

Milling About

News from the Friends of Peirce Mill

Fall 2005/Winter 2006



Annual Meeting of the Friends of Peirce Mill

We tried something different for this year's annual meeting. Typically, very few from among the general membership attend these meetings, at which we report on our activities over the past year and elect a board for the coming year. However, we felt that our loyal dues-paying members should at least have the opportunity to take part in some more convenient way, if they desired to do so. Hence our letter or email of October 28 inviting you to the meeting, and enclosing a ballot listing board nominees (together with bios on each person) that could be voted on and returned by regular or email if you did not plan to attend. A report on the year's activities was also enclosed. The mailing went out to 77 households (111 total members), 46 by email and 31 by regular mail.

The annual meeting was held on November 19, 2005 at the home of Philip Gaudette. All current board members were present; there were no attendees from among the general membership. Activities during the past year were reviewed, including reports on fund-raising, our financial status, membership, archives and historical research, and the new balloting procedures. [Members should now be fully informed on Friends activities as this edition of *Milling About* will update them on events since the annual report written in October.] Our Secretary, Sheila Ploger, reported that 15 members sent completed ballots, all endorsing the proposed slate of candidates. Attendees at the meeting then voted to elect the following slate of board



This shows what Rock Creek can do to the mill after a heavy rain. Photo taken on October 8, 2005.

members for the coming year: Richard Abbott (President), Steve Dryden (Vice President), Sheila Ploger (Secretary/Treasurer), Philip Gaudette, David Lyman, Gene Hines, Tom Blackburn, and Ken Faulstich. Ken is a new member; a brief bio on him appears below.

Win some, lose some

Mixed news on the fund-raising front since our last newsletter. We were not awarded the \$272,000 Save America's Treasures grant we had such high hopes for. The extensive proposal developed by Steve Dryden was well regarded but we were not one of the two grants that went to D.C. applicants. We are re-assessing our strategy for applying this year. It turns out that of the \$50 million in the program, half of the

funds were already earmarked by members of Congress before the evaluation of applications took place. The D.C. grants were for preservation of documents by the American Institute of Architects and the Society of Cincinnati. It appears from the comments of evaluators that more importance is placed on removing threats to historical property rather than on restoration. Ironically, the work we have carried out to date on the internal structure of the mill largely removed the threat to the building.

On the positive side, we received two \$50,000 grants, one from the Marpat Foundation and the other from the 1772 Foundation. The Marpat grant is the third from this organization since 2000, making a total of \$77,500 received from them. The grant from the 1772 Foundation, a Connecticut-



Meet your board: David Lyman

Mr. Lyman joined the Friends of Peirce Mill in 1999 and serves as Business Manager. He has developed grant request proposals as well as preparing the financial and tax returns for the Friends. He grew up in northern New Jersey, graduated from Lehigh University and Stevens Institute of Technology and went on to serve with the Army in the Korean conflict. After working in the electric utility field, he pursued an engineering career with IBM, working in New York and Washington where he specialized in systems design, cost benefit analysis and program risk assessment. Mr. Lyman is a docent at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. He mentors high school students as well as volunteering at a men's Alzheimer's group. Hobbies include hiking, Tai Chi, and international travel. Based on experiences he has had as both a tutor and mentor, he looks forward to the time when a restored, operating Peirce Mill can fulfill its role as a outstanding resource for introducing school children to early history of the country when water-power played a key role in economic development.

based foundation specializing in historic preservation, was the first one from them. We used a portion of these funds as a match for the \$50,000 two-year matching grant from the Kiplinger Foundation announced in the last edition of *Milling About*. The Friends were also notified of a \$30,000 grant from the DC Department of Transportation under a "Transportation Enhancement" program. The funds were to be used to plan measures to improve drainage on the west front of the mill and a handicap access path to the mill front door. (See later developments on this grant below under "The Big Picture".)

With these grants, we can report that to date we have raised a total of \$544,000, of which \$528,000 was in the form of cash grants or pledges, and \$16,000 was the value of in-kind donations of services. This brings us over half-way to our \$1 million goal, but if we are to meet our target completion date of fall 2007, we have to raise the additional money over the next 12 to 18 months. This calls for a different strategy, one that involves Federal funds (see below).

The Friends visit the Hill

As noted above, we must raise another \$500,000 during this year and next if we are to complete the project on

schedule by the fall of 2007. While we know that we can count on several of our loyal foundations to come through again with grants, it seems clear that this will not be enough. For that reason, we are turning to the Federal government for support – support that is long overdue. To date, less than 10% of the amount raised has come from the government in the form of Challenge Grants from the National Park Service, yet the mill is in a National Park. So on February 17, several Friends board members did a little lobbying on Capitol Hill. [We were not very comfortable with that label – but this was lobbying for a public cause, not a private one!] The strategy we're pursuing is to seek earmarking of \$250,000 for our project in the FY2007 DC Appropriations Bill. A little research revealed the fact that there were 68 earmarks totaling over \$29 million in the FY 2006 bill, and many of these were for funding of projects no more significant to DC than the restoration of Peirce Mill. We're told that it is possible there will be an appropriation for the mill restoration in the National Park Service budget for FY2012, but even if in fact it were made it would come much too late for our project. It is clear that the project does not compete well in the NPS budgeting process, given the under-funding of maintenance costs in National Parks nationwide.

Richard Abbott and Ken Faulstich visited the offices of Senators Brownback and Landrieu, the majority and minority leaders respectively of the Senate DC Appropriations Subcommittee, dropping off copies of Appropriations Requests already submitted to them by email, along with packets of information on the mill and the Friends. Steve Dryden then joined Richard and Ken for a scheduled meeting at the offices of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton. Though she is a non-voting member of Congress, her support at the right moment and in the right places on the House side is essential to our cause. We made a strong case for Ms. Norton's support by pointing out that our relationship with the National Park Service/Rock Creek Park should be an outstanding example of a public-private partnership serving the community, yet the Federal government has not done its part.

The Big Picture

On February 6, Tom Blackburn, Steve Dryden, and Richard Abbott met with Rock Creek Park officials in what came to be known as the "Big Picture" meeting. A plan and schedule for all the remaining work on the mill restoration project was drawn up – an indication not only of how far we have

come but also a very strong indication of the support and cooperation we are receiving from Rock Creek Park staff. After noting that the pilot project floor repairs and the hurst frame repairs (and damaged machinery removal) have now been completed, the remaining elements of the project were grouped into three phases and keyed to the NPS Compliance Process, a series of approvals by the NPS Regional Office, the Historic Preservation Office, and in some cases other agencies as well. One of the planned tasks is the construction of a flood barrier along the creekside to prevent, or at least limit, damage to the mill from high water in Rock Creek. The picture on the front page shows what can happen after a heavy rain.

The schedule assigns responsibilities for carrying out each step to either Rock Creek Park or the Friends of Peirce Mill, and calls for completion of all work by the fall of 2007. It should be noted, however, that meeting this target date will require some intensive coordination of all the elements of work and the availability of adequate funding.

In a following meeting attended by a representative of the DC Department of Transportation, it was decided that the \$30,000 grant to the Friends (see above) would be incorporated into a larger project involving improvements to the bicycle path through Rock Creek Park. The funds will still be used to benefit the mill but the \$30,000 grant will not be channeled through the Friends.

New board member Kenneth Faulstich

Ken Faulstich has been an active supporter of the Friends of Peirce Mill for years. He has an avid interest in local DC history and was a board member of the Tenleytown Historical Society. Locally, he served as the project manager for the Tenleytown Neighbors Association's Art-On-Call project

restoring old fire and police call boxes. He retired from the federal government in 2005 after a career in fire and life safety engineering. Ken lives on Yuma St. in DC, not far from Peirce Mill.

Planned new book on Peirce Mill

FOPM Vice President Steve Dryden has begun work on a short book about the mill, tentatively entitled "*Peirce Mill: 200 Years in the Nation's Capital*." The purpose of the book is to provide the first comprehensive history of the mill for a general audience, while strengthening the ongoing fundraising effort needed to complete the mill's restoration. Much of the research has been completed as a result of earlier NPS studies, the Historic Structures Report completed by the Friends in 2000, and ongoing investigations conducted by members. We hope that significant new documents will result from contacts initiated recently with Washington-area descendants of the Peirce family. The target publication date is 2007. FOPM members who wish to share information about the mill, or the historical context for milling in the

Washington area, should contact Steve by email: jsdryden@comcast.net.

The Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM)

Some of our members may know about this national mill preservation organization with the interesting acronym of "SPOOM". SPOOM publishes a newsletter with articles about milling, holds annual meetings around the country featuring visits to operating and restored mills, and publishes a directory of mills by state as well as European locations. Recently a Mid-Atlantic Chapter of SPOOM was organized and its first meeting is scheduled for March 25 at historic Wye Mills, on the eastern shore of Maryland. This interesting restored mill is in beautiful surroundings, in fact next to the site of the famous Wye Oak that fell a few years ago. A morning meeting is planned, followed by a lunch and talk on milling, and in the afternoon a tour of the mill. Interested members may get more information by email at abbott1229@verizon.net.

INFORMATION ON MILLING ON THE WEB

There is a great deal of information available on the web for milling enthusiasts. Check out our own web site at www.peircemill-friends.org, then go to the "Links" page and you will find a list of milling and historic preservation organizations, including SPOOM, as well as links to other national and international milling organizations, and links to other local mills. If you want to learn more about the history and technology of milling, check out the web site operated by Ted Hazen, the former miller at Peirce Mill, at <http://www.angelfire.com/folk/molinologist/map.html>. This extensive site is the most complete source of information on milling available anywhere.



d o w n s t r e a m



Three run of stone, as mill folk like to say. The 1930s restoration put in a mixture of new machinery and equipment scavenged from other mills in a fashion that the contractor believed was appropriate. This photo shows the freshly restored hoppers and millstones.



4305 38th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016

