

LABYRINTH CIRCLES #17

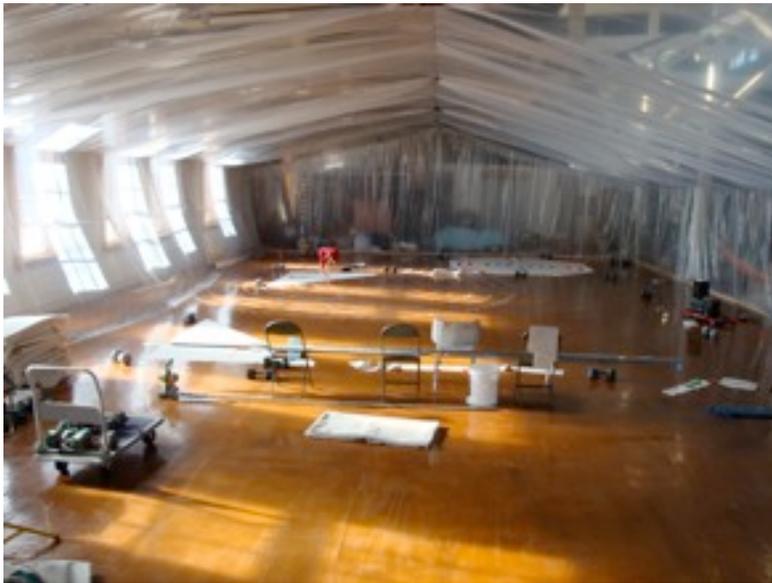
Labyrinth Enterprises, LLC, St. Louis, MO

January, 2010

Founded 1995 . . . Now Entering Our 15th Year

News from the studio . . .

In January, 2009, studio manager, Judy Hopen, became a partner in Labyrinth Enterprises, LLC. Not surprisingly, as the world's most accomplished canvas labyrinth drawer and painter, she is in charge of the studio operation -- although occasionally she escapes to supervise an on-site installation. Being 8,000 sq. ft., the studio is expensive to heat. (In the summer, we just sweat it out.) So, we built a 2,500 sq. ft. plastic tent over the main work area. This area is maintained at about 60 degrees, while the rest of the studio lingers around 45 degrees.



We continue to rent and sell canvas labyrinths of various sizes and designs. We hope to add some new designs and materials as soon as we can get to it. Meanwhile, Easter is our busiest time (order early). If you are in Saint Louis and want to visit our studio, call Judy Hopen at (314) 922-5839.

News from the road . . .

We have now built six labyrinths using granite resin. We love it, and so do our clients. Our most recent installations were in Saint Louis, MO, Fort Washington, PA, and Davis, CA (in addition to Colorado, Delaware, and Grand Bahama Island). Granite has numerous benefits. First, there are no pigments to fade. The colors are the color of the natural granite the way it comes out of the ground. The material is full of quartz crystals, so it sparkles. Most of all, it is available in colors that are not possible with our other durable product, polymer concrete.

To apply the granite resin, we mask off the pattern with masking tape. This is labor intensive, but not technologically difficult. Very handy is our line taping machine that lays down parallel strips of masking tape. The extensive hand work can be done by locally hired workers, or even volunteers provided by the client. This reduces the cost considerably, to almost half of the previous cost for a hard-surface labyrinth. In today's economic climate, that may be another factor in the popularity.

Robert or Judy show up as scheduled, with the tools, tape, and material. They then organize the installation and train the volunteers. Our mission is to get quality labyrinths out into the world. Paint and stain last only a few years. Granite, however, is forever. Well, at least a very long time. See details on our website:

www.labyrinth-enterprises.com/granite.html

Robert in semi-retirement . . .

Upon reading his own obituary in the newspaper, Mark Twain proclaimed that his demise was greatly exaggerated. The same is true regarding Robert's retirement. Yes, he is doing less administrative work and traveling more, but he is still available to conduct trainings or build labyrinths. For certain, Judy is not retired. The studio is in full operation. We continue to sell books, stand-up taping machines, and other items. So, for those of you who have expressed concern that we might not be available and our proprietary techniques and materials will be lost, not to worry. We are still here for you when you need us. Just call.

News from New Harmony . . .

Until 1947, New Harmony was mostly a scruffy oil town located on the Wabash River in the far southwest corner of Indiana. It was actually a hidden gem, with many extant buildings from the original Harmonist community dating from 1814-1824. Then something very fortuitous happened. Oil heiress, Jane Blaffer, married Kenneth Owen and moved to town, settling in House #5. For the ensuing 60 plus years, Jane Owen, now in her 90's, has dedicated her time, taste and resources to turning New Harmony into a fabulous oasis of culture well worth your visit. I have stayed in House 5, and found this tribute to her father, written in her own hand, by the young Jane Owen:

I want this house to be like my father -- sound, unpretentious, fearing only God. May it see things both as they are and as they might be. May it add to its measure, as he did so greatly in his, to the sum of human happiness, and to our understanding of the divine purpose. This, I believe, is the kind of memorial my father would like best (dated June 15th, 1947)

At the time, I was approaching three years of age, some 30 years junior to Mrs. Owen. It turns out that labyrinths have an important association with New Harmony, which has drawn me there many times. In 1998 the Cathedral Labyrinth and Sacred Garden was dedicated. Possibly the most beautiful labyrinth in the United States, it was preceded a year earlier by a trip to Chartres, in which I accompanied the architects and stone supplier to see and measure the real thing. François Legaux, then rector of Chartres Cathedral, performed the blessing at the dedication (photo).



On the edge of town, in 1939, a hedge maze was constructed in recognition of the original labyrinth built by the Harmonists, who built labyrinths in each of their three villages. But the architect apparently felt a labyrinth was boring; so he added extra paths and created dead ends to create a maze. Recently, Historic New Harmony, the non-profit organization that keeps tabs on New Harmony (associated with the University of Southern Indiana in nearby Evansville) decided to return the maze to its original unicursal pattern. I made a number of drawings that indicated the appropriate changes, which were duly realized. The pattern is unique, based on a 7-circuit classical design. There are only a few hedge labyrinths in the world. So it went from an incorrect, boring maze to a historical and very interesting labyrinth.

This year, November 12-14, the annual Labyrinth Society gathering will be held in New Harmony. Although getting there is a bit involved, it is well worth the effort. Details will be posted soon on the Society website (www.labyrinthociety.org). We'll see you there. On the internet, Wikipedia has an extensive article on New Harmony, past and present.

Contact Us

Labyrinth Enterprises, LLC

Robert Ferre, President
Judy Hopen, Vice president
www.labyrinth-enterprises.com

Office:

128 Slocum Avenue
Saint Louis, MO 63119
T: (800) 873-9873 or (314) 968-5557
F: (888) 873-9873 or (314) 968-5539
robert@labyrinth-enterprises.com

Studio:

2725 S. Jefferson Avenue
Saint Louis, MO 63118
T: (314) 865-1988
C: (314) 922-5839
judy@labyrinth-enterprises.com

Products & Services

- ✿ On-site installation of permanent labyrinths specializing in granite resin and polymer concrete
- ✿ Sales and rental of hand-drawn and painted portable canvas labyrinths in numerous designs
- ✿ Consulting and design services for architects, contractors, labyrinth committees, and others
- ✿ Instruction manuals, books, stand-up taping machines, posters, and other products
- ✿ Labyrinth-making master classes, facilitator training, lectures, and special events
- ✿ Extensive educational website with more than 300 links to labyrinth-related sites
www.labyrinth-enterprises.com