



TrueGrist

News from the Friends of Peirce Mill

Coming Up at Peirce Mill

Through October:

Mill open
Fridays, Saturdays
and Sundays,
10am – 4pm.

Mill grinds corn
second and fourth
Saturdays.

Please check website
(friendsofpeircemill.org)
to confirm dates
and times
for the events below.

October 12, 2019:
Heritage Day

January 2020:
Cider Tasting
(members only)

March 2020:
Morris Dancers
Welcome Spring

April 2020
Herring Heroes
Family activity



Capital Campaign Reaches Half-Way Mark

The Friends of Peirce Mill is pleased to announce that generous supporters have donated or pledged more than half of the \$300,000 sought for the completion of the mill's water-powered grain processing system.

"We're thrilled to reach this point in the campaign so quickly," said Nathan Marzoli, president of the board. "This past winter, we completed a study to estimate the cost of the restoration, and we have been working quietly lining up donors."

A fully restored Peirce Mill will showcase one of the few working examples of the revolutionary automated system perfected by American inventor Oliver Evans, who received the country's third patent for his creation. The system significantly reduced the need for manual labor and dramatically improved productivity.

Its operation at the mill will be a vivid illustration of technological innovation and transformation, and be particularly instructive for

young people interested in engineering and related fields. The initial restoration phase, completed in 2011, allowed the millstones to grind grain again, and included installation of a pumping system and extensive structural improvements. The final

phase, funded by the capital campaign, will repair the sifting apparatus and the grain elevators that form the heart of the Evans system. We will also modernize the second floor interior of the Peirce Barn so it can serve as a comfortable space for our staff and activities.



Heritage Day: October 12

The mill's biggest annual event will take place Saturday, October 12, from 10:00-4:00 pm. Back again this year is Dr. Stonestreet, the 19th century physician from Rockville who will demonstrate medical procedures to treat accidents at the mill. Also returning is Ghanaian master weaver Chapuchi Bobbo Ahiagble, who will show West African strip cloth weaving, including the making of the colorful, striking "Kente" cloth. And, making up for the July square dance cancelled due to excessive heat, we will hold a mini-dance at 2:00 pm in what should be nice autumn weather.

Cover Crops at the Orchard



Have you noticed the colorful array of flowers, grasses, and other plants in the Peirce orchard? Manager Tim Makepeace is applying 21st century agricultural science to grow tasty heirloom apples and pears.

The vegetation is known as a cover crop and it is a soil improvement technique that is becoming more popular as farmers are discovering the power of plant diversity and its economic and environmental benefits. Composting of the plant material on site builds organic matter and nutrients, as well as increasing the ability of the soil to infiltrate and hold water.

“Having healthy soil is a sure way to have healthy fruit trees,” says Tim. “Planting legumes, broadleaves, brassicas, grasses, as well as a variety of flowers (in

order to attract beneficial insects and birds), creates an environment where the plants work symbiotically with each other by sharing nutrients and water.”

Tim has benefitted from the expertise of Keith Burns, co-owner of the Green Cover Seed company in Nebraska, who has developed a widely-utilized online tool for crop selection. According to Burns, recent research has shown that in a healthy soil ecosystem the majority of microbes live by feeding on secretions from plant roots. Like animals, plants need a balanced diverse diet including carbohydrates, fats, protein, and minerals.

Plant roots release a nutrient-rich broth that leaks into the surrounding soil. Plants leak as much as 40 percent of their energy, and each plant species has a unique chemical composition. Warm-season grasses release sugar that provides a huge amount of energy to soil microbes. Legumes are high in amino acids, which microbes can use to produce protein. An added bonus of species diversity in any context is that a variety of plant types are better at sequestering carbon, and thereby slowing down climate change.



FOPM board member and local historian John DeFerrari, who writes the Streets of Washington blog, is an indefatigable online sleuth who has found many lost or forgotten images of the mill. His new find, the postcard photo above, is postmarked 1920.

The Friends of Peirce Mill work in partnership with the National Park Service to preserve this historically significant example of early American industry. Located in Rock Creek National Park, the water-power flour mill offers educational experiences to all generations.

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A young artist sketches at the mill's waterfall during the Art Barn reunion.



Mill Hosts Art Barn Reunion

We held our first Art Barn reunion and meet-up on a beautiful Saturday this past May, co-sponsored with the Washington Studio School. The barn was a local exhibit and teaching center from the 1970s to the 1990s, and our reunion attracted alumni, new landscape painters, and passers-by. A number of artists brought their own art supplies or borrowed colored pencils, oil pastels, and watercolors to produce renderings of the mill. Artists could also mark their work with a special Art Barn stamp. A short slide show in the barn reminded visitors about the long history of artists at Peirce Mill,

which has been a popular subject since the 19th century.

Our education director, Angela Kramer (who organized the Art Barn reunion, too) reports that 441 young students from area schools visited the mill this spring – a record number! Among the groups were second graders from the Harriet Tubman Elementary School in Columbia Heights, who were brought to the mill on buses paid for by the National Park Foundation grant for transporting students from low-income schools.

New Trees at the Meadow

Three hundred years of human presence hasn't been kind to the Rock Creek valley ecosystem. Farming and lumber removal, followed by plantings of non-native species, has meant that the lush "green space" you see today is deceptive. It lacks the diversity of wildflowers, shrubs, and trees that characterize an Eastern forest.

The Friends of Peirce Mill, in partnership with the National Park Service, Casey Trees, and the Rock Creek Conservancy, have undertaken a multi-year effort to restore the wooded areas and meadows surrounding the mill complex. The latest chapter was a large tree planting by Casey Trees in the meadow above the orchard, and at selected sites around the mill yard. All in all, 129 new trees were planted last April. Funding was provided by the DC Department of Energy and the Environment.

In June, volunteers from the Deloitte company's Washington DC office helped remove invasive species from the meadow and moved a large amount of dead bamboo stalks to the edge of the area, allowing native and planted species more room to grow. The company is also donating \$500 to support new plantings. Many thanks to

Julia Bernier and all others who participated in these two spring activities.



Saturday Food Service at the Mill

Saturday visitors this summer may have seen the tent next to the barn featuring sandwiches, drinks, and snacks for sale by park concessionaire Guest Services Inc. This is a new program that we hope to expand next year.

Your annual membership can make a difference! Let's keep Peirce Mill running for another 200 years!

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|---|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Millwright | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Master Millwright | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Miller | \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Isaac Peirce Society | \$1000 |

Other donation: \$ _____

Name _____

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Make checks payable to Friends of Peirce Mill and send to 2039 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Apt. 103, Wash. DC 20009

For more information, email us at: info@peircemillfriends.org or call: 202-248-1505

Or join and pay by credit card at www.friendsofpeircemill.org

The Friends of Peirce Mill, Inc. is a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia. It has been recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.



Friends of Peirce Mill
2039 New Hampshire Ave. NW,
Apt. 103
Washington, DC 20009