



BOSTON MILL SOCIETY
Supporters of thompson's mills



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A few years ago we had a U.S. Presidential candidate who ran on the “Hope and Change” platform. The Boston Mill Society followed that idea and still has a lot of “Hope” with much “Change” happening this past year. The BMS President, Roy Thompson, resigned during the 4th quarter of 2014. Vice President, Larry Thompson, assumed that office during the 1st quarter of 2015. Steve Smith has stepped up to serve as Vice President. Unfortunately the BMS lost some very talented board members during this restructuring including Bill Stormont the former webmaster; George Pugh, long-term board member and member of the pioneer Pugh family; and Tom Adams, archivist. However, we’ve gained two new exciting members: Don Ware, Editor of the Brownsville Times, and Kurt Hickman, an Albany attorney.

This new board is enthusiastic about restructuring to a format that is less complex and less demanding yet still supports Thompson Mills. The BMS has changed its status from “Friends Group” to the Oregon Parks and Recreation (OPRD) “Adopt-A-Park” program formalizing on-going relationships and support between OPRD and volunteers from a wide variety of resources. This program encourages hands-on involvement and support from the local community.

2014 was a very busy year of activity at the mill. Last July, in conjunction with the Shedd Days celebration, board members Karen Force and Mike Smith organized a fundraising event at the Mill. The 300+ attendees were greeted with two bands, food vendors and children’s entertainment provided by the Albany YMCA and S&K Inflatables of Corvallis.





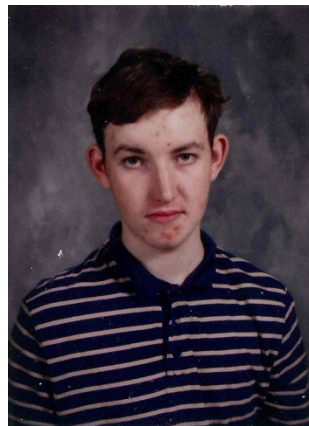
The Uncaged Locals



President, Roy Thompson, Talking With Visitors

WEBSITE NEWS

The BMS is excited to introduce our new webmaster, Kyle Smith. Kyle is a 16-year-old West Albany High School student whose current academic interests lie in computers and robotics. Kyle is an Eagle Scout and is a volunteer webmaster for his high school's robotics website. This position is CWE which means he trades time and skills for credit on his transcripts. Kyle is a thoughtful and well-rounded individual. During his interview he was asked if he could travel anywhere in the world where would it be? His answer: Greenland! We're all looking forward to working with him on the various upcoming website projects which includes, but is not limited to, posting minutes and agendas on the website. We plan to implement the ability to charge items from the gift store and pay for membership dues on the website.



RANGER'S REPORT

The blossoms on the Thompson's Mills apple trees are amazing right now. They are dark pink and white and smell great. There are not a lot of blossoms on the 3 year old trees, grafted by Roy and Larry Thompson, but there are certainly more than last year. They may just be quietly sitting there, looking pretty and attracting bees, but to me they're just one more piece of evidence of the continuing growth and progress at Thompson's Mills.

In every month last year, except during the early winter construction, attendance was up with an overall increase of 20%. The Mill benefitted from more OPRD volunteers than ever before who put in a whopping 7181 hours of work here. The artifacts in the work shop are finally catalogued, photographed and tagged and are now being moved to a secure storage space so the shop can be fully utilized. A small army of Mill volunteers led by Tom Adams set up shelving in a climate controlled room we are "borrowing" at Luckiamute Landing State Natural Area in Albany for storage of our most precious archives. The exterior assessment is nearly wrapped up so we can prioritize the repairs needed on the outside of the Mill. We still have to assess the house and outbuildings and then we'll do the interior of the Mill. We had concrete specialists from Chicago visit to begin formulating a plan to stabilize and repair the top edge of the silos and the unique concrete paneled catwalk on top of the silos. The inflatable dam and pump system work but there are kinks in the automation, plus it may have been hit by lightning so I have had to replace a lot of the electronics. We did a pre-summer impoundment fish removal again and had an excavator smooth the bottom of the mill race to make future fish removals easier. Thanks to a grant awarded to the BMS, we were visited by historic structure preservationist Harrison Goodall and preservation librarian Randy Silverman. They spent two days exploring the mill and the archives, resulting in reports giving us direction on preservation strategies and techniques. Two weddings are planned here in summer 2015 so we have been regularly meeting with the happy couples to prepare for their big days. Neighbor and former Mill employee Nate Kropf was hired to grind about 200 stumps in the orchard (thank you BMS!). A high school group came from Central Linn to plan a demonstration Camas meadow in the north field of the Mill. We are working on a new solar powered river gauge to give us water level readings from the old Sodom Dam site so we can have a 7 hour heads up on what river flows to expect (thank you Al Lutzeier!). The west canopy between the Mill and the silos got a fresh roof, new gutters, new support posts, new flashing and is finally watertight and solid. Down in the basement, the rebuilding of the floor started as a pretty major project but unexpectedly became a really major project- we couldn't even run the mill for over two months. Floorboards, supporting structures underneath the floor and several support posts were replaced or rebuilt. Preservation carpenters Cal and Kendra Lewis were the poor souls who toiled in the dark dank cold down there. And finally, perhaps the crowning glory of the last year, though this is debatable, was the orchard producing exactly one single beautiful little round red and yellowish apple. It is from one of the two heirloom "Winter Banana" trees and it is in my freezer if anyone wants to see it.

So far in 2015 our visitation is up by 44% so it looks like we're off to another great year of growth and improvements. If you haven't been to Thompson's Mills lately, drop by and check out the basement, check out the new west canopy or check out the apple trees. Come remind yourself why you're a fan of Oregon's oldest water powered mill.

Kind regards to all,
Ranger Tom Parsons

Boston Mill Society a Brief History

In the fall of 1993, soon after the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial, Bill & Ellen Lilja sent invitations for a meeting titled "Out of the Ruts" concerning things to be done to help preserve Linn County's historical structures. Some of those attending stayed after the general meeting to focus on saving and preserving Thompson's Mills.

In that meeting were the Liljas (who gave tours to historical Linn County locations), Martin Thompson (a Thompson family descendent), Connie Petty (an Albany Democrat-Herald reporter who took pictures and wrote many historical articles for the newspaper), Glenn Harrison (president of the Linn County Historical Society), and several others. The concern was that the mill's owners couldn't afford the upkeep and repairs

on the mill and were interested in selling the mill. Our concern was about deterioration and what would happen with new ownership.

Over a series of meetings we decided to form an organization called the Boston Mill Society to recognize the historic name of the mill, elect officers, charge dues at graduated rates, draft Bylaws, file paperwork to incorporate with the state on June 6, 1994, and apply to be recognized as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization (effective June 23, 1994). Bill Lilja was the initial President (2 years), Ellen was the first Secretary, Martin was the Vice President, and I was the Treasurer. We had the assistance of Kent Hickham, an Albany Attorney who drafted the initial Bylaws, and Richard Stach, a Linn County Commissioner, who got the support of the Commission to get a grant to fund a Feasibility Study that showed the economic impact of encouraging tourism to the mill while benefitting the county through heritage tourism. From the beginning Peter Jensen attended the meetings to look out for the concerns of the farmers along the Calapooia River. BMS members have included descendants of the builders and previous owners of the mill.

I won't try to name all of the people interested enough in the mill's preservation to serve on the Board, but some are Roz Keeney an expert in historic architecture and still serves with me on the Linn County Historic Resources Commission; Anne Catlin, who is the historic resources staff member for Albany and the Albany Landmarks Commission; Ellen Hamill, a photographer who provides art cards; and George Pugh, a descendant of the pioneer Pugh family and long-time Board member. Following Bill the BMS Presidents have been Martin Thompson for 12 years; Brooks Cavin, who was involved with historic architecture and the U of O field school (2 years); Glenn Harrison for 3 years, the only member of the Board and an officer for all 20+ years; Roy Thompson, a Thompson family member and Larry Thompson, son of Myrle and grandson of Ott Thompson.

Over the years we wrote letters to gain support, got articles in area newspapers, attended an Oregon State Parks Commission meeting to encourage state ownership, attended legislative hearings concerning the mill's future, and followed the governor's efforts to solve the "fish problem" in the Calapooia River. There were meetings concerning the Management Plan, and many meetings with the Calapooia Watershed Council. In the last 10 years with state ownership much has been planned and accomplished to preserve these old buildings.

With Martin Thompson's urging, we joined the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills. The BMS hosted the 2009 SPOOM Conference utilizing one of Ellen's photos on the cover of the Summer 2009 "Old Mill News" along with Martin's article "Thompson's Mills: A Little Bit of History", and a refurbished roller mill as part of a conference workshop.

Visitors to the mill enjoy the experience and tours provided by the Parks staff and hosts. The mill has attracted visitors from every state and many foreign countries, as can be seen by pins on the map inside the mill. BMS Board members and volunteers continue to improve these efforts.

Glenn Harrison 5/17/2014

MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anyone who attended the Shedd school is invited to attend the upcoming reunion on June 20, 2015 beginning at 10 a.m. Teen Challenge will be catering lunch; cost is \$10.00.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Annual Membership Meeting for all current and potential members of the Boston Mill Society is scheduled for Saturday, May 16, 2015 at the Teen Challenge Building, 31700 Fayetteville Drive in Shedd (formerly Shedd High School, located west off Highway 99). Please be sure to mark your calendars. The BMS is beginning its annual membership drive. One of our goals for 2015 is to become more active in our local communities through the participation in community historical educational events. We are actively seeking individuals to volunteer some of their time conducting wheat grinding techniques, participating in fundraising events, helping with projects at Thompson's Mills and participating in the membership drive. It's imperative the BMS acquire additional volunteer help to support the preservation and activities at the mill and the historical community at large. To continue your membership, please send your tax deductible donation to: Boston Mill Society, PO Box 1, Shedd, Oregon 97377. Everyone is welcome to join. Printable membership forms may be found at www.bostonmillsociety.org under the heading Get Involved.



Teen Challenge Building formerly Shedd School

Thank you for your support during this transition and we hope to see you at the annual meeting.

Larry Thompson

President

Boston Mill Society