

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – A YEAR IN REVIEW

As we gather this evening, on January 19, 2008, we should be reminded that next year at this time we will close to celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the founding of what was to become the Jones River Village Historical Society as we know it today. On February 13, 2009, we will mark the anniversary of that landmark meeting when a group of hard-working and forward-looking Kingston residents, who had worked with Helen Holmes on an earlier survey of area natural resources, gathered at her residence, Hilholm, on Wapping Road, to adopt a Constitution and By-Laws for the purpose of organizing a club or society for the advancement of the interests of the town. You know the rest of the story and, if not, you will find it detailed in the catalogue accompanying this past summer's exhibition in the Barn at the Bradford Homestead, which was entitled *The Jones River Village Club 1909 – 1926 Its Origins, Early Years and its "Meeting Place," The Major John Bradford House*. If you did not see the exhibition this past summer and get a copy of the catalogue, please take one with this evening.

And here we are at the beginning of 2008, with that early group of founders' mission well intact, with the same educational and social balance. There has been significant progress in the advancement of those early goals and later stewardship of the Major John Bradford House. We continue today to work to realize the goal of that early mission that is our own.

Because of the successful completion of the National Register process and designation by the National Park Service, in March, 2006, and because we ventured forth with the dendrochronology study and achieved results, we have made real progress in filling out the story of our history and that of our headquarters, the Major John Bradford House. Facts have replaced many myths and legends.

Our nationally recognized historic landmark headquarters remains a strong focus in our efforts at preservation and its importance as readily identifiable historic Kingston resource was acknowledged at this past year's April Town Meeting with the awarding of a grant from Community Preservation Act funds for a Conditions Assessment and Report on the Bradford House. This will include a complete inspection of interior and exterior conditions, an evaluation of those conditions and a report which would provide a prioritized list restoration and preservation work to be completed by the Jones River Village Historical Society. This is another important and essential step in our efforts to

understand, preserve and protect this significant Kingston landmark and a reminder of Major John Bradford's legacy to the town.

This was a true highlight of a very busy and successful 2007 season that encompassed all manner of traditional programs and special events. On February 3, the Annual Meeting of the Society took place at the Hilltop Club, with the election of officers for the coming year, dinner and a program by Bruce Young on "*The Golden Age of the Phonograph*", an interesting and entertaining musical slide show/lecture which covered the early history of recorded sound on cylinder and 78 rpm records, with musical segments against a backdrop of historic slides of forgotten artists and inventors.

In May, the public was invited to join Society members for "*An Evening with Fran*", a concert to benefit the Jones River Village Historical Society by Kingston's own Town Moderator and JRVHS, by Frances Botelho-Hoeg at the Silver Lake Regional Middle School Auditorium. The audience was treated to an absolutely delightful and dynamic concert of Broadway Hits. The JRVHS was greatly honored to offer this event and is ever grateful for the generosity of this wonderful artist.

May also saw the annual clean-up of the Bradford House and Barn and kitchen annex in preparation for Opening Day. Prior to that, there was much work behind the scenes preparing the house and Mary's Garden for tours and installation of the summer exhibition in the Barn. Also readied for display were more than 160 original drawings by Kingston Intermediate School third graders, a very colorful show of imaginative art works entitled "*Portraits from the Colonial Period.*" As in the previous year, visitors had the opportunity to vote for their favorites, and prizes went to the top three. Certificates recognizing participation were also given to each student. On June 4th and 5th, these third grader's the annual field trip to the Bradford Homestead where they were given tours by JRVHS docents, signed the guest book and were asked about their art work that would be on view in the Barn.

On June 16, the Bradford Homestead opened for the season with tours of the house and garden, the inaugural of the summer exhibition in the Barn on *The Jones River Village Club 1909 - 1926* as well as a new mini-exhibit of dolls and children's toys in new exhibition area in the rear section of the Bradford House. On Saturday, June 23, the JRVHS participated in the Town of Plympton's 300th Anniversary Parade, with a small group carrying the JRVHS and Bradford House banners, breakfast signs and handing out candy.

The Society educational efforts were greatly enhanced this past year by the generosity of a number of funding sources. Rockland Trust, once again, supported the summer exhibition in the Barn, *The Jones River Village Club 1909 – 1926 and its "Meeting Place," The Major John Bradford House* with a very generous grant for the production of wide format, color enlargement, visual and text panels, as well as color reproductions of photographs and drawings, pertinent documents, maps and posters and other promotional material. The exhibition, once removed from the Barn wall, was, by invitation, on display at the Kingston branch of the bank. The catalogue that accompanied the exhibition was produced in cooperation with the Plymouth County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The catalogue, which formed the basis of the exhibition, was done with the assistance and cooperation of the Local History Room of the Kingston Public Library, the repository of the Society's Archives of printed and manuscript documents, and visual and photographic images.

The Elizabeth B. Sampson Memorial Fund continued its support of the Society's efforts in research, education and preservation through a generous grant for the purchase of two museum quality exhibition cases for our new space in the Bradford House for the enhanced display of special collections.

These grants are essential and enable the Society to better fulfill its educational and preservation mission. Such grants recognize past and continuous achievements and foster the development of new projects and programs. Continued assistance from these sources is encouraging and rewarding and the Society is very grateful for this interest and support. The identification of additional funding sources for grants that fit our needs and goals must be ongoing as such grants are vital to our continued and expanding programs.

On July 1, the Society's traditional Summer Breakfast season got underway as did our summer raffle and silent auction. Once again, we were blessed with nine Sunday's of good weather and the 2007 breakfast season raised \$14,516, and served one thousand eight hundred and seventy five guests. The raffle/silent auction was very successful as well and brought in \$3,608. The JRVHS wishes to thank its breakfast hosts for another very successful season and express sincere gratitude to each and every person who helped make it happen. Each Sunday at the Bradford Homestead is one of intense activity. Breakfasts always present new challenges for hosts and those who assist them. Each breakfast requires much planning and coordination, imagination and plain hard work. The breakfast season provides such an essential financial base for the operation of our

Society and the Bradford Homestead. And the success of this important Society summer program is a testament to the generosity and support of those hosts and their crews.

On August 11, we hosted the members of the Governor William Bradford Compact on the occasion of their annual visit to the Homestead for their Annual Meeting, dedication ceremony at the Bradford Boulder Plot, tours of the Bradford House and Mary's Garden and a luncheon. One week later some 100 members and friends gathered at the Bradford Homestead for the Annual Lobster Boil.

On September 8, the JRVHS was one of the seven Backroads of the South Shore member organizations participating in the Backroads Symposium, held at the Church of the Pilgrimage in Plymouth. The Symposium topic was "The Founding of South Shore Museum" and JRVHS participation focused upon the origins and early years of our Society, namely the subject of the summer exhibition and catalogue.

Some two weeks later 72 Society members gathered at the Homestead to partake of the now renowned elegant and fine dining in the Barn at the Candlelight Dinner, preceded by splendid and finely crafted hors d'oeuvres in the House. October brought the Annual Harvest Festival, another scary success highlighted by the return of the magical magician, Stephen Brenner and bags of tricks and animals. The President's Wassail occurred in early December and was a joyous holiday event for some 80 JRVHS members who came early and lingered, enjoying the food and other festivities.

As always certain goals remain for the continued healthy and successful operations of the Jones River Village Historical Society. As the JRVHS is a true membership organization, our members are vital to our organization, both as a financial base and a human resource. Membership changes over time, but must continue to grow and expand as ours has.

As the Endowment grows, so must the base of other funding sources for identified Society needs and goals, be they related to the protection and preservation of the Major John Bradford House; indeed, the entire Homestead, or for educational programs, exhibitions and publications and the development, enhancement and protection of our permanent collections. The protection and preservation of our historic site will be given high priority as we complete a study that will outline for us those needs and priorities. The history of the

Bradford House and its site and ownership will be further studied and documented, as will the Bradford family and the larger picture of family holdings in the immediate area of the Society's headquarters. Work on our permanent collections in tandem with our institutional archives will proceed with regard to provenance.

Our visibility continues to increase both within the Kingston community and beyond. Increased recognition at the state level brings new demands upon us as a historical organization with a nationally recognized historic landmark house. It also remains the case that the Society needs to identify and plan for ways to be open and accessible to the public more hours during the regular summer season. Expanded hours would make the Society eligible to apply to certain funding sources, not now available to us. All of this, of course, requires more effort and time on the part of those already dedicated to the goals of our Society, and is also a very strong and necessary appeal to others to become actively involved in the Society's activities and the continued attempt to fulfill its mission. We have accomplished much that we can be proud of. We also have many friends "in the preservation business" who have helped us achieve certain goals and those friends recognize us as a leader among smaller historical societies.

I would like to thank each and every person who has helped, all along the way, to make the Jones River Village Historical Society the vital organization that it is today. My heartfelt thanks go to the Board of Directors and the Trustees and all of our valued volunteers, including committee chairpersons, committee members, and event and program planners, helpers and any others who volunteer their time, expertise, energy, goods, and talent. Without all of you, and the participation of our members, the programs and events you've seen highlighted in this review would not have been possible. Thank you for making this year at the Major John Bradford Homestead a success.

Norman P. Tucker
President