

Round building discussion

BY PHILLIP COLLINS

Special Writer

NEW CARLISLE - The newly formed Olive Branch School Preservation Society met with the Tecumseh School Board on Monday to discuss the fate of the Round Building. Built in the late 20s, the round building is considered by many a valuable piece of Ohio history.

"The building holds strong sentimental value for local residents," said school board member Gary Cochrane. "It was one of the first community high schools in the county."

"During the school renovations, people kept asking about what was going to happen to the Round Building," said school board member Jane Manemann. "Some of the more protective community members would say, 'You're not going to tear it down are you?'"

Presently, the round building is being used as a warehouse for the school district. However, moves are already being made to officiate the structure's historical status. Working in conjunction with the Tecumseh School Board, the Olive Branch School Preservation Society has submitted a request for the round building's inclusion in the Ohio Historical Registry. A tentative plan for the restoration of the round building is also being considered.

"This will be a long process, but it's doable," said Manemann. "We have a lot of interest from the community. Business people, local residents, and retired school officials are all involved with the Preservation Society."

Bill Berry is the chairman of the society. Berry is a retired school administrator and the author of, *Recalling the Past: The History of Bethel Township and New Carlisle Schools*. As a local historian, Berry has a deep passion for the restoration of the Round Building. Matt Curtis, a current school administrator, has joined him in his efforts.

"The community's ties to this building transcend generations," said Manemann. "We all want to maintain it as a positive structure in the district. I think we can do that."

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Although plans for a complete restoration may take a while to develop, work is currently being done on the building to increase its longevity. Repairs are being made to the roof and gutters to prevent further water damage to the structure. Meanwhile, the fledgling preservation society is solidifying its organizational framework.

"We've formed two subcommittees," said Manemann. "One handles finances and the other establishes bylaws. But, we're taking this a step at a time. We don't want to become too fragmented."

The next meeting of the Olive Branch School Preservation Society is tentatively scheduled for 7 p.m. Nov. 21.