

Grist from the Mill



Colvin Run Mill Volunteer Newsletter

March 2008



Spring is Spectacular

Yellow buses in the parking lot, maple syrup at the volunteer breakfast and romantic ducks and geese by the mill pond are sure signs that spring is here. Check out the enclosed Spring Schedule of Activities to find your favorite events. You can also see the list of spring programs at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/crm.

Gears and Pulleys in the Barn



Magnetic gears are stationed on the wall of the barn and the pulleys are now in an accessible spot. Visitors can turn the gears to see how they transfer power, and move the pulleys to see how they make lifting easier. Children and adults are encouraged to use these simple machines and relate their experience to the use of simple machines in a working grist mill.

Relocating the pulleys freed up a corner of the exhibit area for a temporary display recreating an early 20th century classroom with desks and a school bell from Legato School. We have placed the mill model in an open section in the center of the wall, so visitors can view the model from three sides. The other corner of the exhibit area will focus on work, with early 20th century machines displayed behind barriers.

We would like to hear your thoughts about the changes and your observations of the visitors' use of the hands-on area.

March 8, 9am-3pm Mid-Atlantic SPOOM Meeting

The Mid-Atlantic chapter of the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills will have their semi-annual meeting at Cooper Mill in Morristown, NJ on Saturday, March 8.

The meeting will be a joint effort with The International Molinological Society. If you would like more information, contact Bob Lundegard at 703-759-2626 or boblund@verizon.net.

Welcome

Richard Thorpe felt that his carpentry skills could benefit Colvin Run Mill, so he joined the volunteer staff



in late January to help out. Richard has already built a new, improved brochure rack and a much-needed holder for the grain/flour sample jars in the mill.

Richard is interested in other facets of site operations and gladly pitched in to help Mason and Mike Murphy with the popular maple syrup program.



March 15, 9am – 11am Volunteer Breakfast

Come with family and friends on Saturday, March 15 to enjoy a bountiful breakfast in the Colvin Run barn, featuring maple syrup from Colvin Run's trees. Mason and Bob have graciously agreed to be our in-house chefs and cook French toast and buckwheat pancakes for the maple syrup.

Mike Henry will discuss the new Master Plan for Colvin Run Mill Historic Site. He will have aerial photos of the entire site, including the area on the other side of Rte. 7 where the stream and pumping system are located. The new master plan will give more consideration to this sometimes-overlooked section of the historic site. The planning process is just beginning, and we invite you to raise questions and make suggestions.

Friday March 28 9am-3:30pm
All Manner of Useful Goods: Household Necessities and Craftsmanship in Early America



All Manner of Useful Goods is presented by the Fairfax County Park Authority and George Mason University Department of History at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA.

Presentations, a costumed interpretation, tabletop exhibits and demonstrations examine various trades, how they operated, economic factors impacting American craft, and how utilitarian goods made of redware and stoneware, base metals, cooperage, basketry and woodenware were produced and marketed. **Advance Registration with special rate of \$45 for RMD volunteers required by March 21, 2008.** Email: susan.clark@fairfaxcounty.gov or phone (703)631-1429 or FAX (703) 631-8319.

March Birthdays



3 – Karen Hogan. Exploring medieval historical sites seems to be Karen's annual birthday present. This year's trip is to Turkey, learning more about the Ottoman empire.

4 – Terry Tomasulo. In February, seven of the Ryan girls-- Terry, her mother, sisters and some nieces spent their annual girls' week on a road trip to St. Pete Beach, visiting family members along the way, including Terry's granddaughter, Sydney, the newest "Ryan girl".

12 – Muriel Levin. Although she has traveled extensively, Muriel has never been to Israel. In March, Muriel is going to Israel with her daughter, son-in-law and two grandsons. The oldest grandson, Alex, is being bar mitzvahed there--by his own Rabbi who is leading the trip.

16 – Joe Pruden. Joe and Marilyn's son, Mike, returned safely from Iraq in January. They are happy to have him home with his family in North Carolina, preparing to move to his new duty post in South Carolina this summer. Joe appreciates everyone's thoughts and prayers for Mike's safe return while he was in Iraq.



Alice Bailey Rios

Bernard and Eunice Bailey's daughter Alice Bailey Rios recently passed away at the age of 83. The photo shows Alice as a young girl in front of the miller's house in May, 1936, when her father owned the mill.

Bernard Bailey was the last private owner of Colvin Run Mill. His dream of restoring the mill never materialized, but he was instrumental in having a tunnel built under Rte. 7 to provide a passage for the water to the mill.

Colvin Run Schoolhouse

Debbie Robison has a lengthy article about the Colvin Run Schoolhouse on Colvin Run Road at www.novahistory.org/ColvinRunSchool/Colvin_Run_Schoolhouse.html with underlines between Colvin_Run_Schoolhouse.

The current schoolhouse was built in 1908 after another school on the site burned down. The school operated until 1930 when the Fairfax County School Board closed one and two room schools and consolidated them into larger schools. Idylwood, Legato, Navy, Oak Grove, Lincolnia, Springfield and Popes Head Schools were also closed, and students from these schools were bussed to larger schools. Students from Colvin Run School went to Forestville School.

In 1931, the Colvin Run Community League purchased the Colvin Run School building and grounds. The Community League reorganized as the Colvin Run Citizen's Association for the purpose of transforming the school into a social hall.



Debbie's article details the use of the school from its inception to its current ownership by the Colvin Run Citizen's Association. The schoolhouse is now used for weekend dances with music from the 1930s to the 1950s, as well as a meeting hall during the week.

The article is in the site's files and on the bulletin board in the volunteer room.

Arti-Facts from Dawn Legato School Contributes to Temporary Exhibit



The Legato School recently lent the Colvin Run staff two desks, a large bell on a wood pedestal and photographs of the old school for a new temporary exhibit in the Colvin Run barn.

Legato School is a one-room school built in 1877 at a site near Fair Oaks Mall. It educated area children until 1930 when the Fairfax County School Board voted that "Legato be consolidated with Centreville at the latter place." The school then sat empty until 1939 when it was purchased at auction and converted into a home. About twenty years later, it was again abandoned.

In 1969, a committee established by the Fairfax County School Board began planning for the observance of the 100th anniversary of public education in Virginia. One of the goals of the committee was "to establish a school museum in a restored and refurbished building..."

The committee selected Legato School, purchased it for \$2,000 and moved it to the Fairfax County Court House grounds facing Chain Bridge Road in Fairfax City. Woodson High School students helped rebuild the school and conducted an archeological dig at the original site.

After the restoration, the Fairfax County Retired Educators made an agreement with the Fairfax County School Board to furnish the school with fixtures and artifacts appropriate to the Legato School in the late 19th century. Volunteers and members of civic organizations helped in this effort and now the school is open to the public several times during the year or by appointment.

How did the school come to be called Legato? No one knows for sure. It is possible that the school was named after a place called Legato where a local family ran a distillery. Someone recalled that a music itinerant suggested the school be named after the musical term legato to signify a smooth, even passage. If that is true, the road and distillery site were named after the school.

If you would like to read more about Legato School and the history of education in Fairfax County, please see the book, *Legato School, A Centennial Souvenir* in the Colvin Run Mill library.

From the Miller's Corner

Many thanks to Mike Murphy and Richard Thorpe who worked with Mason at the maple syrup boil down



programs in February. Their assistance was invaluable when 200 to 400 people showed up to see sap turned into syrup. Feature articles in the Washington Post and

several local papers encouraged lots of visitors to come and learn about the process of tapping maple trees and turning sap into syrup.

Mason harvested about 80 gallons of sap, enough to boil down for the three Sunday programs and produce maple syrup for the Volunteer Breakfast. Warm weather in January and February limited production. There were not many nights below freezing with the days above 40° -- the ideal weather for producing sap.

The last demonstration will be Sunday, March 2. Mike Murphy, along with Jim Hogan and Mike Toms will help with the program and are ready for lots of visitors at the final boil down. By early March, the maple trees should be budding, a sure sign of the end of tree-tapping.

On the Road with Bob and Marge

The Honey Creek Mill in Henry County, Indiana

This mill is on CR 525N in the village of Honey Creek near New Castle, Indiana. Since the mill is located on county roads, finding it is a bit tricky. The roads cut through the flat rich farming community and often the road changes names. However, keep going north and eventually you will arrive at the village of Honey Creek. Honey Creek has about six houses and the mill.



The mill, which does not appear safe to enter, is a two or three storied frame structure with a clerestory on top. It is attached to a grain elevator that appears to be keeping the old mill portion of the structure from collapsing.

This mill was never powered by water, and there is no evidence of any equipment inside the mill. The mill is located in a rich farming area so it might have been very prosperous at one time. Today, the village is also in a state of decline.

This mill and the grain elevator are illustrated in the newly published book entitled "After the Harvest", by photographer and writer, John and Lynn Bower.

The mission of Colvin Run Mill Historic Site is to maintain and interpret the historic buildings and collections at the site for the enrichment of Fairfax County residents and visitors as they relate to the themes of technology and community in 19th century rural northern Virginia.

A publication of Fairfax County, Virginia and Colvin Run Mill Historic Site www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/crm

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