

GRIST FROM THE MILL

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

COLVIN RUN MILL
HISTORIC SITE

December 2009

Wild For Parks (and volunteers, too)!

The 2009 Elly Doyle Park Service Award event was held November 20 at The Waterford in Fairfax. Two Colvin Run Mill volunteers were among the 35 honorees.

The program's safari theme was **Go Wild For Parks** and **Rich Thorpe** dressed the part. Pictured below receiving his plaque from Harry Glasgow, Vice President of the Park Authority Board and Master of Ceremonies for the awards, Rich looks like he's just stumbled upon Dr. Livingstone!

Kidding aside, Rich received Special Recognition for his dedication to milling operations and education at our site. Not only does he dress out and help demonstrate the mill in action, he designed and built a hand-crank scale model of the mill's waterwheel, gears and grinding stone that allows young students on field trips to see the interconnectedness of the mill's power train.



Photo by Don Sweeney, FCPA

Genie Davis, storekeeper extraordinaire, was honored as one of the Park Authority's Outstanding Volunteers. She is the friendly face who greets visitors on Mondays in the Colvin Run General Store.

Genie has donated 1,000 service hours to our site since 2004, continuing her family's connection to the mill after the death of her husband, Bob, who was a long-time docent here.



Genie and Rich were previously honored as the 2009 Colvin Run Mill Distinguished Volunteer and Volunteer of the Year.

We're *wild* about our volunteers!



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WEEKENDS IN DECEMBER:

HOLIDAY PROGRAMS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



Children's Holiday Shopping Colvin Run General Store

Saturday, 12/5, 10am-2pm
Sunday 12/6, noon-4pm
Monday, 12/7, 1-4pm

Country Christmas with Santa in the Mill

Saturday, 12/12, 3-6pm
\$6 per person, ages 3 to 93

Model Train Display The Barn at Colvin Run Mill

Saturday, 12/19, 11-4pm
Sunday, 12/20, 11-4pm
FREE



Jennifer Blackwood is Heading South



Saturday, December 26, will be Jennifer Blackwood's last day at Colvin Run Mill. She is retiring and, with husband William and dachshunds Sage & Tucker, heading south to live most of the year in Melbourne, Florida.

Jennifer started her career with the Park Authority in the old Division of Historic Preservation's special events section. She joined the mill staff more than 10 years ago when she took the position as the site's programmer.

Over the years, Jennifer has served innumerable teas for young ladies, created programs for hundreds of Girl Scouts and taught thousands of elementary students on field trips.

She has designed countless publicity flyers and was instrumental in designing the *Colvin Run Mill Historic Site Guidebook*.

She is a Master Gardener and has worked tirelessly in the flower

beds to beautify the site. And she brought years of retail experience to the Colvin Run General Store operations.

Lots of work and lots of memories. We will all miss Jennifer's enthusiasm and artistry.



Please wish her well in her new endeavors when you see her this month.

On the Road with Mike & Martha Toms



Two traveling millers sent this report back in October.

We enjoyed our stay in Alabama. We were there for a month visiting various locations with our friends from up north.

One day, we stopped at Chandler Milling and Farm in Moundville, AL. It is a hammer mill which grinds wheat, corn, stalks and leaves and mixes other seed into livestock feed.

The mill is a gritty place with bags of animal feed stacked inside all around

various pieces of dusty machinery. Their biggest product is pellets used to attract and feed deer at various hunting camps around Alabama. Chandler Milling also has a farm where they grow their own grain.

We spoke with 84-year-old Bill Chandler who said that he used to work at his father's gristmill up the street. He remembers they used "rocks" to grind grain.

I explained that I was a volunteer at

Colvin Run Mill in Virginia and that our mill uses stones to grind grain. He asked if we "pick the rocks." I have never heard that term before, but immediately figured out that he was talking about dressing the stones. He said they hired a black man to "pick the rocks" for their miller.



Mike Toms, left, talks with Bill Chandler.





Recent Donations to the Mill

ARTI-FACTS

by Dawn Kehrer

In November, Milton Chamberlain (great-grandson of general store owner Mark Cockrill) and Christine Thompson (granddaughter of Lulu Millard Thompson) visited the site separately and each donated several photos and documents important to the mill's history.

Mr. Chamberlain gave photographs of the mill, his great-grandfather and the general store. He also gave newspaper clippings of Mark Cockrill's obituary and memorials to Mark's wife Maud.

Original photos will be accessioned into the archives at the Collections Branch located at Eleanor C. Lawrence Park. I have scanned all the items and copies of originals will be placed in the files.

Ms. Thompson gave us two Millard genealogies and a research paper. One

genealogy of the Millards begins tracing the Millard family that came to Massachusetts before 1650 and ends with family members born in the early 1800s. An attachment to one of the papers outlines directly Addison Millard's forefathers, including his father Samuel and grandfather Peter.

The research paper Ms. Thompson gave is "*Where the Persimmon Tree Once Stood: The History of 1032 Towlston Road*," written by several Langley High School students in 1989. This paper contains information about the Thompson family. Lulu Millard married John Thompson and 1032 Towlston Road was the address of her home.

These papers are in the Millard file drawer on the second floor of the miller's house if you would like to look at them.

December Birthdays



- 3 Frank Boucher
- 15 Mason Maddox
- 16 Nick Yannarell
- 23 Allison Hicks

Look closely at the photo below. Notice the metal roof on the mill, the short chimney, the painted "1794" sign above the loading door and the broken window pane.

Some things change; some things don't.

This photo, previously unknown to us, shows the mill in 1938.

To the left of the mill is a drying shed and in front is a Chicago Scale with adjacent wooden platform for weighing vehicles.

Posed in front of the mill are 10 gentlemen — interesting-looking, but unknown.

Who are they? What have they been doing? Why are they holding a giant branch?

We've been making up stories about these guys for weeks!





COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE

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www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/crm



Mike Toms, Colvin Run Mill volunteer



The mission of Colvin Run Mill Historic Site is to maintain and interpret its historic buildings and collections 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.

Manager: Mike Henry

Assistant Manager/Newsletter Editor: Ann Korzeniewski

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Programs, Volunteer Scheduling & Sales: Jennifer Blackwood

General Store Operations & Programs: Terry Tomasulo

Miller's Assistant: Kim Whitacre

Jill of All Trades: Pam Gennari