

The Dinner in '75 & thoughts on Carolyn Krause 'herstory'

(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on March 9, 2015)

One of the inherent dangers of attempting to document history is the inevitable fact that errors and omissions will be a part of the final product. Worse, the history as documented in a reference source prepared by a previous historian may just be wrong. As much as the historian desires to give an accurate account of the events, mistakes and oversights occur.

Carolyn Krause is one of the very best researchers and writers I have ever known. I have come to appreciate her more since she has graciously and humbly taken on the role of helping me with these *Historically Speaking* columns. However, she is no exception to the rule. She worries about accuracy.

When she asked if she could provide some feedback on a couple of previous articles she had written for *Historically Speaking*, I readily agreed as I fully appreciated her desire to present accurate information.

Here is the first feedback she wants to provide you readers. She wants to correct the misstatement of the location for the dinner associated with the Tennessee State Legislature meeting in Oak Ridge in 1975 and include a wonderful story that was omitted from the original column. Here is Carolyn's report of the feedback from Fran Silver and Tom Hill:

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What happened over 40 years ago, on Wednesday, Feb. 5, 1975, was more than a piece of Oak Ridge history. The picture is not complete without "herstory."

The *Historically Speaking* column on "Legislators '75 road trip to Secret City recalled" in the Feb. 26, 2015, issue of *The Oak Ridger* focused on the key points made by the speakers. But Fran Silver, who started the Creative Catering business in 1975, told me last week that the most important event of that day was probably "The Dinner at the new American Museum of Science and Energy."

"It was a festive occasion," she said. "Some 300 to 400 people attended."

She credited several people who helped her pull it off: Ben Adams of Adams Craft Herz Walker; Eugene Joyce, a renowned local lawyer, and Tom Hill, publisher of *The Oak Ridger*.

Many of the 91 legislators from the House side of the Tennessee General Assembly attended the dinner, along with local, state and federal government officials and the speakers from Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

The *Historically Speaking* column stated incorrectly that a dinner was held at the "old American Museum of Atomic Energy." It was in the new museum on South Tulane Avenue, which was later called the American Museum of Science and Energy.

Hill likes to relate a story about the dinner. Fran Silver's husband Ernie, an ORNL scientist, was slicing meat for the guests when two legislators approached him with their plates. Hill was behind them. He heard one legislator say to the other in front of Ernie, "I understand fusion but I don't understand fission."

So Ernie patiently explained nuclear fission to them while continuing to slice meat. Then Hill followed the two and heard one say to the other, "Gee, even the waiter here knows about fission."

...

There you have the rest of the story. Thank you, Fran and Tom, for bringing these details and providing the opportunity for Carolyn to include that wonderful story about the fission lesson from the "waiter." Only in Oak Ridge might you be served carved meat from a scientist! We think nothing about it, but believe me, it is rare in other cities. Oak Ridge is unique.

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I have another story that will be published soon in *Historically Speaking* that gives an insight into how Oak Ridge was perceived by a reporter from Louisville, Ky, in 1949, when the city was just being opened to the public. The title of the article written by Sam Adkins, of the *Courier-Journal*, a daily newspaper in Louisville, Ky, that is still in business. The editor provided me permission to reprint the story "***Monument to Schizophrenia: Oak Ridge, A City of Death, Seeks A 'Normal' Civic Life.***" I think you will enjoy reading about an outsider's view of our city during the time when the world was first getting to know about Oak Ridge.

Let me say just a bit more about Carolyn and her excellent contributions to *Historically Speaking*. As you may know, she worked for almost 36 years at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, most of that time as the editor of *The ORNL Review*.

So, her background as a science writer enables her to understand the scientific details, and her editing skills enable her to communicate those details effectively. As a result, the readers of *Historically Speaking* more fully understand the amazing facts without the encumbering scientific jargon so often found in most scientific papers or reports.

Carolyn also writes the weekly newsletter and does publicity for The Rotary Club of Oak Ridge; she is a member of the boards of the Oak Ridge Institute for Continued Learning and the Rotary club and does publicity for both; she provides various editorial and publicity services for First Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, which will celebrate its 70th anniversary in June; and finally, she is writing news and feature articles for *The Oak Ridger*, as well as the *Historically Speaking* columns based mainly on oral history interviews with Oak Ridge researchers.

I am proud to take a moment of your time to let you know a bit more about her. I know you have enjoyed the finely researched articles she provides to *Historically Speaking* and felt sure some of you might not know her as well as you might want to. She is an asset to Oak Ridge and I am pleased to be a friend.



Members of the state Legislature are briefed during a tour of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory on Feb. 5, 1975, when two-thirds of the Tennessee General Assembly visited Oak Ridge, Tenn. According to Tom Hill, former publisher of *The Oak Ridger*, then Speaker of the house Ned McWerter was so impressed by an earlier visit to ORNL that he asked all the state's lawmakers to meet in Oak Ridge to learn about nuclear and other energy issues.

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Fran Silver: The caterer for the legislators' dinner in Oak Ridge's brand new location of the American Museum of Atomic Energy in 1975



A frequent contributing writer of *Historically Speaking* columns, Carolyn Krause is recognized by Y-12 Historian Ray Smith as "one of the very best researchers and writers I've ever known."