

IRON WORK FARM in ACTON, Inc.

P.O. Box 1111, Acton, MA 01720

www.ironworkfarm.org

Fall/Winter Newsletter 2009

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2009 at JONES TAVERN and the JONES-FAULKNER HOMESTEAD

After the 2009 Iron Work Farm season was launched by another rousing Patriots' Day, the monthly open houses at our two house museums were well-attended both by visitors from far away and by local residents, some of whom repeated the phrase we hear quite often: "I live in Acton, and I've never been here before!" To all of you, we're glad you came! Also among the visitors this fall were several Acton-Boxborough high school students who "adopted" one of the buildings for a local history project. We hope they came away with a new understanding of how our community came to be, and of some of the people who shaped it.

2009 Annual Meeting and Jones Tavern Open Taproom. In a whirlwind 9-minute Annual Meeting on October 3 the membership quickly enacted some essential business for 2009-2010. Most officers and directors will continue in their posts, but this year we welcome Fran Arsenault to the Board of Directors. Fran brings experience in sales, retail and art, as well as a love of historic buildings. A highlight of the Annual Meeting was the announcement of the Iron Work Farm **Volunteer of the Year**. The recipient for 2009 is Paul Rogoschewski, who donated his professional services for a complete energy audit of the Faulkner Homestead.

The adjournment of the meeting signaled the start of what has become one of the best parties in town – the October Open Taproom at Jones Tavern. While we wish it could take place more often, for the past four years this one-day fund-raising event has brought back some of the spirit that Samuel Jones' hostelry must have had in the second half of the 18th century. There was plenty of good cheer, good companionship, and good music as Mary Donovan's fiddle and the blues/folk mix provided by Larry Lee Oppel, Gene Beresin, Rob Harris and Scott Billington made the old rafters ring once again. And the muskets, fifes and drums of the Acton Minutemen entertained not just the partygoers, but the whole neighborhood! Whole Foods of Bedford again donated some of the wonderful platters of food that they have become known for. Paintings, photographs and drawings of local scenes done by regional artists as part of the third IWF-sponsored South Acton Paint-Out/Art-Out brightened the walls of several rooms under the newly installed display lighting.

Photograph by Isabella Choate 10-3-09



New sales items. This year, the 2009 collection of mugs and tankards made by the pottery at Old Sturbridge Village for the Open Taproom will be available for purchase all year round, and not just at the Open Taproom event. These reproduction redware items are great for morning coffee as well as for the Jones Tavern custom brews. You will find them on sale at Iron Work Farm events in 2010, but at \$15 and \$30 they also make great holiday gifts, and can be ordered through our new on-line Iron Work Farm Store. We would be happy to ship them to you. See the Iron Work Farm website, www.ironworkfarm.org, for ordering information.

IWF Website update. The on-line Iron Work Farm Store is one of the new features on our revamped website. Craig Surprise of Acton is our new volunteer webmaster. We owe him many, many thanks for taking on the job of keeping the Iron Work Farm site up to date, and for adding some new pages, including the Store. His work is ongoing, so please check in frequently at www.ironworkfarm.org to see what he's been up to. Among the current site features is a slide show of photos from the 2009 Paint-Out/Art Out and the Open Taproom. There's also a link to the Wicked Local coverage of the Open Taproom, with lots of photos of friends, neighbors, and the beautiful tavern interiors.

Jones-Faulkner Homestead planning project completed. As announced in prior newsletters, the major Iron Work Farm project of the last year has been the development of a long-term plan for the preservation and interpretation of the Faulkner House and its 6-acre property. Architect Karle Packard of Red Hawk Studios and landscape architect and historian Martha Lyon, with the assistance of historic preservation consultant Greg Farmer, brought this \$44,000 project to completion on time and on budget. The last piece was a small archaeological study of the farmstead site by the Public Archaeology Laboratory, the results of which were shown during Massachusetts Archaeology Week at the end of October. All the work was conducted under a matching grant from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman.

Faulkner Homestead Capital Campaign

Thanks to the generous support of Iron Work Farm members and friends, we were able to meet the \$22,000 match required by the state grant. Now, there's another challenge! The **Steinberg-Lalli Foundation** has pledged \$5,000 toward implementing the work called for in the long-term plan, provided the same amount can be raised in donations. With your pledges and contributions made during the past year we are nearly there, but we still need your help! So please read your 2009 dues/donation forms carefully, and make a gift if you can. Donations to the campaign can be spread over more than one year, and the Foundation will match contributions made in each year through December 2010.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

While winter is usually a slow time for the Iron Work Farm, 2010 will bring several reasons to celebrate. Not only is it the year of Acton's 275th anniversary, but it will also mark the 150th birthday of **Exchange Hall**. That grand old building, built by members of the extended Jones family, is a descendant of the store begun in Jones Tavern by Samuel Jones in 1750, and has been a vital part of South Acton since 1860. Along with the Tavern and the Jones-Faulkner Homestead, it completes the trio of South Acton buildings listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places. We are honored and excited to announce that the Iron Work Farm's first fund-raising event of the year will be a dance and celebration in the newly reopened Exchange Hall on March 20, 2010. More information will follow over the winter, so please keep checking the website!



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