Grist from the Mill

Colvin Run Mill Volunteer Newsletter **May 2007**

April Field Trip

On April 21, Mary Allen, Crystal Allison, Bob and Marjorie Lundegard, Kitty O'Hara, Joe Pruden, Mike and Martha Toms and Nick Yannarell met Mason Maddox at Ashland Mills where he buys the grain that he grinds at Colvin Run Mill. The owners opened the mill especially for us and Mason gave us a private tour of the mill's operation. We even peeked in the window of the adjacent Byrd mill that packages various mixes using grain ground at Ashland Mill.

We then went on to Richmond to view displays at the Tredegar Iron Works, including the waterwheel from the Crenshaw mill. We strolled Canal Walk to 12th Street where illustrated plaques recall the days of Oliver Evans and the large mills that made Richmond an important player in the flour industry.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Marjorie Lundegard Kitty O'Hara, Joe Pruden, Sam Swartz. and Nick Yannarell. They were recently recognized at the Volunteer Fairfax breakfast for their hours of volunteer service last year. Marjorie and Nick contributed over 500 hours and Kitty, Joe and Sam volunteered over 250 hours. Thank you!

Saturday, June 9
R.M.D. Volunteer Orientation

All new and seasoned Resource Management Division volunteers are invited to attend the Volunteer Orientation on Saturday, June 9th at Hidden Oaks Nature Center from 9:30-11:30am.

Spend an engaging morning learning about the services and unique resources of the Fairfax County Park Authority, the Resource Management Division, and your important role as a volunteer. RSVP by June 6th to Erin Chernisky erin.chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov 703-324-8750

What's Buzzin'

Toni Burnham, who with MaryEllen Kirkpatrick installed four new bee colonies at Colvin Run Mill in March, submitted the following article to the ***This I Believe*** series on public broadcasting radio and posted it on her blog site *City Bees*. It explains her passion for these wonderful creatures and her relationship to them.

I Believe in Living Sunlight

Today I checked my hives after days of hard wind and rain. A honeybee pulled out a young, deformed worker, and dropped her a few yards away. The sick bee moved a little, but had no hope to live. Her sister took no time for pity. I did, but couldn't know whether a short tap from my toe would end her misery or shorten her only moment of sunshine. So it is with bees.

I'm a hobbyist beekeeper, but my companions are a theme of my days. I speak to youth groups, summer camps, and festivals about the miracle and importance of honeybees — how they can plug a jaded urbanite into a world of sun, rain, and blossom. Kids and adults respond with wonder. The bees are the living embodiment of sunshine, dependent on plants and their blooms to flourish, a need which is returned by the wild plants — as well as crops — that depend on pollinators for another generation of seeds and flowers.

In the city, I live like a yuppie but think like a farmer. I

know the temperatures of the past 6 months and the forecast for this week. I know how much rain we've had, and how much we need. Since the bees arrived, I've smelled the blanket of sweetness that the linden trees lay down in June. Have these been extra-fragrant years, or did I just never notice before?

The bees are Tinkerbell vegetarians, less than 1 inch long and hanging from borrowed-looking wings. You can see gold sunshine through their bodies, as if the sweetness of honey starts inside. Being a ham-handed mammal pawing through the delicate home of 50,000 bees has underscored the clumsy truth about power: it's impossible not to kill or injure on the way to staving off disease and starvation. I'm wrong from time to time about how to fight those foes. Size and strength are no help in fixing my mistakes, made by clumsy fingers 20 times the size of any bee, by limits on what I can see and understand about their lives.

Bees live in tight family communities, something many of us crave. Workers that stow honey in May will never meet the December sisters who eat it. Yet the bees are ruthless: the ill are cast out, and the old try to die outside the hive. They can't change how they live, even with the new illnesses and parasites that humans brought. Paradoxically, they need us more, since they can't survive alone. We need them more, too, as other pollinators disappear with their habitats.

Living with honeybees, I see the life force of sunlight streaming through our lives, in sweetness and danger. I don't know if the bees and I are within the cascade of warmth, or if it is in us. But I know we are together just the same, and our very different worlds will have their stories written in the same light.

May Birthdays

12 -- Kerry Roy. Kerry, who works in the general store, is a proud auntie several times over with a new niece in February and another due in August. Kerry loves children and has a job this summer working with 4-year-olds at a day camp. In mid-August, she and husband Michael plan to travel cross-country. We'll welcome her back in the fall.

26 – Jennifer Kalletta. Jennifer is enjoying being a new aunt and her niecey is perfect. She is round, soft, and can boast of many dimples. This year will be Jennifer's golden birthday (26 on 26) so fantastic and magical things are sure to occur.

Arti-Facts from Dawn

When Could You Get That?

The new exhibit in the Colvin Run General Store features items you might have bought at the c. 1900 store, including a camera, a dog biscuit box, a metal box for tea bags, a roll of toilet paper, a bar of manufactured soap and an animal crackers box.

Are you fond of tea? A patent for a "tea leaf holder" (tea bag) was granted as early as 1903. Coffee shop merchant Thomas Sullivan used similar little bags to ship tea samples. As the story goes, recipients of the bags thought that the tea was intended to be brewed by placing the bags in their cups and pouring hot water over them.

Commercial soapmaking has been conducted for centuries, but did you know that Ivory soap was first marketed in 1879 by the Procter and Gamble Company? The soap floats because a workman accidentally left on a soap machine, incorporating air into the soap and making it float.

You may have purchased a package of Animal Crackers just yesterday, but Shirley Temple sang about animal crackers in her soup a long time ago. These treats began in England as animal-shaped biscuits that were later called Barnum's Animals to coincide with the 1889 visit of P. T. Barnum's circus. The forerunner of Nabisco, the National Biscuit Co, put them on American store shelves in 1902. The company also designed the familiar circus box and added a string handle so it could be hung on Christmas trees.

Roll toilet paper was first marketed by the Scott brothers who started their company in 1879, specializing in toilet paper. At first they purchased paper and tissue from other companies and cut, rolled and packaged the paper for private labels. When one of the sons joined the company, he encouraged his father and uncle to use the Scott name. In 1910, Scott began making their own perforated toilet paper.

Got a match? If the year were 1827 you could say, "Yes." That's when English chemist and apothecary (who prepared drugs for sale), John Walker, began making the first friction matches. He called them Congreves in honor of a British weapon, but he did not patent the design. Samuel Jones marketed the Congreves under the name Lucifers. They had a bad burning odor, but they were popular with smokers. An odorless match was invented in 1830, but it was poisonous. In 1910, the Diamond Match Company patented the first nonpoisonous match in the United States.

Biscuits made especially for dogs were apparently an accidental invention. In a London butcher shop of the late 1800s, a baker, trying to expand his business, created a new biscuit recipe. He thought the biscuits tasted terrible. However, his dog really liked them. So, he made the biscuits in the shape of a bone and marketed them to pet owners who quickly bought them up. In 1908, the F. H. Bennett Biscuit Company started selling the biscuits in America under the name Malatoid and received a patent for the biscuits in 1911. The name was changed to Milkbone in 1915 to inform the public that milk was a main ingredient.

Some type of camera has been in use since the early 1800s. George Eastman patented the Kodak roll-film camera in 1888. Our Brownie camera first made its appearance in 1901. Kodak marketed the Brownie to children, naming it after popular elf-like characters created by Palmer Cox.

"There is nothing new under the sun" proves itself with this exhibit. Many items that we buy today have their roots in the early 20th century or even earlier.

From the Miller's Corner

Mason and Mike Murphy began the grinding season by grinding duck food on April 22 – just in time for gorgeous spring weather. The new auxiliary pump by the flume kept the water level high enough to grind from 1pm to 3pm. Mason will make a trip to Ashland Mills soon to stock up on wheat and corn to process into food products.

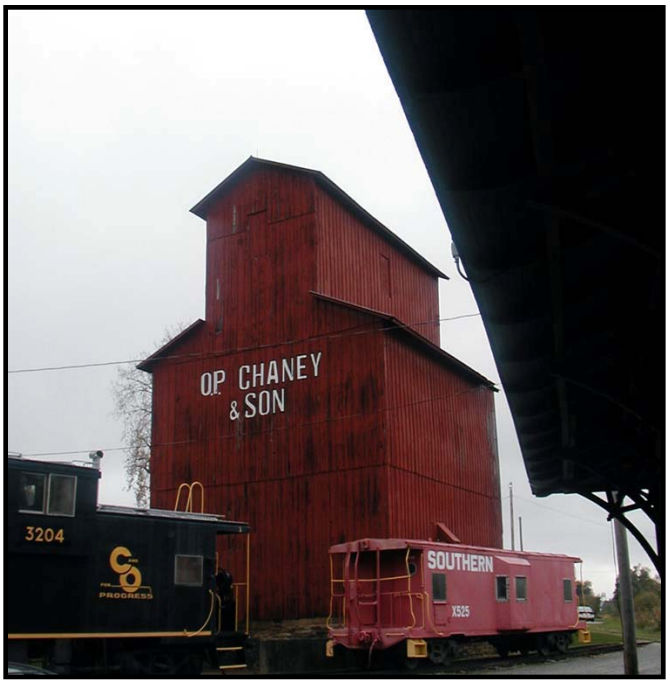
A new pumping system is in the process of being installed at the old pump site on the other side of Rte. 7. The walls by the new pump will be stabilized with a gabion basket -- large rocks enclosed with a wire mesh frame – as we have by the holding pond on the mill side of Rte. 7. This will help prevent the soil being washed away in any future flooding.

Mason has also been busy giving presentations at local organizations about early Virginia milling and the history of Colvin Run Mill. His latest presentation was at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University.

On the Road with Bob and Marge

O. P. CHANEY MILL IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY, OHIO

This mill is located in the town of Canal Winchester on Oak Street adjacent to the Railroad Station.



The three-to-four-storied frame structure was built in 1880 as a flour mill and has been restored by the Historical Society. It is painted bright red with O. P. Chaney & Son painted in white letters on one end of the building. The metal roof has a large cupola. There are no windows in the structure today. There is a small brick addition to one side of the mill. There was a porch overhang where the loaded grain wagons pulled up to

have the grain weighed and dumped. This mill was never water powered. Electricity has been added to the building.

In this historical area is a restored railroad station where tickets were sold. There is also an old brick school house that has been moved to this area. This school house was called the #8 Prentice School. Also included in this historic area are several signs honoring people from this area. The musical composer Oley Speaks was born here in 1874 and died in 1948. Canals were important to this area at one time and you can see the footprints of the old canals.

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

Site Administrator:
Mike Henry
Asst Site Administrator:
Ann Korzeniewski
Volunteer Coordinator/
Newsletter Editor:
Mary Allen
Collections Coordinator:
Dawn Kehrer
Programs Coordinator:
Jennifer Blackwood
Miller:
Mason Maddox

For reasonable ADA accommodations, call Gary Logue 703-324-8727 or TTY703-803-3354