



# FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

## “Success” in First Season

In this, its first full season, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) in Chelmsford and Westford has fulfilled its promise of becoming a popular destination for users of all ages and modes of transportation. Town officials and staff in both towns have been very creative and supportive of this new recreational asset.

The Kids Pan-Mass Challenge, organized by Westford residents Jessica Ryan and Claire Eno, was the first registered event on the trail. In Jessica’s words, it was “a HUGE success!” The event raised \$3,487. From 9 a.m. to noon on Sunday, June 27, about 50 riders and 25 volunteers left from Byam School to ride on the trail. According to Jessica, “We had a lot of fun organizing this event. We learned a ton and hope to do this again next year!”

Groups and organizations that are planning a trail event of 25 people or more should submit a registration form at least 45 days in advance. The form can be found at: [brucefreemanrailtrail.org/events.rf](http://brucefreemanrailtrail.org/events.rf). Although the construction is finished, the Friends continue to focus on adding amenities that will make the trail even more user-friendly. The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (FBFRT) provided the funding for portable toilets (through November) at 2 locations on the trail, Heart Pond and Cushing Place. Thank you to A-1 Portable Toilets for providing the toilets at a reduced rate.

Through a grant from the Charles River Wheelmen, FBFRT also purchased trail rules signs that have been installed along the trail. For more information on Phase 1 of the trail in Chelmsford and Westford, see [www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/Phase1](http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/Phase1).



Welcome to the  
**Bruce Freeman Rail Trail**








- Stop at ALL STOP signs
- Bicyclists and skaters yield to pedestrians
- Keep to the right; pass on the left
- Use an audible signal when passing
- Look before passing
- Bicyclists and skaters should wear safety helmets
- Keep pets on a short leash, remove droppings
- When stopping, do not block the trail
- No littering – carry in, carry out
- Respect property adjacent to the trail

**In emergency, dial 911**





Trail use signs were funded through a grant from Charles River Wheelmen. The rules were compiled by the Chelmsford Bike and Pedestrian Committee with input from Concord, Westford and the Friends.

## Active Support from Westford

Town staff and various boards’ members and chairs have been really enthusiastic about the BFRT! Trail abutters have also been very positive and helpful, including helping with litter removal. Welcome and thanks to Angus Jennings, the Town’s new Director of Land Use Management, who has been facilitating discussions and planning.

Pat Savage, Director of the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Department, has accepted operation and maintenance of the BFRT on behalf of her Town department. Together with Chip Barrett, Highway Superintendent, Jodi Ross, Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen, Pat is creating a budget and scheduling routine maintenance, including late fall leaf clearing. The trail will not be plowed in the winter months to allow for cross-country skiing.

On the Town Common at the September 14th Farmers’ Market, over 40 people signed up to be on the Friends’ mailing list. We talked to many more, encouraging them to use the trail and share information about the design and planning for Phases 2 and 3.

Off-street parking to access the trail continues to be an unmet need in Westford. At the Planning Board’s September 20th meeting, background and new information were presented, and many parking options were discussed. Currently, there is no available land in Westford that is dedicated parking for the trail. The Friends are working with Town and State officials on creative parking solutions.

## State Announces Funding to Complete Design of Phases 2A & 2C

*Backstory: In late May State Senator Jamie Eldridge called me to say that he had good news about the BFRT and asked if I could keep a secret. (I said I could.) He then informed me that he and other legislators had been working with the Patrick-Murray administration and had secured design funding for Phase 2A and 2C for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Senator Eldridge then asked if we could get a few BFRT supporters out for the Lt. Governor's announcement of the design funding while not revealing any details in order to keep it a surprise. I replied we could get 50 or so attendees, which he thought would be fantastic. I did keep the secret, though it was difficult, as the FBFRT Board had to take it on faith that the difficult task of organizing and funding a lunch time get together for a mid-June Friday was a worthwhile endeavor.*

**Tom Michelman – President Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.**

Last June 18 Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray, introduced by State Senator Jamie Eldridge, and flanked by State Representative Cory Atkins, State Representative Jen Benson, MassDOT Highway Administrator Luisa Paiewonsky, and Jane Adams (staff for Congresswoman Niki Tsongas) announced additional funding to design a major expansion of the BFRT through Westford, Carlisle, Acton and Concord. The first section of the trail, from Rt. 3 in Chelmsford to Rt. 225 in Westford, was opened last year.

The \$931,500 in capital funds provides the additional money needed to design the next two phases of the BFRT, Phases 2A (Westford, Carlisle and Acton) and 2C (Concord). The money is part of the Patrick-Murray Administration's Massachusetts Works program promoting job growth and long-term economic recovery. These funds are in addition to \$500,000 in "Transportation Enhancements" funding for design of Phase 2A, which was awarded in October 2009.

"This strategic investment in designing the expansion of the Freeman Trail will enhance the transportation and recreational infrastructure in the region, providing long term healthy transportation benefits to the residents of Acton, Westford, Carlisle, Concord and the many people in the surrounding communities who use and enjoy the Trail," said Governor Deval Patrick.

The announcement, attended by over 120 trail enthusiasts, including many local politicians, took place on the trail right-of-way, just off Brook Street in Acton. It was followed by an outdoor luncheon in the back parking lot of Gould's Plaza. (A MassDOT employee who has set-up many of these announcement events noted the only such event that had better attendance was the BFRT Phase 1 ribbon-cutting). The Friends sponsored the luncheon with extraordinary help from Donelan's Supermarket. This very successful event could not have occurred without many, many helping hands.

FBFRT thanks the Gould family (of Gould's Clothing and Gould's Plaza) for graciously providing space for the event. Joyce and John Reischutz, owners of Pedal Power of Great Road in Acton, who closed their shop and employed their staff in setting up tents, chairs, tables, and food, were truly laudable. George Raimon, manager of Donelan's Supermarket went far above and beyond the call catering the event. Donelan's subsidized the luncheon with donations of hundreds of dollars of food, drinks, plates, utensils, etc. Donelan's also provided tables and volunteers to help set up and serve the food.



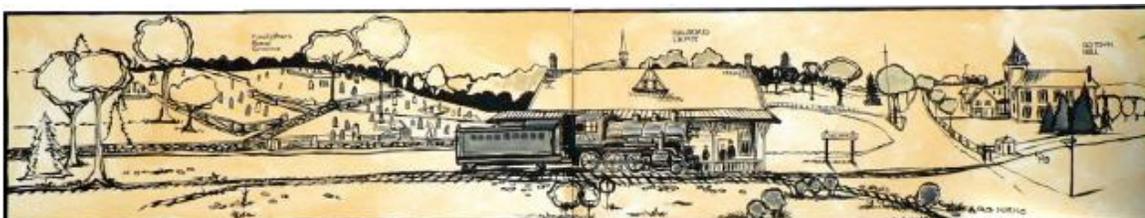
(left to right) State Representatives Jen Benson & Cory Atkins, MassDOT Highway Administrator Luisa Paiewonsky, and Lt. Governor Tim Murray being introduced by State Senator Jamie Eldridge



The Town of Acton and MassDOT both deserve praise for helping to set up, and Acton for providing a police detail. Thanks also to FBFRT members and Board members who helped set up and staff the event. And finally thanks to all who attended. There is no more powerful message than people making the time and effort to attend to emphasize the wide and deep community support for the BFRT.

There would have been no event and no state funds without Senator Eldridge and Representatives Atkins and Benson. FBFRT appreciates their advocacy, pressing the Administration to make the BFRT a top transportation priority.

Phase 2A will extend the trail south by nearly five miles, from Rt. 225 in Westford through Carlisle and Acton. Phase 2C extends the trail from Commonwealth Ave south of Rt. 2 through Concord. The segment of the trail crossing Rt. 2, Phase 2B, is on a separate track and was being designed as part of the Concord Rotary Project (see related story in this newsletter). The estimated construction cost of Phase 2A is \$7.7 million. A formal "request for proposal" for design consultants has been issued with selection scheduled for November.



This mural, painted by Markus Lewis, will be added to the Chelmsford Center Artwalk thanks to a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.



Massachusetts Cultural Council

## MCC Grant for Artwalk Mural

FBFRT has received a matching grant of \$350 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. This grant was awarded through the Chelmsford Cultural Council to support an additional historical mural on the Chelmsford Center Artwalk at Cushing Place. The mural was painted by Markus Lewis and will be installed this year. It is an artist's rendition of Forefathers' Burial Grounds, the second station at the Chelmsford Center train depot, and Old Town Hall in the early 1900's (see photo on previous page).

The grant covers only a portion of the cost of the mural. If you would like to make a donation to support art on the BFRT please contact [Chelmsford-Amenities@brucefreemanrailtrail.org](mailto:Chelmsford-Amenities@brucefreemanrailtrail.org). Donations of \$100 or more will be recognized with a plaque.

### Don't forget to thank...

**Jet Mail** of Hudson for their assistance with the production and mailing of this newsletter

**Pedal Power** of Acton for hosting our annual meeting and their ongoing support

## Chelmsford – Bolstering the Success

The FBFRT and the Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) have been coordinating a number of projects: BFRT logo, trail rules signs, trail counts, trail maintenance, and event registration. The Friends also will be working with the BPAC to get information kiosks, benches, and bike racks installed. BPAC provides guidance and coordination for the Chelmsford portion of the trail. FBFRT provides insight, volunteers, and funding.

The Chelmsford BPAC is interested in knowing how people get, or would like to get, to the BFRT on bicycle. Send your bicycle routes to [Chelmsford.BPAC@gmail.com](mailto:Chelmsford.BPAC@gmail.com) to help guide improvements to Chelmsford roads for bicycles.

The Town recently received a grant from the multi-agency Brownfields Support Team Initiative for cleanup of a parcel of land adjacent to the trail near the Chelmsford Mall. Because of its proximity to the trail, the FBFRT wrote a letter of support for the grant.

FBFRT is rolling out a volunteer program for light trail maintenance. If you want to do something about litter, weeds, overgrown grass, or debris on the trail, now is your chance. Chelmsford Trail Crew members sign up to perform periodic light maintenance on a 1/4 mile section of trail. In return you will receive a free cap or t-shirt and get credit on our website. You set your own schedule. Many thanks to those already helping with litter pick up: Eric Andrus, Mike Carignan, Casey Jones, Bob McCabe, and Fran Meidell. Also, thank you to Scott's Landscaping for donating occasional mowing at Cushing Place. Finally, thanks to Ken Van Tassell, the Chelmsford Trail Crew Coordinator. Come join the Crew! Contact [info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org](mailto:info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org).

Kudos to the volunteers who helped staff our successful July Fourth booth: Mike Carignan, Tom Gazda, Bill Gerber, Bill Schmidt, and Ken Van Tassell. We apologize to any volunteers whose names may have been omitted.

Next spring watch for daffodils planted on October 12 by the Chelmsford Garden Club along the trail in Chelmsford Center.

## Sudbury – Gold'n Silence

What's happening with the rail trail in Sudbury? With little information from either Town officials or the Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee (RTCAC) during the past year, that question comes up a lot. Although the Board of Selectmen (BOS) in April 2009 appointed a committee (Conservation Coordinator, Town Planner and DPW Director) to propose "concepts" for the rail trail, the committee has not yet made its report public.

However, the BOS has shown renewed interest in the rail trail, stating that, as one of its goals for 2011, it will work to "Develop and seek approval from the Town for vision for Bruce Freeman Rail Trail". The Town already has one concept for the rail trail as provided by the Town-funded "Engineering and Environmental Assessment" completed by a contractor in 2006.

At the April 2008 Town Meeting Sudbury residents overwhelmingly approved funds for the purchase of the CSX-owned rail bed (from Chiswick Road south to the Sudbury/Framingham town line). Although the purchase price has been negotiated, the purchase is still not complete. Completion of the purchase is also on the list of the BOS 2011 goals.

During the summer of 2010, new Selectman Bob Haarde accompanied members of the RTCAC on two walks of the railbed from Hop Brook to the Sudbury/Concord line. Also during the summer Town residents showed enthusiastic support for the rail trail as they cheered the Friends marching in the July Fourth parade. That enthusiasm continued at the FBFRT table set up during the outdoor concerts at Haskell Field.



Rail trail supporters marching in Sudbury's July 4th parade received fervent applause from the crowds along the route

## Quick Hit on Phase 2B Status

Phase 2B, the BFRT crossing of Rt. 2, originally was part of a much larger project: the Rt. 2 Rotary Reconstruction. With the Rotary project more or less stalled, and not even part of the state's long-range transportation plan through 2030, this summer, with the approval of MassDOT's Project Review Committee, Phase 2B was separated from the Rotary project.

The next step is for the Towns (Concord and Acton), using input from Phase 2B public meetings, to decide on whether a bridge or tunnel to cross Rt. 2 is preferred, and then submit the 25% design to MassDOT.

*Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail*  
 PO Box 1192  
 Concord, MA 01742



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**Show your support by joining today!**

Members will receive newsletters, notices of upcoming trail-related events, and opportunities to actively promote the rail trail through a variety of volunteer activities.

The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Membership fees and donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Yes! Sign me up as a supporter of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

- Individual Membership \$10
- Family Membership \$25
- Sponsor \$50
- Conductor \$100
- Engineer \$250
- RR Tycoon \$500+

\*Sponsor and above receive complimentary BFRT cap or T-shirt.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 First Name Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Address 1 (Street Address, P.O. Box, company name, c/o)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Address 2 (Apartment, suite, unit, building, floor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Daytime Phone Evening Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Email address

YES NO

I would like to receive the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail newsletter.  YES  NO

Send my newsletter via email (include email address above).  YES  NO

Send via postal mail.  YES  NO

I would like to receive email updates from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.  YES  NO

I am willing to receive phone calls from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.  YES  NO

I am a trail abutter.  YES  NO

I authorize the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to use my name for promotional efforts to support the trail.  YES  NO

I would like to volunteer.  YES  NO

Gift:  Cap  T-Shirt (S / M / L / XL)  No Thanks

Please enclose a check payable to Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and mail this form to:

**Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail**  
 PO Box 1192  
 Concord, MA 01742

You may also join on-line at [www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org](http://www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org)





**The rail trail has a logo!** FBFRT thanks Emily Simons, who volunteered significant time and effort designing the logo with input from the rail-trail towns. (The Friends logo  remains the same.)

## Keeping Your Wits

It's the law! In Massachusetts bicyclists under the age of 17 are required to wear a helmet. According to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, riders wearing helmets had an 85% reduction in risk of head injury in an accident. Even a slow rider can fall off a bike, hit their head and sustain a head injury.

In a tally of bicycle helmet usage on the BFRT in September roughly 1 out of every 4 bicyclists was not wearing a helmet. In many groups, all of the children were wearing helmets but none of the adults were. Crashes happen quickly, especially on a narrow trail with many users. A bicycle helmet can be the difference between an ambulance ride and continuing your ride. **Parents/adults wearing helmets are important role models for all children!**

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) supplies helmets through a statewide grant program. Towns and non-profits can apply to receive bicycle helmets through this program.

Both towns in Phase 1 of the trail have distributed free helmets. Chelmsford's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and Police Department received 275 helmets through the EOPSS grant program. Over 80 of those helmets were distributed on the BFRT in Chelmsford Center. BPAC still has small helmets, most suitable for children and young adults. Contact [ChelmsfordBPAC@gmail.com](mailto:ChelmsfordBPAC@gmail.com) for availability.

In Westford the Police Department distributed free helmets to young riders on June 27 at the Public Safety Day and again on September 25 at Westford's first annual Emergency Preparedness Day, which was sponsored by the Board of Health. The regional American Automobile Association provided about 50 helmets for the spring distribution. The fall distribution of 75 helmets was funded through an EOPSS grant.

## Encore!

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation has awarded a \$500 Community Spirit 9/11 'mini-grant' to the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Westford resident and Friends member, David Martin, a HPHC employee, applied for this grant to go toward amenities for Phase 1.

## Framingham - Garnering Support & Land

The Framingham Task Force of the FBFRT has been meeting regularly over the summer to develop a program for residents of Framingham to become familiar with the proposed trail on the CSX right-of-way (ROW). On the agenda for the fall is a scheduled canvassing of those who abut the ROW in Framingham to assess their level of support for the trail and to address any concerns they may have about the proposed development of the trail.

In addition, the Task Force is planning an event on the ROW this fall for residents to walk the trail and help with a clean-up/clearing effort of a designated portion of the ROW. The ROW in Framingham is over 3 miles long. Therefore the clearing/clean-up will need to occur in sections, most often between road way intersections. This project will no doubt take several attempts to clear the entire trail of brush and debris. Task force regulars include Sue Haney, Dawn Harkness, Donna Merrit, Brett Perruzzi, Jeff Shearstone, with strong support from Selectmen Dennis Giombetti and Jason Smith.

The Task Force was well represented at Framingham events during the summer and fall. The Friday Framingham Concerts on the Common this summer provided opportunities to discuss the trail with those who stopped by for information, a recent newsletter, or a brochure of the Framingham section of the trail. Many signed up for more information on our MemberClicks list, purchased T-shirts and caps or joined the Friends. The Friends also staffed a booth at the celebration of Sports, Culture and the Arts at Bowditch Field in October.

Most importantly, town officials in Framingham have been in discussion with CSX officials regarding the possible acquisition or transfer of the ROW into the public domain. This will be a protracted process, for sure, which will include discussions of several parcels of land in Framingham owned by CSX. The good news is that the discussions are underway. In the meantime the Task Force is working hard to generate public support for the eventual development of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to Rt. 9 in Framingham.

## BFRT On Chronicle



In mid October, Clint Conley, the Field Producer of "Chronicle", contacted the Friends asking to include the BFRT in their show about the Bay Circuit Trail. Clint met with us at Heart Pond where Board Members Alan Cameron and Sharon Galpin were photographed riding the BFRT, Emily Teller was interviewed, and Judy, the camera operator, intrepidly climbed aboard Sharon's bike toting her camera to capture a "live" video from the perspective of someone enjoying the trail on a bicycle! The show is due to air in early November, and as soon as we have the exact date we will inform supporters by email.

## Friends Annual Meeting

**When:** Sunday, November 21, 2 p.m.

**Where:** Pedal Power Bike and Ski  
176 Great Road (Rt. 2A), Acton  
Come see the recently expanded store!

**What:** After a brief business meeting, we will walk a section of the railbed behind Pedal Power.

Light refreshments will be served.

See [www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org](http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org) for more information

## How Many Use the Trail?

In June, July, and September FBFRT volunteers participated in counts of trail users. The counts on the BFRT were coordinated by the Chelmsford BPAC as part of statewide counts of trail usage organized by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The usage numbers are useful for comparison with other trails, prioritizing maintenance activities, and applying for grants. We plan to continue to participate in these statewide trail counts over the coming years.

Counts were taken in three locations: Maple Road, Chelmsford Center, and near the Chelmsford Mall on two Tuesdays and two Saturdays. The counts bore out the observations that the trail is used most between Chelmsford Center and Westford. Not surprisingly, there were more trips on the trail on a lovely autumn Saturday (around 1500) than there were on a hot summer Saturday (around 1100). Last September we counted around 1200 trips in the same location at Maple Road. By comparison, the numbers for the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway in Lexington on the same days were 3000 in September 2009 and 4000 in September 2010. The numbers for the BFRT are more similar to historic numbers for the Nashua River Rail Trail. All of these numbers are for a 12-hour period from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Trail users who pass a count location twice are counted twice, so the counts do not represent the number of users on a given day but rather the number of trips as noted above.

Most trips on Saturdays were by bicycle (around 70%) with about 20% walking, 6% running, and the rest using in-line skates, child carriers, or other forms of locomotion. The proportion of usage types varied by location and day of the week, with a higher proportion of walkers in Chelmsford Center and near the Chelmsford Mall than at Maple Road. Particularly striking were the Tuesday counts near the Chelmsford Mall. During a one-hour period around lunch time on Tuesday, September 14, about 70 walking trips were counted which represented 85% of the usage during that time period. During the September count approximately 25% of the cyclists were not wearing a helmet.

Over the four days we had 42 volunteers covering 96 one-hour time periods. Volunteers came from several towns including Acton, Chelmsford, Littleton, Lowell, Sudbury, and Westford.

Thank you to Gerri Abrams, Lynn Ahlgren, Boy Scout Troop 1 in Acton, Peter Broggi, Mike Carignan, Gini Chadbourne, Tom Christiano, Tracy Cutter, Carol Doblewski, Larry Doblewski, Jared Drake, Anthony Drehman, Thomas Drehman, Susan Julian Gates, Melinda Goodick, Paul Gross, Brian Hannigan, Kate Hollister, Nancy Kerr, David Kinzmaier, Jim Lane, Joan O'Brien, Jennifer Payne, Colin Piette, Tony Petito, Jeff Robinson, Norbert Schade, Bill Schmidt, David and John Schottler, Betty Twombly, Lisa Underkoffler, Arline Wood, all the members of the BPAC, and several FBFRT Board members. Several volunteers counted on more than one day, touché.

Thank you also to Agway (Maple Road), Center Sports (Chelmsford Center), and Staples (Chelmsford Mall) for allowing use of their stores as transfer stations for the clipboards on September 14.

Finally, thank you to those who volunteered but weren't afforded an opportunity to count. We hope to see you in the spring. A full article on the trail count can be found on the FBFRT website.



Hazel & Henry Johnstone with their father Stuart with the train "mascot" they created for the Friends. They are using it here in Concord's 375th Celebration parade.

### For Further Information:

**Visit:** [www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org](http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org)

### Call or Email:

Acton:	Tom Michelman	978-580-6190	<a href="mailto:tmichelman@comcast.net">tmichelman@comcast.net</a>
Carlisle:	Alan Cameron	978-369-2223	<a href="mailto:alancameron@comcast.net">alancameron@comcast.net</a>
Chelmsford:	Cynthia McLain	978-726-0864	<a href="mailto:cynthia.mclain@comcast.net">cynthia.mclain@comcast.net</a>
Concord:	Barbara Pike	978-369-0437	<a href="mailto:bbpike@aol.com">bbpike@aol.com</a>
Framingham:	John Stasik	508-877-6771	<a href="mailto:jstasik@rcn.com">jstasik@rcn.com</a>
Lowell:	Sharon Galpin	978-446-8906	<a href="mailto:sgalpin99@gmail.com">sgalpin99@gmail.com</a>
Sudbury:	Dick Williamson	978-618-5475	<a href="mailto:williamson@ll.mit.edu">williamson@ll.mit.edu</a>
Westford:	Emily Teller	978-692-6968	<a href="mailto:eteller@earthlink.net">eteller@earthlink.net</a>

**Attend:** Monthly Friends meetings

**Send Email:** [info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org](mailto:info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org)

### Newsletter Photo Credits:

Barbara Pike, Emily Teller, Tom Teller, Dick Williamson, Alan Cameron and Sharon Galpin