
The Gristmill Gazette

Jerusalem Mill Village Newsletter Winter 2021



2811 Jerusalem Rd., Kingsville, MD

www.jerusalemill.org

410-877-3560

Scheduled Events

Saturday, February 13th, March 13th, and April 10th: 9 AM – Noon, Second Saturday Serve volunteer day. Help us with a wide variety of tasks throughout the village. All tools, materials, equipment and safety gear will be provided. Our new gathering place is in front of the mill. Everyone is invited. To implement pandemic precautions, work teams will be primarily comprised of volunteers from the same household. There will be some indoor work for those with a low tolerance for cold weather!

Saturday, April 10th, 8 AM – 2 PM, semi-annual Yard Sale. We have a wide variety of household goods, books, DVDs, tools, equipment, toys, hardware, supplies. If you have any items to donate, please call the Visitor Center at 410-877-3560 to arrange for drop-off, or simply bring them on the 10th. Please, no chemicals, food, towels or bedding. Most items in the yard sale will not be pre-priced. Take whatever you want, and make a cash donation in whatever amount you think is appropriate. Tables will be set up across the ball field to accommodate extensive social distancing. Masks are strongly encouraged. 100% of the proceeds go toward the preservation, maintenance, repair and operations of the Jerusalem Mill Village. Come help us make up for some of the lost revenue due to the pandemic.

In the Spotlight:



First Day Hike: a Soggy Success!

On the first day of each New Year, Maryland state parks host a “First Day Hike” to encourage residents to start the year off with exercise, fresh air, a break from technology, and the enjoyment of Maryland’s natural resources. The Friends of Jerusalem Mill partners with the Gunpowder Falls State Park to host the event on the trails around Jerusalem Mill Village, providing our hikers with an opportunity to enjoy the falls and its peaceful surroundings, and at the same time take in the beauty of a historic 18th and 19th century village decorated for the holidays.

Last year, we set a record of just over 500 hikers. This year, a pandemic and Mother Nature worked together to make the event a little more challenging. Because of the pandemic, we took extra precautions to ensure social distancing while still providing an opportunity to visitors to enjoy the hike. Instead of our usual *two* guided hikes on the first day of the year, the event for 2021 was scheduled over the first *three* days, and was self-guided. To further promote social distancing, the trail was

marked “one way” only, and was available from sunrise to sunset on all three days. Some people took advantage of the setup on December 31st and hiked the day before the official event.

Mother Nature had her own ideas to make the hike more challenging by providing rain on the first and last day of the event, causing muddy conditions on the lower elevations of the route. The weather discouraged some people from taking the hike, but we still had a nice turnout. Rick Decker, President of Friends of Jerusalem Mill, attended the event each day, and he estimated there were 75 hikers on the 31st, only 50 hikers on the rainy 1st, approximately 200 hikers on the sunny 2nd, and another 75 on a sporadically rainy January 3rd.



Since there were no guides to identify particular points of interest, special markers were placed along the 2.3-mile route, and a handout at the trailhead provided information on the feature at each marker. These points of interest included 1) new saplings planted by the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (225 new trees throughout the village), 2) a description and example of trail blazes (special tree markings), 3) examples of trail improvements completed by the Maryland Conservation Corps staff and the Friends of Jerusalem Mill volunteers, 4) the site of the former dam and start of the head race that channeled water to the village’s two mills, 5) a look at leafless plants of a species that have been around for over 250 million years, 6) an example of a burr, which is a large bump on a tree caused by trauma to the plant, 7) a footbridge built by volunteers led by a girl scout pursuing her Gold Award, and 8) a brief walk in the head race itself. Due to the muddy conditions, the hike detoured from its original path and missed the last two points of interest – the location of an ice pond and the former “waste gate” that allowed water to be diverted from the head race back to the falls when the water level was too high. These last two features are still marked with interpretive panels for hikers who want to see them when the head race is passable.

January 2nd Hikers; photo by Rick Decker

Christmas in the Village

Although we were unable to have our traditional Christmas in the Village event this year, our great volunteers still donated their time to decorate for the many visitors who came to walk the grounds, to hike the trails, or to take their family photos. Special thanks to Diane and Hugh Pry, Betsy Keithley, Jack Benesch and Michele Geroulo-Benesch for their continued dedication in keeping this tradition alive, even during a pandemic when our buildings are closed to the public. We hope you had a chance to enjoy our Christmas Village. **Many** professional and amateur photographers took advantage of the opportunity to use our Christmas Village as a backdrop for their family photographs. Please keep in mind that the village maintenance, repair, restoration and preservation is the responsibility of the non-profit public charity, Friends of Jerusalem Mill. Photographers can help us continue to maintain this popular destination for their clients, by making a donation to Friends of Jerusalem Mill. For more information, visit our web page at www.jerusalemill.org. You can use our website to donate through PayPal.



Photo courtesy of Jack Benesch

Some Things Never Change!

Here's a reprint of part of an article from our 2006 Fall/Winter "The Friends of Jerusalem Mill Newsletter":

"Message from the President – The Village continues to be a destination for school groups, hikers, living history buffs, Scout groups, and many other organizations. With this confluence of interest comes the need for some additional volunteers. If you receive this newsletter, **you** are either a member of the Friends or have some other connection with our Village. Won't you please consider volunteering in some capacity? We need people to help with school groups – we need maintenance help (painting, grass cutting, trimming, gardening, etc.) – we need administrative help (filing, answering mail, etc.). If you would consider spending an hour or so a week we will find a job for you, and be so grateful!

I would like to thank the folks who presently volunteer. Their reward is seeing the smiles and fascination of children and visitors, as they walk through the beautiful buildings and grounds of our Village. Serving can also mean stuffing envelopes or writing checks and balancing the books. **THANK YOU!** Harry Sanders, President, Friends of Jerusalem Mill."

Fifteen years later and our needs haven't changed! We still need help with a wide variety of tasks, and chances are, no matter what are your particular interests, skills or abilities, we have a job you can enjoy. Some of the challenges can be accomplished while you're staying at home avoiding the pandemic! Here's a sample of some of the needs:

- Docents: Greet visitors and guide them through the Visitor Center – Museum, the General Store, or the Civil War Room. Provide information about the history and operations of the village and answer basic questions about the park. No prior knowledge of the village's history or details about the park is required. Our Volunteer Handbook has all of the information you'll need.
- Special events: Plan and organize one or more events. If you're not a planner, you can still help collect admission tickets, set up, direct parking, assist pedestrian crossings, guide visitors, tear-down, etc.
- Research/curatorial assistance: Identify and inventory artifacts; conduct online or in-person historical research; create or update displays; scan and catalog documents or photographs; etc. Focus areas include genealogy, architecture, archeology, history, sociology, agriculture, and much, much more.
- Living history interpreters: In era-appropriate attire, share knowledge of various aspects of life in the 18th and 19th century. We need coopers, tinsmiths, carpenters/woodworkers/joiners, gunsmiths, toy demonstrators, gardeners/farmers, store clerks, tour guides, musicians, seamstresses, and wandering villagers (including children).
- Administrative assistance: Prepare grant applications for a wide variety of projects and purchases; Help publicize our events and news in print or online; write articles for our newsletter; update and improve our web site.
- Trail maintenance: hike the wooded trails of the Gunpowder Falls State Park Central Area and pick up trash, remove debris from the trails, trim back overgrowth, and report downed trees and other hazards.
- Village maintenance: assist with maintaining our grounds, repairing fences, painting, gardening and landscaping, etc.

While we're on the topic of volunteering, did you know that studies have shown that volunteering helps fight dementia? One study by Sumedha Gupta at Indiana University concluded that people

who volunteer have improved cognitive health. That study was conducted over a twelve-year period, and included more than 64,000 subjects. They discovered that people aged 60 and over, who volunteered for 100 hours per year – 2 hrs. per week on average – scored about 6 percent higher on cognition tests than people who didn't volunteer. A second study, by the University of Calgary showed that volunteering made retirees 2.44 times less likely to develop dementia.

Interestingly, according to Databank USA, Maryland has the fourth largest percentage of adults 65 and older who volunteer, at 38.2 percent of the state's "senior" population. That compares to the national average of 28 percent. Only North Dakota, Utah and Minnesota had a larger percentage of volunteers. The message seems clear, volunteering is not only good for your physical and social health, it's good for your brain! We'll be happy to help you pursue some great opportunities!

If you're interested in volunteering, just attend one of our Second Saturday volunteer events (see details in our "Scheduled Events" column at the beginning of this newsletter), call us on 410-877-3560, or send an e-mail to jerusalemill@yahoo.com.



CARES Act Tax Tip

With recent changes in tax laws, many taxpayers who previously itemized deductions on their tax returns, and were able to include charitable contributions, no longer do so because the standard deductions are greater than their allowable itemized deductions. In fact, in 2018, over 87% of all federal income tax filers chose the standard deduction over itemized deductions, according to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). However, due to a provision in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, taxpayers who take the standard deduction for 2020 may now be able to take an additional \$300.00 federal income tax deduction for charitable contributions. This deduction would reduce both the adjusted gross income and the taxable income, which, of course, reduces the amount of federal income tax you would owe.

In an online AARP article, updated January 5, 2021, John Waggoner (AARP) reports that "For 2020, the charitable limit was \$300 per 'tax unit' – meaning that those who are married and filing jointly can get a \$300 deduction. For the 2021 tax year, however, those who are married and filing jointly can each take a \$300 deduction, for a total of \$600." Waggoner explains that "The \$300 deduction is for donations made in cash, which includes currency, checks, credit or debit cards, and electronic funds transfers. You can't take the deduction for contributions of property, such as clothing or household items. You must also make your contributions to qualified charities...You can't deduct contributions of your time or services, or any part of a contribution from which you benefit..."¹

Under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3), Friends of Jerusalem Mill is designated as a non-profit, tax exempt organization. Under sections 501(a)(1) and 1709b)(1)(A)(vi) of the code, we are also classified as a public charity. Therefore, your 2020 and 2021 cash donations to Friends of Jerusalem Mill may qualify as tax deductions on your federal income tax return, even if you don't itemize.

This new provision recognizes the challenges that face organizations like ours who have been significantly impacted by the pandemic, and have been unable to hold events or conduct their living history or educational programs. It is also a recognition that memberships and sponsorships may also be impacted by the financial uncertainty caused by the pandemic, as we have experienced. Most of these activities are important sources of income that allows us to continue our mission to preserve the village and share its history with the public.

¹ See aarp.org/money/taxes/info-2020/how-to-deduct-2020-charity-donations.

Please note: We are not tax professionals, but want to share information we have found that may be helpful to our readers, and especially to our donors. Please contact your tax professional or the IRS for more detailed information.

20 Years of Living History



Photo courtesy of Kevin Parks, Photo Journalist, Catholic Review

house, then step inside the house and take in the aroma of food cooking on the open hearth; visit the Visitor Center and Museum in the 1772 grist mill and learn how water power was harnessed to make 20 barrels of flour per day; step into a spring house to see how perishable foods were kept cool before “refrigeration” was invented; stroll past the tenant house, 20-room Jerusalem mansion and bank barn, and make your way down to the 1865 covered bridge; see where the wheelwright shop and saw mill were located; follow the .4 mile head race to the location of the Jerusalem Mill dam, and see where the ice pond and waster gate were located while enjoying the sights and sounds of nature and the rushing falls along the way. There’s so much to see and enjoy in and around the village, and on every visit you can probably learn or see something new.

We look forward to resuming our program when pandemic guidelines allow us to reopen. We hope to introduce our Joinery/Woodshop as a regular part of the program this year. Living history is conducted every weekend, with many buildings open on Saturdays and Sundays from 1 PM to 4 PM. On Saturdays the Visitor Center – Museum will open at 10 AM, and will be open on Mondays from 1 PM to 4 PM, and Thursdays from 10 AM to 1 PM.

Follow Us!

We are pleased to start sharing photographic moments of the Historic Jerusalem Mill Village on Instagram. Please follow us @jerusalemillvillage, and when visiting, please hashtag us.

Thanks to our Sponsors

We are sincerely grateful to our sponsors for their generosity, enthusiasm, and belief in our mission! We encourage all of our visitors to patronize our sponsors' quality services and products. Please let them know that you saw their ad in this newsletter, and that you visited or contacted them because of their support to Jerusalem Mill. To inquire about sponsoring our many activities and events, [e-mail](mailto:jerusalemill@yahoo.com) us at jerusalemill@yahoo.com !

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To become a sponsor, send us an e-mail at jerusalemill@yahoo.com or call us on 410-877-3560.

Our concert series is supported by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council and the Harford County Cultural Arts Board.



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