NPS Director Visits Peirce Mill

The Director of the National Park Service, Fran Mainella, visited Peirce Mill on May 5, together with other NPS officials. FOPM board members were there to greet them and lead a tour of the mill. Director Mainella expressed great interest in our efforts to restore the mill, and assured us that Federal funding of the project has a high priority (though the timing of funding remains uncertain). Richard Abbott is shown with Director Mainella in one picture. In the other, the group is, L to R: Perry Wheelock (Rock Creek Park Cultural Resource Specialist), Cindy Cox (Assistant Superintendent, RCP), Terry Carlistrom (NPS Regional Director), Adrienne Coleman (Superintendent, RCP), Fran Mainella, Tom Blackburn, Richard Abbott, Steve Dryden, Joe Lawler (Deputy Regional Director, NPS).

Our New NPS Liaison Person

We have a new NPS technical liaison person who is now providing an essential communications link between the ongoing work at the mill and Rock Creek Park officials. Kari Grabinski joined the National Park Service, National Capital Region, in February. As an Historical Architect, she manages planning and design contracts involving historic structures. Prior to joining NPS, Kari managed preservation projects for the Minnesota Historical Society. A native of Minnesota, Kari has a degree in Building Preservation Technology from Belmont Technical College in Ohio and a BA in Art History from the University of Minnesota. Since she began working with us in April, Kari has proved to be both efficient and accessible and has made a huge contribution to the project by facilitating procedures for approval by the Park of each phase of the work at the mill.

Annual Meeting and Open House

This annual event will be held this year on Saturday, October 16. You’ll hear more about it later, but we are planning to repeat some of the popular attractions from previous years: folk music, blacksmith, woodworking, and maybe even cider pressing. Please plan to join us on that day!

The Friends of Peirce Mill, Inc., is a nonprofit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia. It has been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.
Work on the Mill Floors Moving Ahead

Steve Ortado and his crew have now completed work on Column #3, the last of the columns in the basement that support the main cross beam. As readers of this newsletter know, this phase of the restoration project became more and more complex as time went on, the main beam being in worse condition than expected and each column requiring a different treatment. We’re all happy to see the end of it at last!

Once the floor and the stones are removed, Steve Ortado will have access to the pit below and can begin to lift out the damaged main shaft and gears. Now it really gets interesting! We’ll post pictures on our web site from time to time so you can follow this phase of the restoration project.

Committee of 100 Vision Award

The Friends of Peirce Mill received one of the prestigious Vision Awards for 2003 from the Committee of 100 on the Federal City. Their mission: to safeguard and advance the fundamental planning, environmental and aesthetic values inherited from the L’Enfant Plan and the McMillan Commission that give Washington its historic distinction, natural beauty and overall livability. (www.Committeeof100.net) Richard is a member. Sally Berk, a trustee, nominated us for the award. In Richard’s absence, Philip Gaudette accepted the award at a ceremony June 4 at the Dickson Mansion (now Kingsbury Center).

Our award honors the Friends of Peirce Mill for diligence in making possible the preservation and rehabilitation of the last extant 19th century water powered grist mill in the District of Columbia, a symbol of the milling industry that once flourished along Rock Creek.

We are honored by the company of other award winners. Lifetime Achievement Awards were given (posthumously) to John W. Hechinger and Walter E. Washington. Special Achievement Award winners:

Joint Picnic with the Association for Preservation Technology

On a glorious Saturday (June 23), we had a joint picnic with members of the Association of Preservation Technology, a volunteer organization of architects, engineers, and historians. The group name captures their interests. We have significant cross-membership with APT and some obvious shared interests.

FOPM Officers and Key Individuals

President ........................................Richard Abbott
Vice President ..................................Steve Dryden
Secretary/Treasurer .........................Sheila Ploger
Business Manager ...........................David Lyman
Archivist .................................Philip Gaudette
Legal/Tax Affairs ............................Gene Hines
Chair, Proctors Committee ..............Mrs. Randall H. Hagner, Jr.
Assistant Chair, Proctors Committee ...Mrs. I. Townsend Burden
Special Events Coordinator ............Robert Day
Board Member ..............................Arthur Fort
Board Member .............................Tom Blackburn

Tell Us Your Story

Do you have an interesting story to tell...a photo of the Mill you found in the attic...a favorite memory of Peirce Mill from your childhood?

Share your story ideas or vintage photos with other Mill friends. Submit your contribution to Friends of Peirce Mill c/o Richard Abbott, 4305 38th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20016, or e-mail to abbott1229@verizon.com. We’ll try to get your submission into the next issue of Milling About. Thanks!