

R. Buckminster Fuller to be subject of April event

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CARBONDALE — While renovation of the R. Buckminster Fuller geodesic home in Carbondale continues, a movement is percolating to revitalize interest in the man and his theory of sustainability.

Janet Donoghue, co-founder of the Fuller Future Festival, said she wants to preserve the memories of the philosopher-architect, known widely for his geodesic dome structures, including the one he built for the Montreal World Expo in 1967.

What many may not realize is he built the dome as a 50th wedding anniversary for his wife, Anne Hewlett Fuller, Donoghue said.

Donoghue spoke at an informational get-together Wednesday night at Carbondale Civic Center. About 30 people attended.

“We identified this huge need that is beyond that one structure,” said Donoghue of the dome home.

She and Fuller Future Festival partner Brent Ritzel are former members of the Fuller Dome Home restoration group. Ritzel was the group’s president.

They left to start Carbon 60 Productions and organize the Festival and other events designed to raise awareness about all of Fuller’s contributions.

They are also developing a collection of Fuller artifacts and plan to eventually publish a memoir about Fuller based on people’s experiences with him.

Fuller was a faculty member at Southern Illinois University Carbondale from 1959 to 1970.

“What we notice is there are so many stories that have nothing to do with the dome.

“They have to do with people being in classes with Bucky, meeting him on campus or coming to Carbondale just because they knew he was here. ... We need to preserve that history,” she said.

The Fuller Future Festival is one step toward expanding people’s awareness and is scheduled for April 4-6.

It will be at the Southern Illinois University Student Center and around Carbondale and will feature speakers, panels and activities.

Artifacts include an advertisement declaring, “The man who simplified housing bought a Honda Civic,” and a Jan. 10, 1964, Time magazine cover depicting Fuller’s portrait but with a “domed” head and surrounded by futuristic concepts from several of the 26 books he wrote about the sustainability theory he called “Livingry.”

John Cox of Carbondale said he came to the preview event because he is fascinated by Fuller.

“I came to Carbondale in 1972 and heard a lot of stories about him. I’m just fascinated by what he did. Plain and simple,” Cox said.

Cody Dawkins also of Carbondale said he though he knew about Fuller because of his dome home, but came away from Wednesday’s presentation in awe.

“Wow, it was inspiring,” he said.

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