



# The Lowell Volunteer Partner

Issue No. 2 ■ September, 2005

Lowell National Historical Park

## MAJOR WHACK AT CANAL TRASH

By Mike Wurm



It all started last winter in a UMass-Lowell conference room packed with about 80 interested citizens as Bill Moreau introduced his ideas for volunteers cleaning the unsightly trash floating in the canals of Lowell. From that initial audience, Bill drew a core group of people committed to taking on this challenging task through his new non-profit organization, the Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners (LCC).

This group has used a novel can-do approach to the canal trash problem, using much ingenuity to devise homemade tools such as their extra-long pole nets to reach down into the canals and scoop the debris up onto firm land. The LCC volunteers have shown since the spring that their homemade tools, ingenuity, and labor make a difference in the appearance and environmental health of the canals.

The Earth Day clean-up on April 23 was the public kick-off to this new canal clean-up initiative. A total of about 75 volunteers from the Canalwaters Cleaners along with Keep Lowell Beautiful (KLB) and Mass Water Watch of Middlesex Community College gathered about 100 bags of trash from the canals and walkways. It was a very impressive debut on a rainy day!

Since then, LCC has cooperated with the park, KLB, and the city on two other major spring clean-ups: the Great American Clean-up on May 21 and the Acre Neighborhood and Western Canal Clean-up on June 4, the latter in cooperation with the Coalition for a Better Acre. On July 24, LCC also did a major downtown canals clean-up in preparation for the Folk Festival, followed by a very productive weekday clean-up on September 1.

## Join Us for a Canal Cleanup and Picnic

The Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners and the park are cooperating for one more event, possibly the biggest clean-up of the year, on National Public Lands Day, September 24. Volunteers will be harvesting the canal trash from 9:00 to 2:00 and will be rewarded with a barbecue picnic at the park maintenance shop off Aiken St. by the Northern Canal. Please contact Bill Moreau at 978-250-4028 or Mike Wurm at 978-275-1735 if you can help and/or have questions.

## TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF GREAT CANAL CLEANUP

By Mike Wurm

In October 1995, park Chief of Maintenance Ted Davis and then-Volunteer Coordinator Marcia Dolce orchestrated "The Great Canal Cleanup" over a two-week period during a canal draindown by Boott Hydro. The park provided equipment and safety gear that enabled hundreds of volunteers to climb down onto the canal beds to remove the large, heavy debris accumulated there, such as bikes, school desks, car tires, and even tree trunks. It was a remarkable event supported heavily by the park maintenance and ranger staff that showed dramatically that the people of Lowell are willing to volunteer their time to clean up the canals.

## 5.6 Miles of Canals Need Your Help

The Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners and the park need more volunteers in order to cover the whole 5.6-mile canal system on special clean-up days and on regularly scheduled weekday sweeps. Donations of time, labor, materials, and dollars are all needed to keep LCC afloat. Please call Director Bill Moreau at 978-250-4028 or email: [bmoreau@canalwaters.org](mailto:bmoreau@canalwaters.org). You may also browse the LCC website: [www.canalwaters.org](http://www.canalwaters.org)

## THE MORTONS: RANGER-SON AND VOLUNTEER-DAD

By Paul Mueller

How did a former Volunteer Park Ranger at Olympic National Park recruit his father to volunteer for the park's trolley? It was likely a melding of interests in both father and son.



Photo by Jim Byington

According to volunteer-father, Lloyd Morton, William (the one in the Park Ranger uniform) took the divergent pathway. Lloyd had worked at the consumer division of the Gillette Company while other family members all immersed themselves in various "conventional" careers.

In the early years after finishing college, William volunteered at Olympic National Park and somehow got by on a shoestring budget and small reimbursement checks. He also spent a year in Amsterdam, two years working on a Maine farm, and a year working as a guide at Mystic Seaport. It certainly wasn't easy financially, but it had simple pleasures and was spiritually captivating for William.

After collecting these experiences, William came back to pursue a growing array of interests, but in a more familiar area close to his family's Westford home. Fortuitously, he worked his way back into the National Park Service - this time as a paid Park Ranger at Lowell National Historical Park. He even met his future wife here, seasonal park ranger Lisa Morton, nee Anderson.

Five years ago, William asked his father, if he (Lloyd) would like to do

something that would help satisfy an old abandoned ambition – work on a trolley car.

Lloyd had always liked trolleys and trains. As a child, he enjoyed riding the trolley line from Waverly to Boston. William reminisces that his father built many model railroad landscapes in their family cellar.

In their heyday up through the 1940's, trains and trolleys carried more people to *distant* places than airplanes or possibly automobiles. For many, trains and trolleys, like the automobile after the building of the interstate system in the 1950's, symbolized: freedom, escape, wanderlust, and new opportunities.

What else was so exciting about the trolley of yesteryear? Lloyd relates: "Trolleys didn't go slow. They did not yield. As they darted about in the middle of city streets, they seemed like they were always about to collide with the cars. Yet, people and cars must have gotten used to trolleys, because as reckless as they were, I did not see any accidents."

Trolleys (and trains) were so compelling at so many other levels – the daily intricacies of their operation and their integration and importance in everyday life.

Lloyd didn't have to think too long about William's idea to become a conductor for Lowell NHP. It would be quite a change working outdoors and on a real life set of tracks.

Now, Lloyd and William have their experiences in the park they share. Besides unearthing new tidbits about Lowell and life in general, both also pursue research in the family's history in Massachusetts and other far away places.

In closing, William describes his father's lifelong commitment to volunteering: "Volunteering is nothing new for my father. He has worked for years with Scouting and also for other organizations, and volunteering his time to family and neighbors - this generosity is something deeply ingrained in him."

## JACKIE McQUEEN: BRITISH VOLUNTEER ON THE CANALS

By Paul Mueller

Jackie McQueen visited Lowell National Historical Park last year with her new American husband and walked away very impressed. She decided that she would inquire about volunteering, if she were ever to return to Lowell from her home in England. Of particular interest to her was the 5.6 miles of canals here.



Back in England, Jackie acquired knowledge of canals firsthand. For many years, she lived on her own canal boat with the dimensions of 6 X 47 feet on the canals of Yorkshire.

While finishing her master's degree in Michigan this past spring, Jackie contacted the park and said that she was interested in volunteering. This would be a 2-month stint for her before returning to England.

In May Jackie started volunteering at the Boott Cotton Mills Museum. Jackie learned about the history of Lowell's mills, gave short talks, and helped visitors find their way to historical places and museums around the city. At the end of her time here at Lowell, Jackie gave an impressive slide show to the park superintendent, members of the Middlesex Canal Association, and park rangers about the British canal system, especially how it differed from American canals.

What is it like living on a canal boat for Jackie? "You are much closer to

the seasons and nature living on the water. You know it's cold because of the ice razoring along the side of the boat. At other times geese go running up and down the roof making knocking sounds on the boat."

Jackie also never saw a kingfisher until she lived on the canal. Apparently, kingfishers love canals. "Canals are undervalued as a resource for flora and fauna."

She continued: "Canals should be thought of as a greenway resource in the midst of an urban area." Canals offer solitude in a wired world.

About the Lowell canals, Jackie said that she had never seen such power canals or gatehouse structures before. She also said that the locks at the Francis Gate operate very differently than the locks in England.

Jackie's great enthusiasm for the canals of Britain might lead a number of us to go there to experience them for ourselves. She would be a great canal guide. .... if only we could track down her whereabouts and her always moving home on the canal.

### We Need Your Hours!

The Volunteer Coordinator's Office would like you to calculate your total lifetime hours with the park. New software can now help us track your time accurately. However, we still need to have your estimate of your hours before October 1, 2004, so that we can give out length of service awards. Send your calculations to the Volunteer Coordinator, 67 Kirk Street, Lowell, MA 01852 or [paul\\_mueller@nps.gov](mailto:paul_mueller@nps.gov).

### We Need to Catch Up to You!

We would like to keep you informed about special events like Volunteer Appreciation Day and the Volunteer Orientation Day. If you have moved, changed your telephone number, or started a new email account, please send the latest changes to [paul\\_mueller@nps.gov](mailto:paul_mueller@nps.gov) or call 978-275-1740.



Teacher-Volunteer Linda Almeida and the Bartlett School Honor Society poses for a group picture during a Pawtucket Canal cleanup in June. Each year this group cleans up along the canal at Francis Gate Park.

### LONGEST VOLUNTEER FRED FORSTER KNOWS THE SCORE

By Paul Mueller



Whether it is a game between two local high school basketball teams or the epic battle between the mill owners and the workers, Fred Forster knows the score. As a local sports reporter for *The Wakefield Observer*, Fred appreciates the nuances of plays made out on the fields, the baseball diamonds, and the ice rinks. He also is knowledgeable of what happened during the strategy sessions at the boardrooms, historically speaking, as a Volunteer Park Ranger at Lowell NHP.

Fred, a resident of Melrose, has the distinction of being the longest-serving Volunteer Park Ranger at

Lowell National Historical Park. Since 1997, he has amassed over 2,000 hours of volunteer work. That does not even count the hours that Fred has spent at home reading historical books about the textile industry and Lowell's place in the Industrial Revolution.

Round that out with Fred willingly working a couple of seasons at the Lowell Summer Music Series, and devoting many hours at many Lowell Folk Festivals without pay, you begin to get a remarkable picture.

Yet Fred takes all of this in stride. It is "no big deal", he says. In his ninth year, Fred has been consistently volunteering five hours a week. Volunteering gives him an outlet for discussing history and relating it to the present.

Fred equates the preparation for a sports story with that of a program on the Boot Cotton Mills Museum second floor. For his talks, he incorporates current events and sometimes sports analogies to help others understand the past.

He surprises himself for not getting the numbers mixed up whether it is the statistics compiled for a sports event or the yardage of cloth produced by the mills during Lowell's 19<sup>th</sup> century manufacturing heyday.

Fred says that volunteering gives him a chance to meet people from all over the country, and to talk to kids especially during the school year. He relates this experience back to his job in Wakefield with the people of all ages that he interviews to get the essence of a sports story.

Regarding volunteering versus being paid, Fred doesn't want to get bogged down in time cards and schedules or politics. "It's a day away from the office. It is time well spent."

## HOW IMPORTANT ARE OUR PARK VOLUNTEERS?

By Paul Mueller

Volunteers play a crucial role of helping the park do what might not get done otherwise. Volunteers outnumber park employees during canal cleanups, the Banjo and Fiddle Contest, the Lowell Summer Music Series, and the Lowell Folk Festival. Many events and others would not occur without volunteers.

Volunteers also supplement or fill in for employees in short weekly assignments. This is all for the better because it permits employees to work on projects or other tasks. It also allows the park to benefit from a different set of skills and knowledge.

Volunteer positions for special events may only last one or two days. Others can be seasonal in nature like the Trolley Crew Member (March through November) and the Volunteer Museum Teacher Assistant (September through May). Many can last throughout the year. It all boils down to the volunteer's available schedule, the supervisor's needs, and what the position call for.

In considering new volunteers, Volunteer Coordinator Mike Wurm recommends candidates for the different operations of the park. Each operation's volunteer coordinator or supervisor is then responsible for interviewing and deciding on each volunteer candidate.

We are always interested in hearing from individuals and groups proposing to volunteer, even if they are not sure about what they want to do. The office gets inquiries from people who are looking for an appreciative place to work, for new opportunities, for giving back to the community, and for acquiring new skills.

The Volunteer Office is located at the park headquarters building at 67 Kirk Street, Lowell. Mike and Assistant Volunteer Coordinator Paul Mueller are there to help volunteers find the best fit in the park.

## SCA TRANSPORTATION INTERNS ON THE TROLLEYS

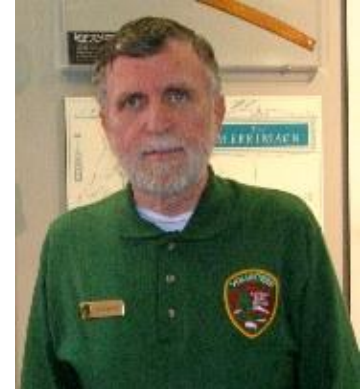


Photo by Jim Byington

In an NPS-wide program funded by the Ford Foundation, the Student Conservation Association placed two student interns for a third summer of assistance and interpretation on the park trolleys. Roberto Pagan of Middlesex Community College and the Acre neighborhood along with Elaine Lynch of Simon's Rock College of Bard and the town of Acton worked closely with our trolley staff, assisting in the operations and giving directions and interpretive talks to park visitors. They both said they would love to work for the park as rangers in future summers. Supervisors agreed that they would look great in ranger uniforms next summer!

## LEARN ABOUT BEN BUTLER OF LOWELL IN SPECIAL FREE PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEERS

On October 18 at 7 p.m. in the Visitor Center Theater, Volunteer Park Ranger and Civil War buff John Balco



will present an illustrated history talk (see below) for current and potential new volunteers. The doors will open at 6:30. Beverages and light food will be served in the Conference Room.

### The Real Ben Butler

Lowell native and Civil War General Benjamin Butler has been vilified as inept at best and as an unprincipled terrorist at worst. Military occupier of New Orleans, he became known as "Beast Butler" in the Confederacy. Jefferson Davis placed a price on his head.

The real Ben Butler was more complicated. He was a poor boy who rose to power and wealth due to brains, persistence and opportunity in the growing industrial city. A committed Democrat, he became one of the most assertive supporters of the Republican administration of Lincoln.

Ambivalent about slavery, he became an advocate of abolition and the integration of blacks into society. Butler held on to command despite criticism from enemies both north and south and performed better than many other Union generals.

John will reveal the real story about this Lowell and Civil War legend.



Cindy Kryston often went out of her way to thank volunteers for their efforts in helping the park and the city. Here she is with members of the 2002 Spindle City Corps. Photo by Phil Lupsiewicz

## PARK VOLUNTEERS WILL MISS YOU, CINDY KRYSTON: RETIREMENT LOOMS

A great supporter of the VIP (Volunteers-in-Parks) program in her National Park Service career and here at Lowell NHP, retiring Deputy Superintendent Cindy Kryston is hereby designated a lifetime VIP! If you have been a beneficiary of Cindy's kind words of appreciation for volunteers, please let her know that she will be missed and wish her a grand retirement, including volunteer stints in the national parks near her Arizona retirement home.

*Excerpts from Superintendent Michael Creasey's letter follow:*

Dear Lowell National Historical Park Staff and Friends of Cynthia:

I would like to share with you the news that Lowell's Deputy Superintendent, Cindy Kryston, will be retiring on October 3 for a new life of traveler and professional volunteer. Newfoundland, Poland, Ireland, and Scotland will be her first travels in the coming year as she practices being a retiree. Cindy's career began at what was then the Adams National Historical Site and moved on to

Minute Man National Historical Park, Boston National Historical Park, the North Atlantic Regional Office and other parks and assignments along the way.

Lowell has benefited tremendously from Cindy's dedication and passion for the park. Her leadership has spanned across the region and throughout the National Park Service.

Sincerely,  
Michael Creasey

P.S.—You can email Cindy at: [Cynthia\\_Kryston@nps.gov](mailto:Cynthia_Kryston@nps.gov). You can also write her in care of:

Lowell National Historical Park  
67 Kirk St.  
Lowell, MA 01852

---

*This newsletter contains stories and photography by Paul Mueller and Mike Wurm. The editor is Mike Wurm. Become a contributor! Send us your suggestions for future articles. Contact [paul\\_mueller@nps.gov](mailto:paul_mueller@nps.gov).*

## DO YOU KNOW?

- **Current Lowell NHP volunteers qualify for a 15% discount at the Visitor Center and Boott Cotton Mills Museum bookstores.**
- **Take Pride in America provided \$2200 in total grants for the three major canal clean-ups of this past spring. This enabled the park to fund the efforts of Keep Lowell Beautiful, Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners, Coalition for a Better Acre, and (indirectly) Mass Water Watch for partnering on these events.**
- **Volunteer Injury and Liability Protection from NPS Guidelines:**

VIPs (National Park Service volunteers) will be treated as Federal employees for the purposes of (1) compensation for work-related injuries (see 5 USC 8101(1)(B) and 16 USC 18i(c)); (2) immunity from liability pursuant to the Federal Tort Claims Act (see 28 USC 2671 and 16 USC 18i(b)); and (3) claims for damage to or loss of personal property incident to service (see 31 USC 3721 and 16 USC 18i(d)).

In order to receive the benefits and protection outlined above, VIPs must accurately complete NPS Volunteer Agreement Form 10-85 or 10-86, and, if the VIP is under 18 years of age, Form 10-89.

### **A VIP must not engage in any work which he/she:**

- **is not qualified to perform;**
- **has not been adequately trained to do;**
- **does not feel comfortable doing; and/or**
- **does not willingly agree to do.**

VIPs must be provided with all personal protective equipment and appropriate training required by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and all park-specific safety rules and regulations for their respective work environments.