
Pickering House Newsletter

Issue #4

18 Broad Street, Salem, Mass. 01970

July 1999

Director's Report

by Sherrie H. Goodhue, executive director

We have had a wonderful first year here at the Pickering House. We especially enjoyed being here during the holiday season, when warm fires lit the rooms, candles glowed in all the windows and friends and neighbors gathered to enjoy the times of the season. This being our first Spring, it has also been wonderful to be here and see the trees and flowers on the property come to life.

This past year has been very busy. After our initial push to move into the Pickering House and prepare it for visitation, we spent the summer and fall months conducting the tours, assessing tree work needed on the grounds, setting up a membership database, holding a new-membership drive, and having a Harvest Festival here on the Pickering grounds. We spent the winter rebuilding the front fence that was blown down in a storm, cleaning and painting the inside of the barn, and cleaning and replastering the basement.

We were open for tours on Thursdays and Fridays from Memorial Day to Halloween, with Susie Carter giving the tours during the Summer; Jody Smith, Eva Beckwith and myself, during the Fall. During July and October, we ran a promotion in conjunction with the Phillips House in which one could visit both houses for \$5. This worked out very well in promoting our two historical houses. This coming season we will go back to being open on Mondays, as this is the time most familiar to locals and when there is a lot of visitation here in Salem.

Roger Ferguson did a very thorough landscape study and prepared a professional report listing the trees and detailing tree work that needs to be done.

A new membership database was created which allows us the flexibility to print names and addresses based on demographic criteria, while giving us good reporting capabilities. The checking account was put up on Quicken so that financial reporting is now very simple.

In an effort to increase membership, 350 newsletters, Harvest Festival flyers and contribution envelopes were sent to various North Shore residents not currently on our



At the annual Pickering Foundation meeting were, from left, Henry Binney, Brian Carter, Jeffrey Beale, Susan Carter, Liz Gillespie, Will Peck and Becky Putnam.

membership list. To date, from this drive we have received 25 new members giving us \$965 in new membership fees. Dues reminder notices were sent to those members not current on their 1998 dues. These notices resulted in 23 members paying dues of \$1,450. Currently the Pickering Foundation has 249 members on the list. Of those, 46 are lifetime members and 121 are paid members.

In trying to gain as much visibility as possible for the Pickering House and the Foundation, we hosted a number of cocktail parties and teas for Salem organizations. In the future, we plan to hold membership programs that should be enjoyable for children and adults. This year we will be a featured house on the Historic Salem

Inc. Christmas Walk, Dec. 11 and 12.

This events attracts about 3,500 visitors and should increase awareness of the house and promote the Foundation.

We have thoroughly enjoyed our first season here and have worked to enhance the house and property, consolidate the membership lists and automate the financial books. We are now ready put some energy into increasing membership and determining the best way to utilize this house and property, in an effort to promote the Foundation and raise funds to preserve this wonderful place.



The garden in its summer glory.

President's Letter

by *Richard Pickering, Waldoboro, Maine*

On January 23, 1999, your Board of Trustees met for a day-long session at the Pickering House to develop a mission statement and to forecast our financial needs for the future. After a morning of group discussion, led most ably by new Board Member Tina Abramson, we arrived at the following statement of our mission:

The Pickering Foundation cultivates an appreciation of one family's role in the American experience, which is manifested in the preservation of the historic home for the enrichment and enjoyment of the community.

We took a break for lunch feeling proud of ourselves for having taken all of our differing perspectives on what should be our reason for being and working them around to a statement we could all agree on. It was the first time we, as a mostly new board, had grappled with something together, and we did it in a spirited and cooperative manner with excellent participation by all.

The papers, pens, notebooks were cleared from the dining room table. After a brief stretch and some pleasant socializing, we pulled the Theophilous chairs back to the table for soup and sandwiches. During the break, Mary Jane McGlennon, long-time Foundation member and professional in the field of fund raising, joined us for lunch, as she was to be our discussion leader for the afternoon meeting, to analyze our financial needs and goals for the next seven to 10 years.

Mary Jane helped us brainstorm a rough annual operating budget and a list of capital expenses in the next five years. Our current income from donations, memberships and rent averages about \$20,000 per year which covers our insurance, utilities, basic maintenance and accounting costs, but does not pay for curatorial needs, any conservation work, or anticipated capital expenditures. When an emergency occurs, as it did last year when the roof leaked, we tapped into our portfolio. As the market has been kind of late, that usage of funds was not as painful as it might have been but, of course, it does not permit the portfolio to grow at its optimum levels. Before we can let our endowment grow optimally, we must increase our annual income from memberships and donations to something like \$40,000. To do that we must look to our members, to attracting new members, to searching out every funding source we can. To date, income from guided tours is insufficient even to pay the guides, which we have found is typical



Tina Abramson and Richard Pickering

of other houses in Salem and elsewhere. In looking ahead to the next five years we can see capital needs for the following:

Support for the base of our central chimney	\$25,000
Tree work to include some planting	8,000
Repair, replace portions of our fence	10,000
Replace recently repaired house roof	25,000
Furnace	5,000
Hot water heater	1,000
Plumbing upgrades	6,000
Contingency	15,000
Total	\$100,000

Clearly, your Board of Trustees will need to focus on increasing our sources of funding, now that we have the house under stable and excellent management with Sherrie and Tag in residence.

I take this opportunity to thank all you past members and donors for your past support, to hope for your present support, and to express our trust that the future will continue to build on the good work we all have done.

Snowblower, fax machine needed

Some items very much needed at the Pickering House are a snow blower, a lawn tractor, a fax machine and a copy machine. If anyone has any of these items and would be willing to donate them, we can arrange for pickup. And thanks in advance.

Colonel Timothy Pickering

By Timothy Pickering

Growing up in *The Pickering House* was a great treat. While other families may have more famous or wonderful ancestors – and there are certainly lots of bigger and fancier houses in this world, to say nothing of those right on Chestnut Street – I felt I was living with my ancestors, especially with the Colonel. I told Dick, our president, I'd be happy to write a few articles about Col. Tim for the Newsletter. The fullest record of his life is a four-volume biography, the first of which was written by his son, Octavius, in 1867.

Col. Tim, in many ways, has not been treated kindly by historians, particularly in his differences with Jefferson and his

more democratic principles. However, there seems to be some dimming of Mr. Jefferson's star lately, and a new appreciation of his political rival Alexander Hamilton; so, I hold some hope that our Colonel, a doughty, outspoken old Federalist, will one day find more respect and recognition from scholars and historians.

Anyway, we felt we grew up with him, surrounded by his papers, by portraits of him and his beloved wife Rebecca, by the dining implements he took to Harvard, the letters he received from Washington, Jefferson and Adams, his silver cups, his condiment set, the chest he used as Quarter-Master General of the Revolution (just right for toys), and the wonderful wine cooler given to him by George Washington. I cannot, as a total amateur, do him justice, but I am glad to tell a little bit about his life and work.

Colonel Tim went to Harvard at 14, in the class of 1763. He afterward wrote that he regretted not having improved "Heaven's invaluable gifts" by studying harder, a feeling not unknown to several of his descendants at the college. He became a county clerk and, in 1766, a lieutenant in the militia. As a Whig (the Tories, including his father, being largely pro-British), he became very busy instructing the public, with a remarkable lack of restraint, on matters of civic virtue and military discipline.

When John Higginson, the registrar of deeds for Essex County and colonel of the militia, died, Timothy was elected to both positions, and things began to heat up.

On February 26, 1775, the British General in Boston, General Gage, sent Colonel Leslie and a regiment to Salem with orders to blow up some cannon lying in the North Fields of Salem. Leslie landed his troops in Marblehead.



Alerted by the Marbleheaders, the Salem militia met the Redcoats at the drawbridge over the North River.

Leslie ordered a company to march forward and fire upon the locals, but our Timothy replied: "If you do fire, you will all be dead men."

Leslie said he would stay until they let him across the bridge, and the locals answered he could stay forever but the bridge was staying up. Finally Leslie promised to cross the bridge, march "a few rods" and return. They let him do so. He crossed, marched forward about a hundred yards, stopped and turned around. He went over the bridge again, back to Marblehead, and sailed for Boston.

Col. Tim, aged twenty-nine at the time, called Leslie a man of great prudence and honor. This action at the Salem bridge was the first armed resistance to British troops in America. It does seem that bloodshed was avoided only by the presence of two men of prudence and honor.

Consider honoring the Pickering legacy through deferred giving

Whether you are family, neighbor or friend, please consider leaving a legacy to the Pickering Foundation when you are making your estate plans.

The Foundation depends on membership gifts and on income from the Foundation's endowment to further our mission and preserve our unique heritage. Your planned giving will enable the Pickering Foundation to sustain our preservation efforts for future generations.

There are many creative charitable vehicles that will

preserve your assets for your heirs, minimize your tax burden, and allow you to give substantially to the Pickering Foundation. Financial and legal advice on planned giving is available.

For more information about legacy gift opportunities through the Pickering Foundation, please call Richard Pickering, Pickering Foundation president at (207) 832-0538 or email him at pickerng@midcoast.com. Or you may contact Sherrie Goodhue or Tina Abramson.

Colonel Tim would be proud!

First Annual Harvest Festival

by Sherrie H. Goodhue

On October 16, we held our first Annual Harvest Festival. A great success and certain to be a yearly event, the Festival was very popular with families with young children, and the spirit of the event was perfect – simple, neighborhood, family-oriented fun.

Everywhere you looked in the yard there were children playing games and running through the hay maze while their parents enjoyed a variety of treats from the food stand and had a chance to catch up with friends and neighbors.

The highlight of the day was the Very Haunted House, designed by our artistic director, Susan Carter. Susie used her magic touch to convert the Pickering barn into a haunted house. Lines of children formed out front waiting to go through. Unfortunately a few children didn't make it all the way – the witch was too much for them!



Charlie Newhall was successful at enticing guests to try his assortment of scrumptuous food.

We had numerous games – Scarecrow Ring Toss, Softball in the Bushel Basket Toss, Scoop the Ducks, and the Pumpkin Bean Bag Toss. Ben Shreve, Leland Goodhue and Sallie Vest sold game tickets for 25 cents while neighborhood children ran the games.

The incredible hay maze was put together by Tag, who rented a U-Haul truck, drove to Essex to pick up 40 bales of hay, and then created a maze in the center of the Pickering lawn. The children loved it and neighborhood children continued to play on it throughout the year.

At special times during the day, we held family activities. One was the scavenger hunt. When the list was posted, it was great fun to see groups of families scouring the property for the items on it. The other “organized” activities quickly became disorganized activities, and the best fun was had when the Water Balloon Toss was abandoned for an all-out water balloon fight.



Tag Goodhue and Bill Burns take on the difficult task of judging the pumpkin-carving contest.

Wonderfully designed pumpkins were entered in the pumpkin-carving contest and all were reviewed by our fine judges, Racket Shreve, Benjie Shreve, Bill Burns and Tag Goodhue. Appropriate ribbons were awarded.

Much work was done to prepare for the big event by the Pickering Foundation Special Events Committee of Susie Carter, Kate van Dyke, Debbie Hilbert, Becky Putnam, Liz Taft, and Sherrie Goodhue. The Food Committee was co-chaired by Kate and Becky, with each contributing their incredible chili and unforgettable chowder. They also coordinated the delivery of doughnuts, apples, cookies, hotdogs, cider and sodas. And where would we have been without Charlie Newhall and Brian Carter manning the food table the whole day?

We received many compliments on the event and, now that the props are all made, we look forward to holding the Harvest Festival again next year. Many thanks to all who contributed to make this event such a success!



Sally Vest and Leland Goodhue took turns selling tickets to the children's games.