



December, 2009

Dear Iron Work Farm Members and Friends,

Each holiday season reminds us to celebrate our blessings, and celebrate all who support and care for us. The Iron Work Farm in Acton, Inc (IWF) has enjoyed many successes in 2009, much because of your support and care! I gratefully appreciate your sponsorship of IWF programs, helping IWF to steward our historic properties in South Acton: the Jones Tavern and the Jones-Faulkner Homestead. Part of our mission is to preserve these significant buildings for the community. Stewardship allows IWF to tell the story of South Acton's historic commercial, residential, and agricultural development and to feature the properties to our members, friends and the community.

The Winter Newsletter features many of the IWF activities this year. More and more people have come to know Jones Tavern and the Faulkner House through a Spring (candy) egg hunt, the Patriots Day Trolley Open House, our Sunday Open Houses, the local Paint-Out Art events, and the ever popular IWF Annual Meeting and Open Tap Room in October. The Board is always searching for ways to increase the visibility and viability of the Iron Work Farm. Developing themes that encompass three centuries of history has allowed IWF to highlight not only the Colonial years and the Revolution, also the Industrial Era, the Civil War and the late 19th century in various features and events. In the coming year we plan to expand those themes even further. For 2010 open houses at the Faulkner Homestead, for instance, we will be featuring the Jones-Faulkner Fulling Mill and guest demonstrations related to early textile production in South Acton. Do you have a favorite era for us to present to South Acton, in gardens, house or hearth?

Our greatest effort this year was the grant work performed by both professionals and the IWF volunteers. 2009 saw the completion of the Faulkner Homestead Master Plan. The Massachusetts Historical Commission's Preservation Projects Fund \$22,000 matching grant allowed IWF to develop plans for further preserving the beautiful house, reinterpret the building use and design a tenant apartment, as well as plan the landscaping to allow sewer hookup and augment the parking to make the 6 acre homestead more accessible to the public.

The entire organization supported the fund-raising needed to match the MHC grant of \$22,000 with donations and strong involvement in IWF events. I can say we are about 25% of the way there. Many of you pledged donations through 2009 and 2010. If you have not yet done so, please consider a generous donation this holiday season. You can pledge toward the Steinberg -Lalli Foundation matching fund and double the value of your gift towards the Faulkner Homestead Capital Campaign. The Capital Campaign is set up to raise funds to implement the Faulkner Homestead Master Plan.

Another successful grant funded the installation of gallery quality lighting in the upper rooms of Jones Tavern. This project was made possible by a grant from the Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. The gallery lighting affords IWF the opportunity to use the upper rooms for art shows such as our participation in the Acton Open Studios at the end of October. Neighborhood organizations are welcome to use the Tavern rooms as well. Currently the Acton Minutemen meet at the Tavern once a month.

This year was our fifth partnership with the Acton Historical Society for the Patriots Day Trolley event. The weather was raw, but more people than ever came to ride Olde Towne trolleys from Town Hall to the society's Hosmer House in Kelly's Corner, then down Main Street to the IWF buildings. A Civil War theme was repeated to explain the Baltimore Riot: the first Civil War casualties were from the Sixth Massachusetts Militia. Our sixth collaboration is in the planning stages for April 19, 2010, when we will also be celebrating Acton's 275th birthday.

Among your blessings, I hope you will remember Iron Work Farm's work when you renew your membership and make your year-end charitable contributions. Our endowment fund is modest, more so after the economy of this last year; maintaining and improving the two buildings means IWF must depend on generous members and friends for funding. A tax-deductible gift from you can be beneficial to the Iron Work Farm's cultural heritage preservation.

The Directors of Iron Work Farm wish you joyful holidays, and a peaceful and bountiful New Year.

Nancy Claire Evans,
President