

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 6

Fall 2004

FROST IS IN GOOD COMPANY: FAMOUS AMERICANS WHO HAVE RESIDED IN DERRY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

During the 177 years since Derry's incorporation, several noteworthy individuals have resided in this quaint southern New Hampshire town. In the pre-Revolutionary era Robert Roger's, father of America's Army Rangers, best remembered for his daring exploits as the leader of the famed Roger's Rangers during the French and Indian Wars, and as the hero of Kenneth Roberts's *Northwest Passage*, was a member of this picturesque community.

General John Stark, soldier at the Battle of Bunker Hill and hero of the Battle of Bennington (VT) also called Derry his home, as did Matthew Thornton, revered physician, revolutionary patriot and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Mary Lyon, religious leader, pioneer in women's education and founder of Mt. Holyoke College taught at the Adams Female Academy in Upper Village (East Derry) during the 1820's and established new educational opportunities for the young women of Derry during her tenure there.

Another former East Derry resident brought worldwide attention to this little community in May of 1961. When *Freedom 7* lifted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, Derry's entire population proudly cheered as Alan Shepard, America's first man in space successfully completed his historic flight and heroically made his mark on American history. Nearly ten years later, residents were once again riveted to their television screens to watch this favorite son hit a golf ball across the surface of the moon.

Shepard, one of only twelve people on earth looking at the moon on a clear night and able to say "I've been there," is undoubtedly one of Derry's most revered residents but there is one other whose name may be remembered long after Shepard's fame has become but a footnote in a page of history.

When this man moved to a thirty-acre farm on the east side of Route 28 about two miles from Derry Village, he had two choices for how he would provide for his family...as a factory worker or as a farmer. Robert Frost chose the latter.

By 1900, the year that Frost moved into the "Magoon Place," Derry's economy was primarily driven by a booming shoe factory industry spurred by speedy railroad transportation in the western section of town. Most pastures and farmlands had already been replaced by stores, hotels, taverns, housing developments, and churches. But on his modest rural homestead, Frost, virtually isolated from the rest of the community, struggled to make his farm self-supporting during the daylight hours and pursued his passion for writing poetry late into the night.

Robert Frost, the charismatic poet-farmer whose native touch and creative inspiration seem to have sprung from his Derry soil as surely as wildflowers from a meadow went on to become the first poet invited to speak at the inauguration of a president, the only ever to receive the Pulitzer Prize four times, and undisputedly, America's best-loved poet.

Men and women who rise to greatness are generally unwavering in their pursuit of a dream which becomes the driving force in their lives. The driving force in Robert Frost's life was writing poetry. The genius of this farmer-poet who found his poetic voice and inspiration on his Derry farm is acknowledged worldwide, his words continue to speak to our very souls, and his permanence as a literary great is certainly assured. That he took the road less traveled and followed it to such a successful, glorious conclusion places Frost at the pinnacle of Derry's most honored and admired citizens.

ROBERT FROST YOUTH POETRY PROGRAM

The Robert Frost Youth Poetry Program held June 19 at the Frost's Homestead in Derry was gain a successful event, thanks to Trustee's Vice Chairman David Watters of UNH, Poetry Society of New Hampshire members, Verna Cahill, Peter Langella, Carolyn Veitenheimer, and Ian Veitenheimer who judged the winning entries.

Eighteen fourth grade County and Honorable Mention Poets joined 2004 Robert Frost Youth Poet Ellen Fitch of Concord in reading their poems using the theme of "Nature in New Hampshire"; a compelling affirmation that poetry is alive and well in New Hampshire's classrooms.

Ellen Finch was a student of Mrs. Berger at Conant School in concord, NH.

NATURE

by Ellen Finch

Streaks of color adorn the sky
a sunset rises and passes by
burst of yellow, pink, and red
Gorgeous colors swirl in my head

Pink lady slippers bloom
purple lilacs smell like perfume
white crocuses take on full shape
yellow buttercups lighten the landscape

White-tailed deer leap through the air
stomping on the ground is a black bear
Wolves lurk in deep fog
up a tree hops a frog

Pines sway in the breeze
along with oak and apple trees
white birch's bark is as soft as a cloud
strong maples stand tall and proud

Sparkling lakes reflect the moon
along the water, a graceful loon
majestic mountains rise and fall
grand New Hampshire has them all.



Ellen Finch, NH Youth Poet & David Watters,, PhD

COUNTY & HONORABLE MENTION POETS FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

Belknap county Poet, Brittany Coulstring, Honorable Mention, Taylor Loranger. Carroll County Poet, Peter Gibson, Honorable Mention, Tyrra Demeritt.

Chester County Poet, Paige Bussiere, Honorable Mention, Danielle Rondeau.

Coos County Poet, Shauna Randall.

Grafton County Poet, Camden Johnson, Honorable Mention, Willie Sagraves.

Hillsborough County Poet, Jennifer Peet, Honorable Mention, Austen Theroux.

Merrimack County Poet, Ian Greene, Honorable Mention, Jillian Lanney.

Rockingham County Poet, Mary Melanson, Honorable Mention, Victoria Leathers.

Sullivan County Poet, Hannah Schafer, Honorable Mention, Alexis Romano.

FROST'S GRANDDAUGHTER VISITS DERRY

Stormy weather on Sunday, August 1st changed the venue for Frost granddaughter Robin Hudnut's talk from the Derry Farm to Pinkerton Academy's Stockbridge Theater located in the recently expanded addition to the school where Frost taught a century ago.

In sharing Robert Frost's planetary world of poetry and family with her audience, Robin's talk was an intimate portrayal of the unique and loving connection she enjoyed with her grandfather.

At a reception following the program, Robin is pictured here talking to one of many devoted Frost fans. In the foreground left of Robin, is author Natalie Bober holding a copy of her 1981 biography of Frost entitled "The Restless Spirit." The book's dust jacket features Robin's imaginative illustration depicting the snow-filled landscape of Frost's New England.



FARM POSTCARDS UPDATED

This past summer, professional photographer Carl Howard of New York whose photographs of Robert Frost appear on the poetry note cards which have been available at the Frost Homestead for several years, spent the day at Derry photographing exterior and interior scenes of the Robert Frost Farm.



During his daylong shoot, which began at 8:00 a.m. and ended at dusk, Howard's fascination



with the effect of light on his subjects is vividly captured in the play of shadow on the Farmhouse and attached buildings.

Glossy prints suitable for framing together with postcards of these and several other museum-quality photographs reminiscent of a Maxfield Parrish painting will be available for sale in the Barn's bookstore next summer.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Over 2000 visitors toured the house and grounds and attended the literary lectures this summer. Although figures were down 6% from the previous year, the visitor turnout was good considering the Farm was open only 6 days instead of the usual 7 days of past seasons. Forty-six of the fifty states were represented as well as visitors from foreign countries that included Sri Lanka, Germany, Wales, Ireland, Australia, England, Canada, and Mexico.

FARMMANAGER RESIGNS

Farm Manager Ben Fontaine submitted his resignation following the closing of the Farm for the season. He writes that his years of affiliation with the Robert Frost Farm have allowed him to increase his knowledge and understanding of both the author and his poetry and further involve others. We wish him an enjoyable retirement.

OCTOBER PROGRAM FEATURES NEW HAMPSHIRE POETS

Poetry readings by six poets on Sunday afternoon, October 3rd in the Barn



Don Kimball

Theater concluded the Farm's literary events for the year. Four of those reading their poems were from New Hampshire, the other two from the Boston area. Among those featured were Don Kimball, Midge Goldberg, Robert Crawford, Bill Gleed, Peter Desmond and Paula Savoy.

Don Kimball is a retired family therapist living in Concord, NH. His poetry has appeared in *The Formalist*, *The Lyric*, *City Review*, *lambs & Trochees*,

and other journals. He received Honorable Mentions in the Newburyport Arts Association Poetry Contest 2004 and The Lyric Poetry Contest 2003. He is a member of the Powwow River Poets of Newburyport.

Midge Goldberg is a member of the Powwow River Poets and lives in Derry, NH. She is a software designer in a business she co-owns, and she is also a graduate student in writing at UNH. She recently won 3rd prize in the 2004 Newburyport Art Association Poetry Contest, and an Honorable Mention in the 2003 Robert Frost Poetry Contest.

Robert Crawford lives and works in Chester, NH. He is an Assistant Professor at Chester College of New England where he teaches poetry. His poems have appeared in *The Formalist*, *First Things*, *The Dark Horse*, *The Comstock Review*, *The Lyric*, *Light* and other journals. His first book *Too Much Explanation Can Ruin A Man* will be available this winter.

Bill Gleed who organized the readings, is a Tremont, NH resident. He is an adjunct faculty member at Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester where he teaches writing and literature. Much of his poetry has been published in periodicals and journals.



Bill Gleed

Rounding out the program were the two Boston area poets; Paula Savoy and Peter Desmond who often perform together at poetry readings. Both are award-winning poets whose work has appeared in magazines and journals.



Robert Crawford



Midge Goldberg



Paula Savoy & Peter Desmond

CHRISTMAS TREES A CIRCULAR LETTER

A thousand Christmas trees I didn't know I had!
Worth three cents more to give away than sell,
As may be shown by a simple calculation.
Too bad I couldn't lay one in a letter.
I can't help wishing I could send you one
In wishing you herewith a **Merry Christmas**.

Robert Frost

RECENT BOOK RELEASES

ROBERT FROST

An Adventure in Poetry, 1900-1918

Lesley Lee Francis

With a new introduction by the author

In this volume, Lesley Lee Francis, granddaughter of Robert Frost, brings to life the Frost family's idyllic early years. Through their own words, we enter the daily lives of Robert, known as RF to his family and friends, his wife Elinor, and their four children, Lesley, Carol, Irma, and Marjorie. The result is a meticulously researched and beautifully written evocation of a fleeting chapter in the life of a literary family.

Taught at home by their father and mother, the Frost children received a remarkable education. Reared on poetry, nurtured on the world of the imagination, and instructed in the art of direct observation, the children produced an exceptional body of writing and artwork in the years between 1905 and 1915. Drawing upon previously unexamined journals, notebooks, letters, and the little magazine entitled *The Bouquet* produced by the Frost children and their friends, Francis shows how the genius of Frost was enriched by his interactions with his children.

Francis depicts her grandfather as a generous, devoted, and playful man with a striking ability to communicate with his children and grandchildren. She traces the family's adventures from their farm years in New Hampshire through their nearly three years in England. This enchanting evocation of the Frost family's life together makes more poignant the unforeseen personal tragedies that would befall its members in later years.

"Occasionally one reads a study of a famous writer with a growing realization that the reader is compelled to look at the once-familiar story with fresh eyes. This is such a book; unpretentious, finely honed, and closely at home with its subject." — R. George Thomas, *New Welsh Review*

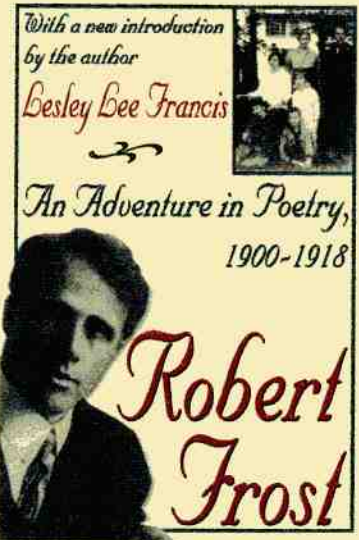
AMERICAN WRITERS AT HOME

In his "*American Writers at Home*," J. D. McClatchy's brilliantly literate and insightful text together with Erica Lennard's stunning photographs provide the reader with an opportunity to visit the private homes of some of our greatest writers, including the Robert Frost Farm in Derry, New Hampshire.

Although there are several Frost houses in the New England region, Derry has been categorized by Frost as the place he had been happiest. McClatchy writes "...that his years in Derry were the seedbed for his career as a poet."

Ten pages of text and photographs of the Derry Farm's interior and exterior landscape promises "...to open a window onto the writer's life that will forever change the way you read."

Published in 2004 by The Library of America in association with The Vendome Press, New York, the book features besides Frost, the homes of twenty other writers whose work defines the nation's literary heritage.



****** PLEASE NOTE; ******

Your Membership Expiration Date follows your name on the mailing label.

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 ¾ 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.

<<http://www.nhstateparks.org/ParksPages/FrostFarm/Frost.html>>

Telephone (603) 432-3091

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