicians, animals from the circus, to the jungle to the realms of make-believe.

Lions, tigers, and bears, but also horses, dogs, giraffes, giant seabirds, elephants, hippos, camels, and a mermaid. He moved and reworked these pieces placing them in whimsical arrangements in, out, and around his home, amid trees and ponds, and on the exterior walls of his barns and studios. Langlais pursued a daily rhythm of art-making that resembled the agrarian livelihood of his locality. He practiced an art husbandry and articulated a desire to use the land the way a farmer uses it to create what he described as his environmental complex. He actually did have live animals living in and amongst the wooden sculptures on the property. You can just imagine this image of him heading out to the barn to feed his horse Cheyenne, which you can see in the image here, meandering among wooden dogs and live cats, and live dogs and wooden cats.

Let's begin with his monumental horse in 1966, a wooden beast which still towers over the main road in Cushing fifty years later. Langlais became absorbed with the idea of the landscape as his canvas and with Maine's quintessential elements as contributors to his creative process. He sought a symbiosis of sorts between his materials, the artworks composed of them, and the inherent qualities of the place he made home. Langlais's art was as rooted in his native land as a homesteader's nourishing vegetable garden. Scrap wood, muddy ponds, and changeable weather were as integral to his art as they were a reality of his environment. Langlais died in Cushing in 1977 at the age of 56.

More than thirty years later, upon the death of his widow Helen, in 2010, Bernard Langlais's estate including 3,300 works of art and his sprawling Cushing property passed to the Colby College Museum of Art as a bequest. It's important to note that during the years when Helen was living on the property after Bernard had passed away, she kept it quite private. She'd put up no trespassing signs, and really did not allow visitors to walk around the way Langlais did when he was alive. She made some changes to the site. She actually let some of the landscape grow in quite a bit. She moved some things around, but she also kept incredible records and maintained quite a bit of the art there.

The Colby Museum hired me that year to manage this large and complex gift of art and real estate. A proposal that required I move into the Langley home in Cushing, like many colleagues here who've had the rare privilege of occupying an artist home or built environment. I soon discovered all that I have just described, the primacy of place to Langlais's art. I initiated daunting, but what have become essential, discussions with Colby College about preserving as much of his actual home and art environment as possible despite the epic challenges of conservation, long-term stewardship, and the remoteness of the site. I became acquainted with a far-flung organization called the Kohler Foundation, which had just recently expanded its reach beyond Wisconsin. Thank goodness.

In June 2011, Kohler responded positively to the idea of a preservation project at the Langlais property, if—the big if—a third party steward for the future could be identified. After almost two years of exploratory and ultimately discouraging meetings in board rooms with officials from other Maine colleges and museums, and even representatives from the state’s Bureau of Parks and Lands, we were nearly at the end of the road. But, a small local land trust, the Georges River Land Trust (GRLT) in nearby Rockland turned out to be the little engine that could. After many, many, many, many meetings, where myriad scenarios and stewardship models were considered, GRLT agreed to complete the trifecta and take ownership of the site in perpetuity.

In a bold vision that could have drawn criticism from their constituents, they saw the potential of the Langlais property to connect people with the land. They appreciated the artistic heritage of the site as much, if not more, than its natural heritage. They understood that Langlais’s legacy was defined by his engagement with the landscape and that preserving his built environment was in line with their mission. In 2013, Kohler Foundation purchased the property from Colby and commenced conservation treatments to the wooden sculptures on the site. Working with the Maine historic preservation nonprofit, they also completed transformative renovations to the house and studio, creating a space for gatherings and events.

Meanwhile, I gave talks in a number of venues around Maine including the Cushing Historical Society to tell the Langlais story and share news of the preservation project. We also mounted a major retrospective exhibition and produced a catalog at the Colby Museum in and around this time. Kohler Foundation arranged a town meeting and shared their plans with the community, and also met with local artists and friends of the Langlais's to engage them in the effort. Colby and the Land Trust worked together to create a fifteen-year maintenance plan and memorandum of understanding outlining Colby's financial commitment to the oversight of conserved sculptures of the property. Ron will be speaking about this in a moment.

In 2015, Kohler Foundation made its gift of land and nearly a dozen of the conserved sculptures to the Land Trust. In the last two years, GRLT found grant funding to develop a 900-foot wheelchair-friendly path around the sculpture park, purchased a small adjacent property to create a parking area, and raised funds to support an annual operating budget for the site. They rallied local volunteers to cut back invasive plants, move rocks, prune trees, and burn brush. The chairman of Cushing's board of selectmen, of all people, assisted with the reinstallation of sculptures after conservation was completed. One of the many tasks that benefited from his heavy duty construction equipment.

Last weekend, almost seven years to the day of my arrival in Cushing, the Land Trust inaugurated the Langlais Sculpture Preserve, a public nature and sculpture park dedicated to celebrating Langlais's legacy and the natural resources of the Cushing peninsula. This is the list of events that were planned at the grand opening that you can just skim over very quickly but just gives you a sense of the

of the real community focus of the day. Music, art projects, a reading, a bake sale to support the school, etcetera. Here are more photos from the event.

This is an image of children at the site in the early '70s when Langlais was there and would allow tourists really to wander around and then, a recent image. There's more. One of the most, I think, powerful sources for community building around Langlais in the preserve actually was maybe one of the more difficult pills to swallow from a preservation standpoint, which were the roughly 3,300 works of art that were on the site. We worked with Kohler Foundation to gift nearly 3,000 of these works to museums, libraries, schools, and main street communities throughout Maine, over 60 venues. This broad distribution of Langlais art across the state is celebrated in a beautifully designed interactive Langlais trail website and map, which enables visitors to discover his art in a diversity of venues and contexts, many beyond museum walls.

A small grant from the Maine Office of Tourism allowed us to produce a bookmark to promote the trail and, in turn, Langlais was on their radar right around the time they were working a major new marketing campaign for tourism in Maine. Langlais is well represented on their beautiful visit Maine.org website. There's a documentary and the Langlais site is also included on a list of artist sites around the state along with Winslow Homer's Prouts Neck and Andrew Wyeth's Christina's World, which is actually just down the road from the Langlais estate. He's up there with the best. I think as a result of this trail, the creation of this trail and the engagement with sites all over the state, we really built a large network of stakeholders around Langlais that I think has been quite successful.

I just wanted to end with this image, speaking of tourism. This is one of the great finds of mine during my inventory of the house. This is a drawing that Langlais did right around the time he was graduating from high school. I think at this point he was interested in commercial art, so thinking about posters and signage, and creating his own little plug for the beautiful state of Maine. I'm going to now pass it over to Ron.

Ron Harvey:

Thank you Kohler. Thank you NCPTT, and thank you all for coming to the conference. I'm going to start out with a little story. There's a sculptor, a curator, who's a Langlais curator at Colby College and a conservator. They're walking into a bar. No, wrong talk. The gift that I had was twofold. I've had an opportunity to work on Langlais pieces prior to the environment and the work that Kohler Foundation supported. I had the opportunity to work also for Colby College on many things and so, developing a relationship with Hannah and being able to have, talk about being able to do outreach in your community. Colby's about forty-five minutes from the Langlais site. We had the best, most dedicated, and informed curator in the country on Langlais's work sitting next to me and just down the road, not too far. I live in Maine and so I'm about twenty-eight miles from the site. I think of myself as part of the community.

I'd gotten a call from Terri Yoho, Kohler Foundation, asking me if I would take on the responsibility of conserving about thirty-two exterior wooden sculptures that were on-site. I'm going to do a funny little thing. I was back and forth in terms of community and concept, and working, and location. What you're seeing is what I refer to as Langlais's backyard studio. It was just behind the barn. He would work in the barn in bad weather but he worked on many of these large pieces. People could drive up, park, and Helen was off teaching school so she couldn't police. They would come on site and Blackie (Langlais), he had an area set up where he would sell art. People would say, "So is this your studio?" He'd say, "No, this is my home." The first piece again having curatorial input on all treatments, which was just phenomenal.

One of the things we both agreed upon was of the first pieces which should be conserved is that piece at the road, the very first piece on that property. The horse, when Blackie bought the property, he said, "That outcropping needs a sculpture." If you're driving down, I think it's River Road, that's what you see. The house is set back and then the sculpture in the rest of the environment is behind it. If you take a look to your right-hand corner, that's what a lot of the interior would look like. There was a lot of degradation and deterioration. I have come out of a sculpture background; Blackie started as a painter. I'm well aware that he was a painter first before he was a sculptor. An example of a painted horse, again, we're looking at different things.

The original first piece had no paint on it. It was another group of pieces that had some level of polychrome but the question was, do we repaint it? Don't we repaint? We had long discussions and the curatorial conservation decision was don't repaint it. Consolidate it. You can see what we had to do. Again, Scott Mosher who's down working on the pieces is just [inaudible 00:41:41] a skilled woodworker, problem solver. We've worked on many projects together. He's local. What was really wonderful was the first time Terri drove up to the property and met Scott, she said, "Scott, where you from?" He said, "China." She looked at him and he said, "Maine." He is the quintessential Mainer. Again, another piece. This is a geometric cow that's been worked on a number of times. There maybe less than 20% of it is original. That's a piece from about 1976 -77.

Again, we ended up doing replacement and then using commercial house paints, and I went to my outdoor preservation people and said, "What's the best house paint to use for houses?" Because a lot of these things are like structures that need maintenance. He made suggestions and that's what we've done. That's part of the maintenance process. Blackie also did things that fall very much into pop. It's 1973 and Nixon and he's in a pond. He was alone at one point, he went to the Ogunquit Museum of American Art down in Ogunquit. Blackie was still alive at the time, so he was taken off his original pedestal, which is a concrete pedestal that was put into this pond.

Blackie had a large concrete base poured around it. Blackie did all the work himself. He would throw things like bicycles and any kind of metal just to

reinforce the material. We ended up taking Nixon out of the pond, putting him on land, creating an A-frame to draw him out. Removing the concrete and again, the curatorial agreement was let's put him back where he was originally. It's also best preservation. He's in the water. He's not going to last. Now, we see him back in the way it should be and he was repainted because he had been painted. Again, the paint gives a level of protection for the piece.

Also, Blackie was getting a lot of this wood from mills that were being taken down. This is old growth. Some of the pieces are so rich in resin that they're still bleeding resin. The great preservation properties on their own as long as that skyward-facing cross section surface is protected, which in many cases Blackie would paint something or put tar on it. What we're doing is now putting lead and then painting over the lead to give it a double life. This is batter, catcher, umpire 1974, pre and post. Local girl, 1968. Blackie, who's that local girl? Blackie was actually a good friend of Andy Wyeth's and so Andy and his family would come from Pennsylvania to Cushing, and spend the summers.

One summer as Andy is driving down the road, there's this Christina but she's facing the other way. They had a good chuckle about it. That piece is again in that area that I was talking about that is his original work space. There's a cluster of five pieces that are original that have not been moved and retained where they are. She was so rotted. She was so failing that we ended having to cut her open, bridge her with white oak, and she's got a nice three-inch-square rod of stainless steel, 3/16", that pins her to a base support connection. Then, one of the arms, the left front arm, there's again a stainless steel rod that runs into the concrete pad and up to her shoulder to give it support. We know people are not climbing on these pieces, but they're going to certainly be handling them. We want to keep them long and hard. Also, the idea was repainting.

We found, again, Helen had great pictures. I was matching off of those pictures and what little paint we had. Poor Christine has had multiple layers of paint. Originally, she had a pink dress and she had a white dress. The face turned into this creamy color. The arms are all the same color and Blackie had painted the arms and legs differently so she's back to normal. Someone, again, just prior to the land opening, brought some historic photographs from around the 1970s prior to Blackie's death. Christine has rouge. She's got these little red cheeks, so go back and embellish.

The bears, and I think Terri showed a picture of this piece. All of this would have to be dried. The bears were too big, the polar bear is sixteen feet high. We ended tenting around it and using, during the winter, using solar gain to help dry them out and then, spring through fall, we put a Hi-E dehumidifier in the case and got the wood down to the point below 15% so we could use epoxies and resins and work in place. Although, one bear, the east bear had to be removed. There you see the dry-out tank. We call it the bear's den. You see the degree of deterioration on the east bear. Again, Scott working his magic in

creating internal supports and reattaching, conserving, and consolidating the back side too and rebuilding it. She's now back in place.

Blackie's, one of his two elephants. You can see the early original photographs. That's 1977. I'm going to be working with art students at Colby to help repaint the exterior surfaces of consolidated pieces, what's original. What's so neat about this piece was it was commissioned to go to Florida, and was considered unsafe so it came back. If you go on the inside, you look along these lower pictures, Blackie painted what do elephants eat? Fruit and nuts, and all of that. Then, the next level up, what happens when they're digested so it's Jackson Pollock going organic with fruit and vegetables. Again, this is probably the most intact hand of Blackie that we have in terms of his art and his paint on any of the outdoor sculptures that have remained outdoors.

With that, and again, this idea of community and being able to meet back and forth, Hannah and I said, okay, Kohler Foundation's going to support the conservation. Bless them. Terri, I apologize to her now. She asked me on the first phone call, how long do you think you'll have it done by? She was calling me in early spring and in Maine, that can actually be June but this was April. She's saying, "Can it be done by December?" I said which year? The bottom line is we were able to talk about, okay, we've got the funding and the ability to conserve the pieces, but as a trained conservator I'm always thinking down the road. I'm thinking in terms of maintenance and intervention, but also how do we get maintenance. Hannah and I both agreed that the way to go about it was to approach Colby. We ended up working on an outline sheet of cause and effect materials, and dollar amount.

We asked. I said, let's ask for twenty-five years. We got fifteen. I can tell you that as far as I know, this is the only project that's been funded by Kohler Foundation and that we've come to it. We got this maintenance before we completed the conservation. I'm happy because I'm local. I can't run away and say, "I don't know. Don't call me." I want this piece to be there and in place. Part of my giving back to the community was Georges River Land Trust had four invited events over the last two summers, 2015 and 2016. They did a presentation of walking through and talking about the pieces. John Payson, who had been a gallery director and owner, and sold, and represented Langlais. Andy Verzosa, who also sold and represented Langlais, and Carl Little who's a scholar and a writer in Maine.

We were seducing people into committing to a level of involvement with the Land Trust. The Land Trust, bless them, early on I was pitching the idea. You're conserving the land, we're conserving the art. It's this great conservation project that's both space and art. Thank you.

Anne Pryor:

We're going to go from the east coast to the south coast. Dennis Sipiorski and Gary Lafleur are going to copresent. Dennis is an educator and an artist in Louisiana. He works primarily in clay but also in metal, watercolor, oil, and photography. He's a professor of ceramics at Southeastern University in

Hammond, Louisiana. He serves on the board of the Louisiana Crafts Council, the Chauvin Folk Arts Center, and the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts. Then, Gary Lafleur is a Louisiana native who has been teaching and conducting research in environmental biology at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana, since 1998. He is the executive director of the Center for Bayou Studies at Nicholls State and serves as the president of the Friends of the Chauvin Sculpture Garden in Chauvin, Louisiana. Thank you.

D. Sipiorski:

Okay. All right. Thanks. First thing we wanted to tell you is, obviously, you've met us for a couple days. Everything I'm about to tell you is true except for all the lies that I'm going to throw in. We wanted to start with that and we are really happy to be here. Because of Kohler and the young people here, we're doing the math on my talk last night. Seventy years of a relationship with Kohler, they couldn't figure that out but my family's been with Kohler for seventy years. My aunt raised Mr. Kohler's children so she was a big part of their family. We're excited. Chauvin's an unusual site and Terri Yoho is retiring because she had to deal with me in 1999 on the Chauvin project. I'm going to do the first part, Gary is going to pick up the select.

I did want to mention that I was also a professional musician in Wisconsin for four years. I played in a polka band. I guess that counts, right? This is the house I grew up in in Sheboygan Falls. People said, "Well, how did you get to Louisiana?" I said I asked God to send me someplace warm and he picked the warmest thing he could think of. There is no museum there, by the way. Found that on a tour and the house was sold after my parents passed away. It's a different color now, but the Kohler Foundation's thinking about going in and preserving—it's a proposal that I got in the works. This is a wonderful photograph of my father, who in and of himself taught me about folk art. I was going to tell everybody where folk art comes from.

My father worked at Kohler in the Pottery and I teach ceramics so I'm a second-generation ceramic artist. This was right before he retired, and I went to see him and he said, "This is my kid." All his workers, of course. He worked there for thirty-two years, all my uncles, my aunt. The reason I know where folk art comes from is because my dad used to go to a lot of bars in Wisconsin. When you look at a lot of glitter and a lot of neon and pickled pig's feet in jars, it's all in the bars of Wisconsin. The new tour will be, I'm leading it this afternoon, all the bars that you can find. All the folk art you ever wanted to because these non-educated artists would make these environments, so you could have a good time, and you'd eat those pickled pig's feet because...my God in heaven.

The other thing I wanted to say was I was a Disney artist, so Disney should be on the list. I was invited to go to Epcot and they put me next to the statue of Goofy for some reason. They said you're a plein air painter and I go, "What the hell is that?" I didn't realize you paint outside. It rained, so it took a little bit off of that. Anyway, we're going to get on with this. God sent me to Louisiana and a lot of people said I was sent there to save the Kenny Hill site. I think I was sent there for all my sins going to all those bars in Wisconsin. If you' look at this map of

Louisiana, we're an hour-and-a-half south of New Orleans. Nobody goes an hour-and-a-half south of New Orleans, so Terri Yoho's first trip to Louisiana was certainly an eye-opening experience.

When I happened to find, well, this is another story. I got to throw this in. I didn't know if I should use Mr. Kohler's name or Terri's. I thought, you know, you're going to get in trouble. CNN did a report that when Elvis died, there was a Kohler toilet in the bathroom. This is just, we don't know if it's true or not and it's CNN, so the saying was what a way to go. Do you believe that? See, that's worry. I also have this Elvis thing that I do so this is not Chauvin by the way. This is another building. Kenny Hill was a bricklayer, spent twelve years building a garden that I, as an artist or an educator, could never have done. He did it on rented land. Mr. Gary here introduced me to the site and I said, "What the hell is this?" I had discovered with Mr. Gary an unknown artist that had built an amazing thing.

Came back the next week, and am one of the only people I know that has talked with Kenny Hill. I have dedicated twenty years of my life to the preservation of this garden because I said, "Kenny, what do you want me to learn from this garden?" Kenny said, "Whatever you bring with you will help you learn from this place." Okay, I thought, "Wow, that's pretty high end." I said, "You know you don't have any money. Have you ever sold a piece of artwork?" Here you go guys. If I sell a piece of artwork for money, I lose my ability to create." How could you not dedicate your life to preserving something? The man was evicted. He walked away. I just happened to walk into the picture. I knew the family. They gave me three weeks to find someone to pay \$13,000 to buy the sculpture garden.

I thought, "Well, I can do that. I can buy that." Little did I know, I could've retired if I would've bought it and sold it all. Luckily I called this place, called the Kohler Arts Center because I knew Ruth had done sites around Wisconsin. I, as a growing teenager, working at the Kohler plant, knew that artists were there. They believed in this. I said, "Well, I got a folk artist." They said, "Yeah, sure. Send me some images." Terri had just got on board. She came down with a crew, was excited as she can get. I mean she just was so thrilled to see this. They went back and said, "We're going to preserve this site in Southern Louisiana." I was the translator for the conversations because when you say all y'all, Terri's gone. What did they say? I was the Kohler guy that was in Louisiana. For a year, I cut the grass.

One day, we went inside the home and it said anyone who comes here will be cursed. Of course, I wear a black chicken foot just in case. I talked to a voodoo lady. She said, "No man who makes religious work can curse a property." I was telling the story this morning. I went back to cut the grass, there's a giant water moccasin heading for me, me thinking that's the curse. I had a weed eater and a chicken foot, but after that, nothing happened. We've talked about problems with people damaging things. There's a lot of religious articles on this. A lot of people have honored that down in the bayou. He built this for people to come



and learn about it. We have embellished the community to make this theirs, along with Nicholls State University.

That's Kenny. I'm the fat guy. That's Kenny in one of his statues. He did amazing statues of himself. Now, Mr. Gary's going to tell you a little bit about some of the insane things we've done over the last twenty years. We never asked for permission by the way, so it's a lot easier to get things done. Paul James was our first president. He was enthusiastic. He said we need a consultant. We need docents. We need a festival. We need all of these, we need a master plan. I go, okay. He ended up developing that. We developed a board. We got a bunch of crazy people like all of you saying, would you like to be on the board now and help us out? They went, yeah. That's how this all came about. We've been running that so when you say come up with a plan, it's like my school when they said the plan for computer replacement is there is no plan. That's the way we run Chauvin. We just make it up as we go and Terri has been down a number of times to support us.

Ruth brought my mother down to celebrate the initiation of this site to the university. Without Kohler, none of this would happen. I think my years of service as a bathtub inspector in the enamel plant may have had something to do with this. I'm going to give it to Gary and let him tell you the good stuff. Thanks.

Gary Lafleur:

Thanks Dennis. It's great to be here. As Dennis started saying, we created a board. We call that board the Friends of the Chauvin Sculpture Garden. Over the years, we've met probably quarterly. Some of the people on the board have changed, but some of them stayed the same. I think that's one of the lessons—that you hook into a group of people that care enough to remain year after year. Even Terri was here early on. She helped us out and Terri's always been willing to come and give us advice and send consultants our way. There's been not just a drop-off relationship, but a long-term relationship between us and the Kohler Foundation. We appreciate that.

Another thing that we tried to do with our board was we tried to create a diverse board, and maybe that's some of what our message is today. What was our dream team? Well, some of the people that we had on the dream team were folks that cared about this event. We tapped into this event, which is called the Blessing of the Fleet in Chauvin, but now it's the Chauvin Folk Art Festival and the Blessing of the Fleet. Chauvin was already doing the Blessing of the Fleet in April. We said, man, we've got to tap into that. People are coming to Chauvin already. It's only about 2,000 people. We're going to have a celebration on our site on the same day as the Blessing of the Fleet. We made that happen.

We invited a lot of the Houmas Indians to come and other local artists, so we show off the site, the Chauvin sculpture site. We also tapped into the local culture. We also show off local artists. Some of the help to do that came from being able to count on people from the community that we're able to work with. Now, the community comes to our site to be able to see this event, the

Blessing of the Fleet. This is another Houmas Indian artist, Mr. Ivy Billiot. Now, these guys count on coming to our spot. It was a way to integrate them into our sculpture site even though they didn't start out being part of our sculpture site.

During the festival, that's our biggest thing that we do each year. Some of that came about because we had local people from Chauvin on our board like Dottie Ratliff. You saw some of her work last night in what Dennis and I presented. Dottie has allowed us to tap into things that go on in the bayou, this Bayou Petit Caillou, like the paddle trip. They created this paddle trip to pass by the garden right before the Blessing of the Fleet. Now, this is a trick that we did to make the community need us. We needed them but we tricked them into thinking that they need us. It seems to work pretty well. Nicholls is part of this. We bring our boat and we give people rides on the bayou. This is one of those things where I don't ask permission from the university. I do it because I'm not sure they want us to have a bunch of strangers on the boat, but we do it anyway.

Terri and Bill have been on that boat, and we make it work. Another thing that we do besides those community events is we bring young students to the garden. We do this by teaching them environmental arts. Since we're right on the bayou, it's a perfect place to talk about the ecology of Chauvin and the coast, introduce them to art at the same time that we introduce them to the ecology of that place. You might have seen some fish prints on my shirt yesterday. That's one of our tricks, make the students look at the biological art in a fish print. Then, we bring them into the garden and they take part in some of the stewardship of the garden. That's because we have a board member named Mike Slage. He was a local artist that taught. We have community people that are local Chauvin people. We also have art educators and networks.

The other thing that we've added to our board is university faculty. Not just from Nicholls, which is where I work, but also from Southeastern Louisiana University. That's where Dennis is and Louisiana State University. We have some of our board members, who are art faculty, able to come and give talks so that we can do academic things at the site as well as community events. If the university knows that you're doing something academic, bringing a class and I can say that that's why I'm going to Chauvin. I'm not going to Chauvin just because I care about the garden, which I do. I'm bringing a class there, then the university is much more apt to understand that it's an asset. We think that's part of the winning formula.

Now, when I bring students to Chauvin, there's more of a story there. I see this thread coming through some of these other sites. That the community is a story in itself. In Chauvin, there's real hardworking shrimpers that you just don't see in my town of Thibodaux, up north in downtown New Orleans. You don't see people that are connected to the land like this. I feel like it's my obligation not only to show students the sculpture garden, but to introduce them to the real working coast of Louisiana. They meet people like Mr. Terry Lapeyrouse, who, even though he was on oxygen, was able to give us a tour of his shrimp drying platform. One of the worrisome trends is that we're losing coast in Louisiana.

Coastal erosion in Louisiana. It's not just happening on the beaches but in the marshes. Chauvin is right about up here, and so we're in the danger zone. That's part of the story. That's why I bring students to Chauvin, to not just look at coastal land loss as a red part of the map, like data driven, but to show them what we lose when we lose coastal Louisiana. We lose communities of people and a tradition. In this case a beautiful sculpture site, but we're not going to let that happen. Brace yourselves, because this is a little scary. This doesn't happen very often. About once a year, we get water in the garden. It's coming in straight from the bayou. This is Bayou Petit Caillou. This doesn't happen every day.

When Terri visited, that was one day we had a huge big rainstorm. This worries us and so, this reminds us of the work that we have to do. This is some of our challenge. There's good news and that Chauvin has recently put in a floodgate that is supposed to keep this water out. These high water events don't happen very often. We think that there are several strategies that we can do in the future to increase drainage and to keep the water out. That's what we're working on. The last thing I wanted to tell is that you're invited to come visit us. We would love to have you down there. If you come in April, you can see the Chauvin Folk Art Festival and the Blessing of the Fleet. But if you come any day of the week, we would just love to have you. Sometimes, it's nicer to see the garden on a quiet day. Thanks for your attention.

Anne Pryor: What are your stories? What are your questions? What are your experiences of, as Hannah said, heartbreak, compromise, and victory? Or what questions do you have for any of our panelists about their experiences in building community and using community assets to maintain and thrive in these environments?

Speaker 7: If you want to raise your hand, I'll bring you the mic. If you could introduce yourself before [inaudible 01:09:02]. People know you but if ...

Anne Pryor: Who is that woman?

Terri: Terri from Kohler Foundation. Hannah and Ron really, I think, wove the story well of what happened at the Langlais site, but what I have to share is we view that when we sit in the office and rehash what's been done the most difficult project. Not technically but personality-wise, because we were working with a Land Trust who did not speak our language. The language differential was a lot greater than it was going down to the bayou. The Land Trust talked about invasive species and they talked about what materials are you going to use on those pads through the trails. We could not get them to focus on the art. Years later, now they regret that they didn't keep more of the art on the property. We regret it too, but our mission was to preserve the art and because of that Susan Kelley worked to place those 3,000 pieces with Hannah across the state of Maine, and some of the best pieces came to Wisconsin. Hopefully, you'll be here to see them.

Within the community that we worked with, not everybody has the same vision that we do and not everybody sees it the same way. The Land Trust was

probably the biggest lesson for us because their whole vision was in a different universe than ours. Thankfully, we've seen them come around, but it took many years.

Speaker 7: One over here. [inaudible 01:10:45] introduce yourself.

Sister Caroline: I'm Sister Caroline [Collie 01:10:48] and my first teaching assignment was in Dickeyville, Wisconsin, where the great shrines are. Did Kohler take that on or was it studied and not at this time? It's a phenomenal place, but I didn't know what happened?

Anne Pryor: Terri, do you want to speak from here?

Terri: We helped and counseled at Dickeyville. In fact, I was just on the phone probably a week ago with Arlene. The diocese is probably not the easiest customer in the way that the Dickeyville Grotto is intertwined with the church and church property in the cemetery. I don't know that we'd ever be able to acquire it, but we've given them grants. We send expertise and we try to counsel them whenever we can. If the church wants to give it to us, we'd take it.

Randy Vick: More of an observation. Randy Vick from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Yesterday, I was really impressed by the very serious, important work of conservation, the science and everything. This morning, I got a little nervous with the tourism, chamber of commerce, or things. Then, the waive of the folk humor, the hucksterism, the flim-flam qualities that were really part of the spirit of many of these makers. Unlike Dubuffet's notion of silence, and secrecy, and solitude. I mean when you put something out on the front lawn, you want the people to come. I think that in some ways, that piece is as important to preserve as the objects themselves. It's that spirit and it seems it's coming through in a number of ways from what people said today.

Anne Pryor: Interesting observation. Thank you.

Sam Gappmayer: I'm Sam Gappmayer with the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. I'd be curious to know if any of you had points of contention with neighbors, with people who lived adjacent to the properties? What strategies you used to overcome that?

Gary Lafleur: We've had a few issues, some of them were good and bad, but like when we have our festival, there's not a lot of parking around there. Some of the neighbors got mad about that. The next year, we cordoned off an area for those people that had complained. This is VIP parking for the Neal family. We tried to nip that in the bud. Then on the other side of that, sometimes those same neighbors walk up and they do the tours themselves for us. We think we have a working relationship. It's not something that you can ignore because we can see how we can rub people the wrong way. Even though, south Louisiana seems like a small place, in Chauvin, they see as those people from Thibodaux, from the

university coming down here and having a party. We tried to stray away from that as much as possible and make them part of the show.

Hannah Blunt: Is this on? Can you hear me? Mainers are very private also, but I think if you stay out of my business, I'll stay out of your business. There wasn't really a great deal of tension in the community around this project. There was one neighbor right adjacent and actually a very tiny little piece of land that was pretty much carved out of the Langlais property. The elderly couple that lived there had actually lived there even longer than the Langlais's, so they had been there through his entire takeover of the site. I think they had a very amicable relationship during that time. That couple, the gentleman actually passed away a couple of years ago. His widow, Tessie, we were neighborly with them and I think, through the entire thing were just very respectful and very understanding.

She, just a couple of years ago, actually moved into an assisted living facility and I mentioned that the Land Trust bought a piece of land and it was actually that little plot of land that they purchased. They auctioned the house off and that was what created the parking area for the site. It all worked out, I think very well in that instance.

Kevin Rose: More of a comment.

Anne Pryor: And introduce yourself.

Kevin Rose: Kevin Rose, thank you, with the Hartman Rock Garden in Springfield, Ohio. More of a comment playing off what we're talking about here. I think we need to find better ways of first connecting our sites. The sites especially that have boards and maybe staff, or whatever that might be, are talking more together. As it relates to this session, I think we need to be doing more to connect our communities and the people in our communities. In Springfield, Ohio, we have a chamber of commerce that really gets it. They believe in preservation, historic preservation. We've struggled with this for ten to fifteen years, but what we've been doing lately is taking community leaders and taking in towns that get it. Just taking them there. Going out to dinner or talking to community leaders. When we get back to our town, we find that our mayor, our city manager, the heads of our foundations, universities, they get it. We're making huge progress.

I think if I could back to our site, if we would've had the knowledge to get a group of community leaders and then, to come up here to Wisconsin, and go to a community where they really get it. They understand how important this art environment is to their community, is to our heritage, to our art culture, and I think we would go back and we would have much better luck in our community. We have it today. It's taken us, however, many years, eight years start to get there. I wish I had the key leaders of my community here because we would go back and we would have a much easier time at fundraising, connecting the disparate parts of our community. If they could see the great success stories that have happened across the country. I think we need to find ways of doing that, of collaborating and working together.

Anne Pryor: That's a great idea. We need to remember that leadership shifts and interest in communities shift, and so you have to time it well. Yeah. Who's next?

Karen Patterson: I had a question. Karen with the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. My question is for you, Hannah. A curatorial advise and advisement on the restoration of preservation of art environments really stretches a lot of muscles that you may not be used to. I totally understand that so I live with that a lot and I struggle with the decisions that I make and I'm very self-conscious sometimes about did I make the right choice? How far is too far? Those kinds of questions. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about being the curatorial voice in that restoration project.

Hannah Blunt: Sure. It was so vast that it's hard to pull out specific examples. I would say as Ron described, I mean I think I wasn't alone in it. I had a professional conservator. It was a back and forth between both of us. I'm grateful to Helen Langlais for all of the records that she kept, because in many cases it gave me the answers to be able to go back and see the placement of things and their original paint and their original state. I mean, Langlais moved things around. He repaired things. Things started to degrade even when he was still alive. There was one whole enormous composition on the front lawn that he actually dismantled several years after creating and integrated parts of it around the property. It was a very dynamic place all along and continued to be dynamic as Helen made choices of where she wanted to see things.

There's no time capsule moment. That was also a little bit liberating. You could pick and choose, but there were certainly a few, I think particularly around the painting of sculptures. I think many of the people who had had the experience of seeing the sculptures on the site had this very specific image of them. It's like the way we look at ancient sculpture. That used to be brilliantly painted and our understanding of it is that this is very stark white. I think it was a similar experience for people when they saw the repainted sculptures that it was a little bit garish and that's actually really how they originally looked. Bringing that back to some extent was important I think to resurrecting Langlais's vision there. Just a few comments.

Anne Pryor: Probably one last question and then we'll have to break.

Peter: Hi. Peter [inaudible 01:20:51] from Los Angeles. Rich, I wanted to ask you why not like Mt. Rushmore? Maybe we're better served by drawing connections between other kinds of artwork than constantly trying to remind people of differences.

Rich Gabe: That is a good point. I've actually never been to Mt. Rushmore, only the one in Kansas. Yeah, I know, I have nothing against Mt. Rushmore because it's interesting. To me, art environments are so distinctive and so unique that to get that word across that they are. I'm not coming from an art perspective or an art historian perspective. I think there's something so unique and special about them. Yeah, one of the things that themed routes do like through dispersal, you

can link public art together. Mt. Rushmore too, is there another site in the Black Hills or something that I may be not aware of? You make that distinction, not that distinction but you can make a connection. If you like Mt. Rushmore, there's more public art. It's a little different, but give it a shot. No, I'm not opposed to Mt. Rushmore. I just haven't been there yet.

D. Sipiorski:

I had one thing I wanted to say. I met the Rhinestone Cowboy nephews in the building and they said we came from Mississippi because we went to see the building because we never talked to our uncle. The building was in Wisconsin. We spent a good deal of time talking about this man who they were afraid in some ways to go visit because he had crossed into a different world or something. The explanation is there's a fine line between genius and insanity. That's my definition of all of us that care about these works and make work is: what side of the line are you on? There's a joke about a Polish guy that hits a guy's car. The guy gets out, draws a circle. He says to the Polish guy, stand in the circle. Polish guy does. He beats the Polish guy's car with a bat. The Polish guy is laughing. He said, I just beat your car up. He said yeah, but I jumped in and out of the circle three times while you were doing that. Maybe that's why we're all here and why we believe in what we're doing.

Anne Pryor:

[inaudible 01:23:20]