

Robert Frost Farm Friends Newsletter

(Robert Frost Homestead Foundation)

The
Robert Frost Farm



P.O. Box 1075 Derry, New Hampshire 03038
A National and New Hampshire Historic Site

Issue 2

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"Considering his work as a whole we can think of no poet of his generation who seems to us more worthy to survive." —London Spectator.

... "Those days - precious to all of them - were the days when Rob's poetry was growing inside him. Robert Frost was almost the perfect example of William Wordsworth's philosophy that poetry 'takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.' Frost's memories of life on the Derry farm were later to be transformed into some of his most beautiful poems..."

"In the evenings, after Elinor and the children were all asleep, Rob continued to scratch out his poems by lamplight. When he wrote 'The Pasture,' a poem that urges 'I shan't be gone long. - You come too,' he told Lesley he had written it for her, because she was the one who loved to trail after him on the farm. When she grew older, he confessed that that he had actually written it for Elinor..." — Robert Frost: Poems, Life, Legacy, Marianne Saccardi & Marilyn Jody — Henry Holt and Company, NY.



SORROW'S SEASON IS UPON US

Sometime during the long days of early darkness that herald the onset of winter, Frost wrote at Derry in 1903:

"...MY Sorrow, when she's here with me,
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be.
She loves the bare, the withered tree;
She walks the sodden pasture lane..."

My November Guest.

"The utmost of ambition is to lodge a few poems where they will be hard to get rid of.

Sometimes I have my doubts of words altogether, and I ask myself what is the place of them. They are worse than nothing unless they do something; unless they amount to deeds, as in ultimatums or battle-cries. They must be flat and final like the show-down in poker, from which there is no appeal. My definition of poetry (if I were forced to give one) would be this: **words that have become deeds.**"

From "Robert Frost," by Percy H. Boynton, English Journal, October, 1922.

THE ROBERT FROST YOUTH POET PROGRAM RECEPTION.

Fourth grade student Jean-Luc Bouchard, winner of the Robert Frost Youth Poet for 2002, is the son of Marc and Kathy Bouchard of Hudson. Teacher Marilyn Tremblay and Librarian Pat Zube of the Library Street School in Hudson, NH encouraged Jean-Luc's poetic development. Over 600 students competed this year representing all counties in the state. Below, Jean-Luc reads his poem while Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees David Watters, Ph D holds the microphone.

The 2002 Youth Poetry Awards Ceremony was held Saturday, June 22, 2002 at 12 noon at the Robert Frost Farm in Derry.



Poems this year reflected the theme of "New Hampshire: Our Land", inspired by Frost's "The Gift Outright." In addition to Bouchard, the following students were honored: Matt Dow, Carroll County Poet. Joey D. Scherr Jr., Carroll County honorable mention. Casey Powers, Cheshire County Poet. Josh Martin, Cheshire County honorable mention. Molly Goolman, Coos County Poet. Philip Burke, Coos County honorable mention. Sydney Lea, Grafton County Poet. Andrea Ford, Grafton County honorable mention. Kristen Lake, Hillsborough County Poet. Arianna Vailas, Hillsborough County honorable mention. Ellen Attarri, Merrimack County Poet. Atticus Sweet, Merrimack County honorable mention. Joshua Aboody, Rockingham Poet. Gregory Jacobs, Rockingham County honorable mention. Dennis Nadeau, Stratford County Poet. Melissa Moreau, Stratford County honorable mention. Jennifer Coverdale, Sullivan County Poet. And Carmen DelGenis, Sullivan County honorable mention. Congratulations to one and all.

That this event continues to gain recognition in the state is evidenced by a recent mention of last year's

Stratford County Poetry winner in a copy of Farm Trustee Alice Dickenson's Spring Issue of the New Hampshire Retired Educator's Newsletter.

The Robert Frost Youth Poet Program is generously supported by an endowment from the Finisterre Fund of New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. Trustees of the Robert Frost Homestead Foundation. State of New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development - Division of Parks and Recreation. Poetry Society of New Hampshire.

EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP OF England reports in their August, 2002 Newsletter that "Boston University in conjunction with **Handsel Books** is to publish the complete literary exchanges between Edward Thomas and Robert Frost. The book will include all the letters from each to the other, the poems connected with their association, the reviews of *A Boys Will* and *North of Boston*, *This England*, the essay about experiences with Frost although he is not mentioned in it by name, and other letters between the two families. It is an ambitious and welcome project. The Fellowship is co-operating with the university and further information will be published in future newsletters." Also, in the same newsletter is mention of "**When Christmas Comes, an anthology of Childhood Christmases** is published by Sutton Publishing. It includes work by Helen Thomas Farjeon, Walter de la Mare, W.H. Davis, and an unpublished piece by Robert Frost. This changing and thoughtful book contains pieces by many of Edward Thomas's friends."

New Hampshire Fall: A walk in the woods with Dad

Moist leaves form a red carpet
Welcoming us into the woods
The familiar path leads us up a steep hill
Dad points out distant mountains
Covered with skin of rock, like the scales
Of a great lizard.
The ground beneath is overrun by an army of ferns
Still barely green, dreading the first frost.

Chanterelles, boletes, porcine, hen-of-the-woods
Make up little huts -villages
Hidden beneath fallen trees.
Dad says: "Watch out for amanita, the angel of Death."
The pines rise above us, Roman columns
Holding up the sky, protecting maple and oak.
White birches stand out among them all,
Their bark peeling and revealing dark flesh underneath.
The urge to touch is in my veins.

A granite chair awaits me
My favorite place to sit, think and watch Dad
Watching migrating birds. I see no deer
But part of me feels that they see us.
Dad tells stories on the way back.
My mind wanders away from the woods,
Until I trip—over a root or rock
Reminding me (like a slap in the face)
That I'm still here.

Jean-Luc Bouchard

ROBERT FROST COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Frost friends, fans, and scholars surely recall the issuance of a commemorative 10-cent stamp at the Derry Homestead on March 26, 1974, celebrating the centennial of Frost's birth. Few however, are probably aware of the little-known story behind the selection of a particular photograph of Frost that stamp artist Paul Calle used for his drawing.



Andover, Connecticut resident, David Rhinelander -- a selectman, writer, and maple farmer, first met Frost in Ripton, Vermont during his summer vacation from Harvard University in 1957. Rhinelander had the unique opportunity to photograph the poet with the help of his then-girlfriend, Ann Morrison, whose mother happened to be Frost's manager, secretary and friend, Kathleen Morrison.

When he wasn't photographing students at nearby Middlebury College, he was at the Homer Noble Farm, another of Frost's properties, where the Morrison's summered in the farmhouse situated below Frost's cabin on the hill above. Rhinelander, a philosophy major, and Frost became friends that summer, discussing and debating American history and other topics of mutual interest.

It was through Kathleen Morrison's intervention that Rhinelander was able to photograph Frost (who did not like photographers), during a family picnic where Frost sat under a tree in an informal and relaxed setting.

Rhinelander then sent the photos to Frost's publisher, Holt Rhinehart, who paid him a nominal fee for the photos. However, since he never copyrighted his work, this oversight came back to haunt him when he learned that artist Paul Calle received sole credit for his drawing of Rhinelander's photo of Frost that was ultimately used for the commemorative stamp.

Hoping to right this wrong, he wrote Frost's publisher and also the Postmaster General, asking only for credit for his photograph. Within a month, Gordon C. Morison, director of stamps, wrote him expressing the Postal Service's thanks and appreciation for his photo, assuring him that he would receive credit and recognition for the Robert Frost photograph used by Calle as the design concept. He was then presented with a sheet of the Frost stamps in a leather binder together with a copy of Kennedy's inauguration ceremonies, and a small check for his contribution.

For Rhinelander, Frost's impact was memorable. Today he owns many books about the poet where his photos of Frost are reproduced and for which he still receives royalties from Holt. His appreciation of Frost's poetry has developed and grown over the years - so much so that he admits to reading one of Frost's better-known poems "The Road Not Taken" at the wedding of one of his sons. A reading that could be interpreted as a reciprocal tribute to Frost, who gave Rhinelander his own favorite copy of "The Complete Poems of Robert Frost", inscribing it with lines based on "The Gift Outright", a poem he would say three years later at Kennedy's inauguration. Frost had shortened the poem, substituting Rhinelander's name in the last lines:

*"... To whom better could I repeat this
sentiment than to a Rhine-
lander I like so much."*

ROBERT FROST STONE HOUSE DEDICATED IN VERMONT

The Stone House on Route 7A in South Shaftsbury, Vermont that Robert Frost owned for nine years, from 1920 to 1929 was recently dedicated as The Robert Frost Stone House Museum. Following the address of Keynote speaker Peter A. Gilbert, Literary Executor of the Frost estate and Executive Director of the Vermont Council on Humanities, the large crowd enjoyed visiting the museum where the woodcut art of J.J. Lankes who worked with Frost during the Shaftsbury years is prominently featured together with the Peter J. Stanlis Collection of photographs, and memorabilia acquired during Stanlis' long friendship with the poet. Among those attending were Elinor Wilbur, Frost's granddaughter, and great-granddaughter Kate who traveled from Connecticut for the event.

Owned by The Friends of Robert Frost, an organization founded by Carole Thompson of Bennington, the museum will be open through December 31. Hours are Tuesday through Sunday 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. A small bookshop is on the museum's premises. Visit their web site at www.frostfriends.org



In an effort to acquaint our readers with members of the Robert Frost Farm Board of Trustees, we would like to introduce you to one of our most valued and distinguished trustees who has served on the board since its establishment in 1965.

Hannah Rutter Martin

Since its dedication as an historic landmark on May 22, 1977, the Robert Frost Homestead has provided visitors from throughout the world with an opportunity to view the poet's Derry home and grounds as they were when he and his family resided there from 1900 to 1909. Hannah Martin knows from first-hand experience the tremendous challenges which this restoration project presented before the homestead was purchased, restored, and opened to the public.

A life-long resident of Derry, Hannah enthusiastically joined the initial efforts in 1965 to have Frost's home preserved and maintained as a living memorial to America's best-loved poet. As a member of the newly formed board of trustees, she began making inquiries of Frost family members, friends and Derry acquaintances for their recollections on the precise character of the homestead during the years of Frost's occupancy.

While most would find such a project too daunting to undertake, an enthusiastic Hannah directed untold time and energy to the task at hand. "I even hemmed the organdy curtains in the dining room to Lesley Ballantine's exact specifications," Hannah said. "It's funny how things happen. I was just out of nurses training and I wanted to make a good impression, so I worked hard at anything and everything I could do for the Frost Farm project."

In addition to all her other projects on behalf of the Frost Homestead, in 1974, Governor Meldrim Thompson appointed Hannah to serve on the Robert Frost Commemorative Stamp Issuance Committee to prepare a program of events celebrating the stamp's first day of issue. Frost aficionados and numismatists from across the country gathered on March 26th of that year to honor Robert Frost and remember the inspiration he drew from his years at the Derry farm. Twelve years after she joined the board, Hannah experienced another memorable event when she attended the official dedication of the Frost Homestead.

In 1984, Hannah was elected President of the Frost Farm Board of Trustees, a position which she held for the next sixteen years. During her tenure as President of the Board, she worked tirelessly to improve the property and expand the educational programs presented there. The Youth Poetry Program which offers New Hampshire 4th grade students the opportunity to express their feeling about New Hampshire in a poem, and the Summer Literary Series featuring lectures by Frost scholars and celebrated poets are just two of the noteworthy programs instituted under Hannah's direction. Development of the Visitors' Center in the barn has also been an ongoing project of Hannah's, in addition to her continuing pursuit of historical items for the homestead's interior.

Prior to the Trustee's Fall Meeting of 2000, Hannah informed members of the board that she would be resigning the position she had held for so many years. Two weeks later, Governor Jeanne Shaheen personally presented her with a commendation for all her years of service to the Frost Farm.

When asked what she feels is her greatest contribution to the Frost Farm Homestead, Hannah replied, "I am proudest of the way I was able to organize the trustees into an effective working group. This teamwork is what makes the Farm program run so smoothly. I must add that I am grateful for all the personal rewards I have experienced since I joined the board and for all the wonderful trustees who have worked so diligently on the many projects over the years."

As she has for the past 37 years, Hannah continues to be an active and valuable member of the board of trustees, currently serving as an advisor to the Executive Board, on the Acquisitions and Historical Integrity Committee, and as a key component on the Legal/Financial Committee. Hannah is a truly remarkable individual and her dedication to preserving the memory of Robert Frost and his Derry home is unparalleled.

Retirement from the nursing profession for the past several years has afforded her more time to spend with her husband Peter at their unique log-cabin home. An afternoon spent with Hannah is always an educational experience whether she is sharing her gardening expertise or her wealth of memories of Derry in earlier times. Hannah is a true New Hampshire treasure and anyone lucky enough to have made her acquaintance is the richer for the experience.

HAPPENINGS AT THE FARM

The Frost Farm Homestead, a place where Frost found his poetic voice, has hosted several local and New Hampshire groups this past season. Among those using the Farm for events were:

DERRY VILLAGE ROTARY For the past ten years Derry Village Rotary has met in June at the Robert Frost Farm, where they enjoy a catered banquet. Then they settle in for the highlight of the evening when members read their favorite poems, surrounded by the stone walls, woods, orchards, streams, and fields of Frost's poetry. This year the barn echoed with selections that ranged from a whimsical rendition of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" to an audio-tape of Frost reading some of his splendid verse.

In recognition of the importance of the Farm to New Hampshire's landscape and also as a tribute to Frost's enduring legacy, Derry Village Rotary has long adorned its banner with a scene depicting the Robert Frost Homestead; this year adding the colors of New England's Autumn foliage.

DERRY GARDEN CLUB held their picnic on the grounds of the Farm this summer. It is the Garden Club's generous and talented volunteers who are responsible for work on the delightful Children's Garden.

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL Members of the Council whose mandate is to recommend National Landmarks, met July 29 in the Farm's barn for an afternoon meeting.

VISITOR STATISTICS Again this year, the Derry Farm's Guest Book recorded a greater percentage of visitors from New Hampshire and the New England region. However, many foreign visitors from places as far away as the Marshall Islands and Guam came to see the place where Frost first wrote his immortal lines.

BOARD MEMBER RESIGNS At their September meeting the Board of Trustees of the Robert Frost Farm Homestead accepted with regret the resignation of Trustee Joan Midgely who will be living in Arizona for 6 months of each year.

NEW TRUSTEE APPOINTED Robert Frost Homestead Board of Trustees recently unanimously approved the appointment of Hercules "Herc" Papachristos of East Derry, to the Board. An antique dealer by profession, "Herc" specializes in antique appraisals and auctions. A graduate of Pinkerton Academy and Franklin Pierce College, he has had a life-long love of antiques. His expertise in this field should prove to be an invaluable asset in the area of acquisitions for the Farm.

EXCHANGE STUDENTS VISIT THE FROST FARM

After three weeks of attending classes at Pinkerton Academy, the twenty-two exchange students from The Theresianum School in Mainz, Germany took a well-deserved break on October 11th to tour the Robert Frost Homestead. As 11th and 12th grade students, they have studied the poetry of Robert Frost as part of their school's curriculum and were anxious to visit the place that inspired so many of his best-known works. Students and their chaperones were treated to a very informative house tour conducted by Park Ranger Ben Fontaine, followed by an exploration of the farm's nature trail. Heinz Raepple, Germany's program coordinator of GAPP (German-American Partnership Program), expressed his gratitude to all the individuals who made the tour possible, noting this was the first time that his groups have had the opportunity to tour the interior of the house and peruse exhibits in the farm's visitor's center. Because the exchange students arrive after Labor Day, the farm is closed on weekdays; but this year, special arrangements were made to accommodate the students' busy schedules. The students asked many questions during their tour and were genuinely impressed by the picturesque homestead.

"We all had a better understanding of why this place inspired Frost to write poetry," Raepple said. "I know the students will have a deeper appreciation of Frost and his poetry after today."

Pinkerton Academy and the Theresianum School began the student exchange program ten years ago with visitations scheduled every two years. P.A. students will travel to Mainz in June where the hospitality extended by the host families in the Derry community will be reciprocated by families in Mainz.

Edward Vaitones, Pinkerton's German teacher and GAPP coordinator, who requested the special tour remarked, "We Americans often forget the international appeal of Frost's poetry. These students' enthusiasm at the Frost Farm shows us how much Frost's poems and his Derry home are valued throughout the world."

FRIENDS of the ROBERT FROST FARM MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

STUDENT.....\$10.00 INDIVIDUAL.....\$20.00 FAMILY.....\$35.00
SPONSOR.....\$50.00 SUPPORTING....\$100.00 CORPORATE...\$250.00

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____

Mail to: Ian Veitenheimer, Treasurer
Friends of the Robert Frost Farm
P. O. Box 1075
Derry, NH 03038

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP — *Please tell a friend.*

DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE I-93

Rte. I 93, Exit 4. East on Rte. 102 to Derry New Hampshire Traffic Circle. South on Rte. 28 for 1 ¼ miles to the farm. Programs are made possible by grants from the New Hampshire Humanities Council and are sponsored by the Robert Frost Homestead Trustees and the Friends of the Robert Frost Farm. Speaker Programs are free to the public.

www.nonprofitumbrella.org/frostfarm

Telephone (603) 432-3091

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