

Grist from the Mill



Colvin Run Mill Volunteer Newsletter

July 2008



Volunteer Dinner Thanks

Many thanks to all the Colvin Run Mill staff and volunteers who made the volunteer dinner a memorable occasion. Dawn's slide show of all the volunteers in action through the year was a reminder of all you accomplished and how we depend on your support in so many ways.

Distinguished Volunteers

Jim & Joanne Stapleton

Congratulations to Jim and Joanne Stapleton – Colvin Run Mill's 2008 Distinguished Volunteers.



For 17 years, Jim and Joanne have set up and run a train display for our holiday visitors. It was easy the first year when they lived in Herndon. Jim just packed their vans full of trains, tracks, trees, wires, switches and accessories, and hauled them to the mill for a day-long program. Then, they moved to Purcellville – to have more room for the trains of course. Still, they both worked in Reston, so it was just a little detour.

The train display was so popular that after a couple of years, we expanded it to a weekend program and the Stapletons added Thomas Tank. Members of their model train club pitched in to help with setting up --which takes about 4 hours--monitoring the operation and taking down the display.

Along the way, Joanne retired and members of the train club moved. Still, Jim and Joanne come each December, their cars loaded with all the ingredients for a happy holiday event. They enjoy the excitement of all the big and little kids, some seeing their first display, others reliving a traditional memory. Then, they take it all down, load it into their cars and disappear until the next Christmas when, magically, they appear again.

Jim and Joanne are not just a seasonal phenomenon, they are Distinguished Volunteers.

Volunteers of the Year

Ken Asher & Iris Schwartz

Ken Asher works in the Information Technology field and finds earlier technologies intriguing. Giving tours of the mill would be a good way to learn more and share



his interest. When he came to inquire about volunteering, he brought his friend Iris Schwartz along for the ride. She did not share the technology bug, but was curious about volunteer

opportunities at the mill – obviously a great prospective volunteer.

Iris has a degree in English and Journalism. She wasn't so sure about technology and giving mill tours, but was happy to help with programs and gardening.

After about a year, Iris realized that she didn't need an engineering degree to lead tours of the mill and learned to be a mill docent. Since then, Ken & Iris have been a versatile Sunday



team. Along the way, they decided to become an official team and were married at the Lee-Fendell House in Alexandria.

Ken & Iris could not attend the Volunteer Dinner because of their newest team adventure. Ken's friend told him of a six-month position available in Marlow, England on the River Thames. Ken was interested, but only if there was a position for Iris. That was not a problem. By June 2, Ken and Iris had packed their bags and headed off to work at Spinvox, an American company that captures spoken words and spits them out as text context. Iris writes a blog of their adventures in the British Isles, and, inspired by Bob & Marge, she will feature a section just for mills.



Special Thanks

A special thanks to the following volunteers who have exceeded the annual 72 hours that we request

100 hours	Lee Boyd, Toni Burnham, Jim Hogan, Harriet Hunt, Mike Murphy, Andy Procko, Bridget Sullivan, Richard Thorpe, Bing Tseng
200 hours	Genie Davis, Muriel Levin, Bob Lundegard, Joe Pruden
300 hours	Mike Moran, Kitty O'Hara, Sam Swartz
500 hours	Marjorie Lundegard, Nick Yannarell



Certificates and Pins

Brian Kendell received his **one year certificate** and Colvin Run Mill pin. Brian works on Saturdays and helps with programs – like ice cream making – as well as giving tours.

Congratulations to the following volunteers who have worked with us through thick and thin for many years. We hope they will continue for many more.

Kitty O'Hara -- 5 year pin
Muriel Levin -- 10 year pin
Andy Procko -- 15 year pin.

Country Loaf from Volunteer Dinner



Joe Beene, husband of Joyce Beene President of the Northern Virginia Carvers, brought a delicious bread to the Volunteer Dinner. He graciously supplied the recipe with the note that he used Colvin Run Mill whole wheat flour in the recipe.

We have copies of this "bread in a basket" recipe in the volunteer room if you would like to duplicate this treat at home.

July Birthdays

12 – Kitty O'Hara.

Kitty will celebrate her birthday with friends camping comfortably in a cabin near the

Blue Ridge Mountains. She will hone her kayaking and hiking skills in preparation for a fall trip to Yellowstone Park and the Grand Tetons with Terry Tomasulo. Kitty also attended both the Small Museum Association Conference and the Virginia Museum Association Conference this year.



13 – Harriet Hunt. Harriet will celebrate her birthday with two special dinners with family members. On her birthday, she hopes to begin training as a volunteer in the Bird House at the National Zoo, pending her acceptance as a docent. Harriet already volunteers at the Daughters of the American Revolution Headquarters in Washington, D.C. as a museum docent one or two Saturdays a month, in addition to her duties at the Colvin Run General Store.

16 – Mike Murphy. Mike and his wife Ruth have always wanted to take an African safari and decided this was the year. They have just returned from the best trip of their life, as Mike described it. Hopefully, Mike will share some of his experience in the volunteer newsletter. For now, he is back home and volunteering as the miller's dusty on Sundays.

17 – Ann Korzeniewski. Ann is celebrating her birthday the whole month of July by taking every Thursday off -- to be sure that she doesn't forget and work on her birthday. Ann did celebrate in June by taking her mother on her first cruise – out of Baltimore to Bermuda. Hesitant at first, her mom is now asking when the next cruise is – and can it be a longer one.

Artifacts from Dawn More Parlor Music

Continuing a theme of “Music in the Parlor,” I have placed a ukelin (pronounced you'-ka-lin) and a Chickering Harp in the parlor exhibit in the Miller's House. These instruments are on loan to us from Colvin Run Mill Volunteer, Mary Dettra. The zither is a familiar instrument, but the ukelin may not be as well known.

Both instruments are in the broad family tree of “fretless zithers.” The zither's basic structure is a wooden sound box with strings stretched over a resonating chamber but not extended beyond it. Unlike the violin or guitar, zithers have no necks and are plucked with fingers or struck with wooden mallets. They date back at least to 2000 B.C. when ancient Greeks and Egyptians used similar instruments.



Let's talk about the ukelin first. It combines two sets of strings, one group tuned to the scale of C, plus four groups of four strings, each tuned to a chord. The ukelin is placed on a table with the larger end closer to the performer. While the right hand plays the melody on the treble strings with a violin bow, the left hand plays the accompanying chords on the bass strings using fingers or a pick. (Sounds like you need both sides of your brain to play this one). Ukelins were made from the early 1920s to

1965 and were usually sold by door-to-door salesmen, often on a time-payment plan. They were intended to be played at home by persons without a formal musical education – like the Millard family -- although we have no record of anyone in the family owning a ukelin.

Mary Dettra dates her ukelin to the early 1900s. It was bought by her family from a door-to-door salesman. John Dettra says it is not hard to play—it's like playing a piano.



The Chickering Harp was made by Oscar Schmidt, Inc. in New Jersey and patented in 1894. It is a zither since it does not have the chord bars that are on autoharps. John & Mary Dettra don't know why the label says Chickering Harp.

The Chickering Piano Company was well known, but why their company name is on a zither made by Oscar Schmidt is a mystery. The Oscar Schmidt Company in Illinois still manufactures stringed instruments.

Information about the ukelin and Chickering Harp is in the Room Guide on the windowsill of the parlor room exhibit.

Note from the Editor

The Volunteer Dinner was even more memorable for me, since it is the last event that I will host before my retirement on July 4.



I never imagined 20 years ago when I inquired about volunteering at the mill, how my simple quest would evolve. I am indeed a lucky person to have been able to work and share the days with such interesting and caring people.

I am happy to have more time to spend at our new vacation home on the Northern Neck of Virginia, but I will miss everyone. The only solution is for you all to visit and spend some time with us on the Rivah.

On the Road with Bob and Marge White Star Restaurant, Staunton, VA

White Star Mills was formed in 1890 by four gentlemen—Isaac Witz, Captain Charles A. Holt, Andrew Boling, and M. Kivlighan.. The objective of the group was to construct buildings with modern machinery to manufacture flour from the locally grown wheat. When the supply of locally grown wheat was

insufficient, wheat was purchased from northern Ohio. In 1892, Mr. Bowling withdrew from the partnership.



The White Star Mill was built in 1892 and was steam powered. Twenty to thirty-five people worked around the clock six days a week to produce 500 barrels of flour daily. The mill produced three brands of flour — Melrose, White Star and New Process -- that were sold in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The mill was equipped to receive wheat direct from the combine. For a fee of five cents per bushel, the wheat was then placed under a drying process capable of drying about 300 bushels of grain per hour. After the drying process, the grain was kept free of moisture in huge storage bins.

In 1946, electricity was added and new machinery installed that could manufacture 1,000 barrels of flour per day. Around 1963, due to rigid pure food laws, the threat of fire, and competition, the mill ceased the manufacture of flour. The owners sold the mill, and the new owners operated the mill for three more years before ceasing operations in 1966.

In 1979, Timothy J. Gaglio bought the old vacant flour mill and converted the lower floor of the three-storied brick structure into a restaurant. The floor had to be replaced and all of the milling equipment removed. The four-foot-thick limestone foundation walls were reinforced and water lines were added for the bar and kitchen. Gaglio installed a thirty-foot long solid stone

bar with a four-inch thick bluestone slate top. A chestnut beam became a foot rest at the base of the bar. The mill had a sprinkler system that had been installed in 1890. Gaglio painted the pipes bright red. He also had eight stained glass windows made that depicted the story of wheat from the field to the mill, and to the bread-making process. However, due to the lack of business, the restaurant closed in 1992. Since 1981, three families have operated the restaurant—the Gaglio family, the Yoder family, and the Keiser family

Today, there is a smaller operating restaurant in the old White Star Mill complex in Staunton, VA. that serves dinner and a special Sunday brunch. Mr. J. B. Hanger has operated the restaurant for over fifteen years. This is a delightful place to spend some time even if you are not able to enjoy the special food prepared at the restaurant.

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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