



# TrueGrist

News from the Friends of Peirce Mill

## The Virtual Mill

While Rock Creek Park remains open for outdoor recreation, the COVID 19 pandemic has closed Peirce Mill until the National Park Service makes a decision on re-opening its brick-and-mortar facilities. As of this date (June 2020), the Friends of Peirce Mill is developing online lessons so we can continue our educational programs via virtual visits. Our first offering:

## Create by the Creek

Any time between Saturday, June 13, and Sunday, June 21, find a safe, quiet spot in Rock Creek Park. Draw or paint a landscape—or a single flower. Write a rap or a poem. Take a photograph, record a video, or make a collage. The medium is up to you!

Then share artwork using the hashtags #createbythecreek, #rockcreekpark, #loverockcreek, and #summerintheparks. To see what other people have been making, check out [Create by the Creek on Instagram](#). Or follow the event on [Facebook](#).

Now more than ever, FOPM needs your support. Please renew your membership with us, and consider a special donation if possible.

The past year was an especially active one, with record-setting events such as Heritage Day in October (almost 900 attendees), and school visitation. Close to 700 students came to the mill in 2019 for curriculum-related lessons. The square dance planned for July was cancelled due to a heat wave, but a more family-oriented dance was held at Heritage Day, with live music and a caller from the DC Square Dance Collective.



Photos by Steve Dyden

FOPM President Nate Marzoli at the rope-making machine on Heritage Day.



FOPM volunteer Reggie Kelley at the mini-square dance.



# Out in the Orchard

Tim Makepeace, our orchard manager, reports that while the apple trees are slowly developing to maturity, the pear trees produced a bounty of flowers this spring and then set gobs of fruit – some of which “may survive the squirrels.” A number of cover crop plants made it through the winter, including vetch, winter pea, rye, wheat, oat, kale, and daikon radish. They may have been helped by the post-holiday wassail party we held January 11. After enjoying some libations in the mill late that winter afternoon, we went out in the darkening orchard to bang on pots, sing the wassail song and “wake up” the trees – all part of the English tradition we imported for this event.



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-powered flour mill offers educational experiences to all generations.

## In Memoriam David Lyman

David joined the Friends of Peirce Mill in 1999, and soon began developing grant request proposals as well as preparing financial reports and tax returns for the organization. David grew up in northern New Jersey, served with the U.S. Army in the Korean conflict, and later 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.

Because of his longtime service at IBM, he was able to win annual grants for FOPM from the company. David also volunteered as a docent at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and as a tutor and mentor to middle and high school students. His hobbies included hiking, tai chi, gardening and international travel. David particularly enjoyed conducting visitor tours, and could be found many weekends at the mill wearing his volunteer shirt and cap. He believed that each day at the mill brought



Photo by William Mills

David Lyman at a mill cider-tasting.

a new learning experience both to the guide and to the visitor. David passed away in November 2019.

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## In Memoriam Tom Blackburn

Tom, who died last October, played many roles in FOPM over the years, including the presidency. Tom joined in 1998, advising on fund-raising, writing grant proposals, and overseeing donor relations. Tom and Richard Abbott, the founder of FOPM, became close friends, and that collaboration resulted in identifying the financial

supporters that made the 2011 restoration of Peirce Mill a reality. His family noted “the calm patience, beautiful music (Tom was an accomplished cellist) and wry sense of humor he brought to the sometimes chaos of large family life ... and his belief that any pitch outside the strike zone was a moral failing.” A geochemist by training, Tom had a long career in college teaching, and then joined the American Chemical Society Petroleum



Photo by Adam Sieminski

Tom Blackburn with a special award for his years of service to FOPM.

Research Fund, retiring in 2002. He was the author of books on undergraduate

chemistry and science grants, and published two novels. As a cellist, Tom played with the Dumbarton Chamber Ensemble and the Hunt String Quartet.

# Kids Korner

By Angela Kramer, Education Director

## Make a Cornhusk Doll

*This not-completely-traditional version of a Native American craft uses materials you may have at home.*

### Materials

Dried corn husks\*  
Bucket of water for soaking husks  
Pipe cleaners or string  
Scraps of fabric, yarn, or beads  
Scissors

*\*Save husks from corn on the cob, and dry them on a sunny windowsill for about a week. Or use tamale corn husks.*

### Directions

Soak dried corn husks in water for about 10 minutes. There is more than one way to make a corn husk doll, so feel free to experiment! Here are some basic ideas to get started:



1) Fold husk in half.



2) Wrap pipe cleaner or string to form neck.



3) Insert arms.



4) Add fabric, yarn, beads, etc.

Courtesy of the National Park Service.



## “Farro e Pepe”

Ok, it's true we don't grow much farro in the U.S., nor do we grind it at the mill. But in the interest of promoting new ways to appreciate the wonderful world of grains, we present this recipe for “tender, starchy” farro “robed in silky cheese,” as was noted recently in the *New York Times* food section.

Time: 40 minutes  
Yield: 4-6 servings

**2 cups semi-pearled or pearled farro**  
**7 ½ ounces Pecorino Romano cheese, finely grated (about 1 ½ cups), or Parmesan.**  
**1 ¼ teaspoons coarsely ground black pepper**

1. Bring a large pot of water to the boil and salt it generously. Cook until done, about 15-18 minutes. Set a colander in sink.
2. In the meantime, place cheese and pepper in a medium bowl and add ¼ cup cold water. Use an immersion blender or food processor to combine into a thick smooth paste, adding tablespoons of water as needed.
3. When farro is cooked, reserve 1 ½ cups cooking water; transfer farro to colander to drain, then return to pot. Add ¾ cup cheese paste and ½ cup cooking water; stir vigorously until cheese melts and coats farro with a glossy sheen. Add cooking water and more paste until farro is like a loose risotto. If too thick, add warm tap water to loosen.
4. Serve immediately, garnished with more pepper.

[Click here to learn more about friendsofpeircemill.org](http://friendsofpeircemill.org)

# The Mill as Fountain of Youth

The Mills Archive, a United Kingdom-based organization “dedicated to the protection and preservation of the records of milling history,” recently posted an amazing account of the legends surrounding mills and “grinding” old folks back into young people again:

“The idea appears to have originated in the 17th century, when woodcuts on the theme began to appear in Germany, the Netherlands, England and Ireland. Sometimes serving both sexes or men only, more commonly



the mill took the form of an ‘Old Wives’ Mill’ (Altweibermuehle in German), and showed husbands carrying their

old wives into the mill on their backs or wheeling them in wheelbarrows. The rejuvenated wives tumble out of the other side of

the mill to rejoin their husbands. The idea was even used for political satire in Britain at the time of the 1832 Reform Bill which reformed the electoral system. The comic paper Figaro in London published a cartoon of the decrepit British Constitution being put in the ‘Reform Mill’ and emerging as a youthful Britannia.”



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

- |                                     |       |   |        |
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For more information, email us at: [info@peircemillfriends.org](mailto:info@peircemillfriends.org) or call: 202-248-1505

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*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.*

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