



# Friends of the Robert Frost Farm NEWSLETTER

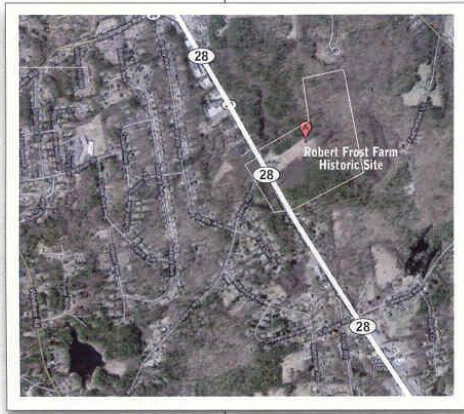
A National and New Hampshire Historic Site

SPRING 2010 • ISSUE 11

## History Meets Development

**The Road  
More Traveled**  
Route 28 and the  
development creeping  
ever closer to the  
Frost Farm

Local business interests in Derry, including a welding business that abuts a pond on the Frost Farm, want Route 28 near the Farm rezoned for increased commercial activity. Historic preservationists and literary enthusiasts are worried about the impact on the land surrounding Frost's early home. Public workshops have been held by the local Planning Board—and more are coming. The outcome isn't apparent, though, and there is some cause for concern.



From time to time in the early 1960s, Robert Frost expressed a wish that something be done about the state of the farm in Derry where he and his family lived for ten years and where his poetic voice was formed. The farm was then littered with the detritus of an automobile salvage business; it

took a while, but the State of New Hampshire eventually purchased the property, and a board of trustees was founded to restore it and its surroundings to the condition in which it is today (the Farm is listed in the Registry of National Historic Sites and is considered one of the jewels of the New Hampshire State Parks). It was hard work then, and it's hard work now. There's pressure from folks who want to expand their businesses. Nothing wrong with that, except the fact that the natural setting of the Farm—its stonewalls and fields and trees—are at the essence of most of Frost's most memorable work. If they are lost, so too is the pastoral setting of the property. The irony can't be missed.

Meanwhile, a six-member Planning Board chaired by David Granese and the town's Planning & Community Development arm led by George Sioras, are trying to find a solution that satisfies all parties. Over the course of three workshops that began in November of last year business owners made it clear that they feel there's enough buffer in place to allow for growth. Supporters of the Farm, including Trustee Charles Dent, have pointed out the value of the Farm to the local tourist economy, the impact the Farm has on the pride of the community and the need to preserve it. Former Chair of the Trustees Laura Burnham has suggested the idea of creating an historic district for the site. Nadine Peterson, Division of Historic Resources, suggested consideration of a neighborhood heritage district whereby an advisory board would work alongside the planning board versus creation of specific zoning buffers and easements. The *Derry News* reported on April 7, 2010 that the planners are considering a General Commercial III Zoning designation rather than that of an historic overlay district to protect the Frost Farm while encouraging growth along Route 28. New Hampshire Historic Sites Specialist Ben Wilson is glad that the town is concerned about the issues surrounding development, and says that the planners are doing a good job of finding out about best practices from the experts. In the end, however, if it's a planning issue, it's a political issue. And those are usually settled by the the last people standing in the room.

To express your support for the Farm's interests in this matter, correspondence may be sent to:

Town of Derry Planning Board  
14 Manning Street  
Derry, NH 03038

## State of the Farm: Preservation Update

Visitors to the Robert Frost Farm this year will immediately apprehend the improvement of the entrance apron and parking lot completed last year using part of the funds secured in 2008 by Senator Judd Gregg to repair and maintain the Farm. Less apparent but of great importance is that the barn is now being stabilized through replacement of a rotted beam, the overall barn foundation is being secured and longstanding drainage difficulties have been eliminated by the introduction of French drains and drip edges all around.

Now the earnest work begins to spend down the remainder of the grant during this fiscal year. Between May 3 and the end of October, the Bureau of Historic Sites will complete renovations and repairs that include a new roof for the house; a new porch roof; redesign and reconstruction of bathroom facilities in the barn; strengthening of the house and barn foundations; electrical upgrades; interior plaster repair; and interior paint, as needed. By the end of the summer, the Robert Frost Homestead will be the first completely restored site in



the inventory of the State of New Hampshire Bureau of Historic Sites.

Every effort has been made to choose materials and methods appropriate to the age of the structures. The house roof will be done in Alaskan Yellow Cedar wood shingles. They are a high quality, long lasting shingle that weathers grey and will restore the original effect of the roof. A lead coated copper porch roof will be constructed to match the old manner of roofing involving smaller sheets of material. Foundation work will utilize dry laid stone and result in overall strengthening of the structure.



Kumin

### Kumin and Espailat Join Hyla Brook Poets

Maxine Kumin and Rhina Espailat are among the poets who will join a local writers' group, the Hyla Brook Poets, formed by Trustee Robert Crawford and Farm Manager William Glead, at its summer readings in the barn at the Frost Farm. Readings are 6:30-8:00 the second Thursday of each month and workshops are from 10:00-1:00 the third Saturday of each month.

**Thursday • July 8 • 6:30-8:00 PM**

Maxine Kumin of Warner, NH won a Pulitzer in 1980 for her work *Up Country* and served as United States Poet Laureate 1981-82. She is the author of seventeen volumes of poetry laced with the rhythms of New England life, five novels, twelve children's books and numerous essays and short stories.

**Thursday • August 12 • 6:30-8:00 PM**

Rhina Espailat of Newburyport, MA is a native of the Dominican Republic who has lived in the United States since 1939. She is the author of eight poetry collections, among them *Where Horizons Go*, *Rehearsing Absence* and *Playing at Stillness*. She was the first to receive the Tree at My Window Award from the Robert Frost Foundation for her Spanish translations of Robert Frost.

**Saturday Workshops • July 17 and August 21 • 10:00 AM-1:00 PM**



Espailat

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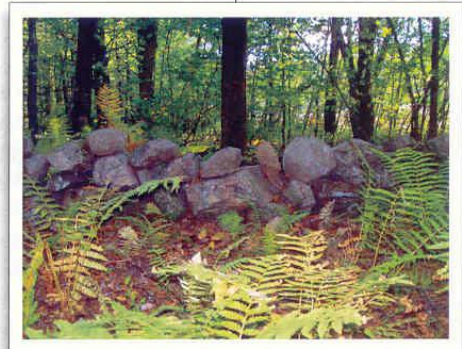
## The 2010 Season Has Begun—Don't Forget to Visit

The 2010 season at the Robert Frost Homestead began on Wednesday, May 5, with house tours conducted on the hour until 3:00 PM, displays, the walking trail along the Hyla Brook, and poetry readings. As ever, our programs to the public are offered free of charge. The State has undertaken renewed promotion of the Farm for school groups, and we anticipate continued growth in visitor activity as a result of the long sought interstate highway signage directing travelers to the site.

Ben Wilson, State Historic Sites Specialist, announced a welcome to Alex Fowler as a new guide this summer and offered many thanks to departing guide Stephen Ormond of Derry. Stephen is the grandson of Trustee Laura Burnham and has given years of service to the Farm as a guide for house tours, in the upkeep of the sixty acres of grounds, and with the

maintenance of the Farm itself. Alex Fowler is a Derry resident who graduated Pinkerton Academy and is currently enrolled at the University of Vermont as an English major.

This summer promises to be a busy and productive one at the site. We encourage our supporters, especially, to visit the Farm this year to enjoy its beauty, review both recent and ongoing preservation work and witness the stream of visitors from all corners of the world who find their way to the setting that imbued the early work of Robert Frost.



*Your support can  
make all the difference...*

### Friends of the Robert Frost Farm—Membership Form

- Student (\$10)     Individual (\$20)     Family (\$35)     Sponsor (\$50)     Supporter (\$100)
- Benefactor (\$250)     Corporation (\$50)     An additional gift of support in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for sustaining your support—please invite a friend to join us.*

Please mail your completed membership form and check to:  
Peter S. Gaucher, Treasurer • Friends of the Robert Frost Farm • PO Box 1075 • Derry, NH 03038

The Robert Frost Homestead Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization under the IRS tax code. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

## Our Pledge

*The Friends of the Robert Frost Farm assist the Trustees of the Robert Frost Homestead Foundation to develop and present programs for the public relating to the Farm and to promote the life and poetry of Robert Frost. The Farm in Derry is a living memorial to one of the world's foremost literary figures and the inspiration for many of his most enduring works.*

*We wish to appeal to Frost enthusiasts of all ages to join us in our efforts to promote the life, work and legacy of America's best-loved poet. Historic preservation of his Derry home that began over forty years ago continues to rely on your abiding interest and generosity. Please help us in any way you can.*

## Educational Signage for the Self-guided Tour of the Hyla Brook

Farm Trustees Charles and Marilyn Dent, Claire Ternan and Hercules Pappachristos are writing the narrative for the durable, attractive outdoor markers to be placed along the Hyla Brook Trail using funding from a \$10,000 gift to the State that the Hampton Hotels Corporation made last year to educate the Farm's visitors about Frost and his work. The signage will compliment and expand upon the brochure currently used on the self-guided tour and will include both images and story. The project will benefit from support and assistance from the Bureau of Historic Sites.

## FROST FARM HOURS

*The farmhouse and barn are open 10:00-4:00 on the following schedule:*

*May 5 - June 27 Wed-Sun*

*June 28 - Sept 6 Daily*

*Sept 8 - Oct 11 Wed-Sun*

*Tours on the hour until 3:00*

### *Admission*

*\$7 for adults*

*\$3 for children ages 6-17*

*children ages 5 & under FREE*

*The Robert Frost Farm grounds are open year-round.*

## The Robert Frost Farm

PO Box 1075

Derry, NH 03038