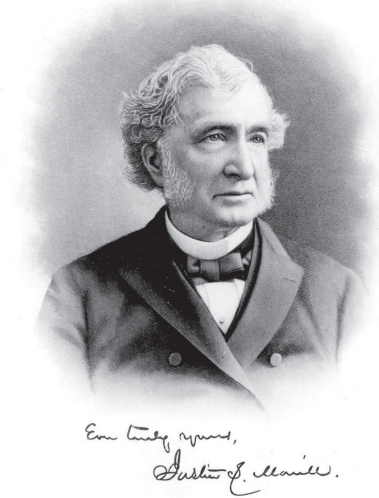


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Senator Morrill's library

A REPORT FROM THE STATE

The Vermont State Historic Sites Program is happy to announce the reopening of the Justin S. Morrill State Historic Site after the damaging July 2023 floods. The Morrill Homestead will reopen May 24th and will be open Thursday-Sunday, 10AM-5PM through October 14th. Tours of Sen. Morrill's Gothic Revival house are \$7 for adults, while children under 15 years of age are free. The Victorian grounds and gardens are always open for everyone to enjoy.

There are several special days each summer when house tours are free for all. The first is Sunday, June 9th when The Friends are hosting an **Open House** complete with a puppet show and ice cream social. Open House is part of **Vermont Days**, a time to celebrate the beauty of Summer in Vermont on June 9th and 10th. All State Historic Sites, including the Morrill Homestead, will have free admission on both Vermont Days. **Bennington Battle Day** (August 16th) will also feature free admission to all State Historic Sites. There are other low-cost ways to enjoy the site. All Veterans and active military personnel (and immediate family members) are always admitted free, as well as Green Mountain Passport holders, and those who check out a Library Pass from their local library.

Unfortunately, the stream running alongside the property was impacted by the July 2023 floods, and will still be inaccessible this summer. Although the original stone bridges over the stream are closed for safety reasons, the hiking trails and ice house can still be accessed over the wooden bridge.

In 2021, the Morrill State Historic Site was awarded the National Park Service's Save America's Treasures grant to address solutions of drainage at the property, which has impacted the historic homestead. This season engineers from Marble Valley Engineering with consultant NBF Architects will be focusing on the design aspect of the grant project, with construction to take place in the 2025 season. We do not anticipate there to be any disruptions for the public in the 2024 season!

*Victoria Sample, Historic Site Section Chief
 Vermont Division for Historic Preservation*

THE FRIENDS WELCOME A NEW DIRECTOR

This past March, The Friends welcomed Kumari Patricia as their Director. While reflecting on her new role, Kumari shared, "I like creating community. I like being a part of a community. And I like being creative in a community." A fitting sentiment as she takes the helm of an organization dedicated to creating opportunities for thoughtful programming and meaningful engagement that moves forward Senator Justin Morrill's legacy of access and education.

Education and community are deeply rooted in Kumari's professional and personal background. Hailing from Cincinnati, Ohio, her early career as an art educator placed her on a path that began in New York City and at The Rhode Island School of Design, wove through the midwest — including work with the first K-12 virtual learning school based in Columbus, Ohio — and eventually led to a teaching and leadership position with Goddard College.

Today, developing and sharing learning and healing experiences continue to drive Kumari's work, which reflects her commitment to creativity, growth, collaboration, and authenticity. Currently, she serves as an adjunct professor with Vermont State University's Graduate Leadership Studies and Education Program. Outside the classroom, Kumari is a professional life coach who works with clients recovering from loss in their lives. She is the founder of Kumari of the Woods, a land-based retreat in Strafford that aims to connect creative and healing communities with nature. She also writes, paints, and teaches gentle restorative yoga.

Kumari's history presents a diverse array of experiences in which community is consistently the thread that binds the varying elements of her work. She comes into her role with the Homestead eager to build connections and enthusiastic for collaboration. She is grateful for the previous Director Tracey McFadden's guidance and support, and is thrilled to work with a passionate and dedicated board. She's very much looking forward to the season ahead, which offers an exciting slate of programming, and of course, moments to connect with the community.

*Trish Palao
 Board Member, Friends of the Morrill Homestead*



See Jennifer Brown's "Strafford Flood Plain" at Gallery in the Garden

morrillhomestead.org

The MORRILL HOMESTEAD *Chronicle*

News and Information from Vermont's First National Historic Landmark and State-Owned Historic Site
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Spring, 2024 VOL. 18 No. 1

HAPPENINGS AT THE HOMESTEAD

I am excited to join The Friends of the Morrill Homestead as the new director. I am grateful to work beside the outgoing director, Tracey McFadden, as she helps me transition into this role to serve our full calendar of exciting events planned for the Summer season. There's something for everyone and we welcome new community members, as well as our longstanding supporters.

First up is our **Open House** on Sunday, June 9th. Be our guest for an afternoon of guided house tours, Strafford Organic Ice Cream, and a puppet show with No Strings Marionettes. Soon after is a **Tapestry Felting Class** followed by **Nature Play with Little Ones** (for ages 1-6) and **Regenerative Agriculture for the Home Gardener** by the close of June.



Meet farm animals at AppleFest

Our **Gallery In the Garden** and the **Mini Auction** will kick off July with the reception on July 5th. Enjoy the "After the Flood" exhibition of paintings from 14 local artists. Walk our gardens with others who support the arts and the Homestead. Place your bid on a mini painting until the close of the auction on July 12th. The Summer continues with a **Tree Walk** and a talk on **Vermont Women and the Civil War** with Vermont Humanities speaker Howard Coffin.

Children will love our summer camps, including **Art, Nature, and Imagination Camp** led by Jennifer Brown and her daughter Katie, as well as **Photography Camp** taught by Scott Miller. Each month, we lead **Historical Walking Tours of Morrill's Strafford Village** from Morrill's birthplace to his mausoleum.

August brings a **Basket Making Workshop**, the Watercolor Workshop **Making Morrill's Pink**, and a **Printmaking Workshop**. And in September (Vermont Archaeology Month), **UVM Archaeologists** will reveal what they found and learned from the archaeological digs on the grounds of the Homestead.

The Homestead season wraps up on September 22nd with **AppleFest**, a festival that has a little of everything! Live music, farm animals, cider pressing, heirloom apples, artisan cheeses, Vermont ice cream, homemade apple pie, period games, wagon rides, crafts, exhibits, and more!



Vermont Wildlife is the theme for Tapestry Felting

The Homestead grounds and gardens are always open for you to enjoy and Justin Morrill's Gothic Revival house is open for guided tours Thursday-Sunday, 10:00-5:00 through October 13th. Visit morrillhomestead.org for all the event details. Whatever your interest, we look forward to seeing you at the Homestead!

*Kumari Patricia
 Director, Friends of the Morrill Homestead*



No Strings Marionettes at Open House

SPECIAL ART AUCTION SUPPORTS THE HOMESTEAD

On Saturday, March 16th, The Friends of the Morrill Homestead hosted a one-day art show at Barrett Hall in South Strafford featuring the works of the late artist, Greta Newman. Her son Andy Newman, together with his sister Jessie and brother David, had generously offered 31 paintings, mostly watercolors, for a fundraiser to support the work of the Morrill Homestead. The show was preceded by a week-long online auction and concluded by 4:00 PM on Saturday, in time for most winners to take home their paintings that very afternoon.



Lukes Street (London) by Greta Newman

As the Newman siblings shared in the artist bio, “Greta lived much of her adult life in Europe — France, England and Italy in particular — as her husband Joe was a U.S. Foreign Service officer. The landscape of these countries became a principal subject of her work, and many of the resulting paintings were featured in gallery exhibitions in Paris, London and Rome, as well as the United States. Her work is now included in many private collections.”

Choosing March 16th as the show date may have been a bit of a gamble back in the Fall when we started planning. We wanted a date that would feel more like Spring than Winter, but not so late as to conflict with school vacation; but who ever knows in October what mischief the Vermont weather will be up to in March? How lucky we were. The day was sunny, bright, and warm enough to prop open



Three Tomatoes by Greta Newman

the doors and allow the fresh air in. In the abundant natural light, the paintings could not have looked better, and everyone who saw the paintings “live” after browsing them online commented on the difference. The following Saturday a snowstorm raged all day and dumped two feet of snow, and two weeks later we were dealing with another significant storm.

As a fundraiser, the event was a success, with nearly all the paintings sold, making a significant contribution to support The Friends’ educational programs. As an exhibition, the show was a gift of beauty to a community emerging from a long winter. All this thanks to the generosity of Andy, Jessie, and David Newman, and the artistic vision of their mother Greta.

*Jon Stableford,
Board Member,
Friends of the Justin Morrill Homestead*

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF THE JUSTIN MORRILL POSTAGE STAMP

Justin Morrill was one of the most influential political leaders of our nation in the second half of the 19th century, helping to steer the financial course of our nation, shaping our nation’s capitol building and grounds, and most of all, remaining committed to education. Morrill authored the bills which built the Library



of Congress and founded the Land Grant College Acts, which opened up higher education to working people.

On July 17th, 1999 the U. S. Postal Service issued a Justin Morrill postage stamp. The Strafford Historical Society had been advocating for a Morrill stamp since 1955. The first day issue was held in Morrill’s hometown of Strafford, with celebrations at the Town House and Morrill Homestead arranged by The Friends of the Morrill Homestead and Strafford Historical Society.

The official unveiling of the Justin Morrill stamp took place at the Town House, with over 100 people in attendance. Dignitaries included two U. S. Senators from Vermont, two university presidents, and a host of state politicians. Dedication of the stamp was given by the District Manager of the Postal Service followed by remarks from

Senator Jeffords and University of Vermont President Judith Ramaley. A blow-up of the stamp now hangs in the Strafford post office that was once Morrill’s store.

That afternoon at the Morrill Homestead, Dartmouth College President James Wright addressed the gathering. Wright’s father was a miner in Illinois. Wright himself tried working in the mine as a teenager, but decided it was not for him. He attended the University of Wisconsin, a Land-Grant institution, became a History Professor, and went on to lead Dartmouth College. In his remarks, Wright said that Justin Morrill, “made it quite possible for millions of Americans — and I count myself in that group — to receive a higher education.”

Also seated on the veranda at the Homestead were two Senators from Vermont, Robert Stafford and James Jeffords. Senator Stafford was the author of the Stafford loan program which helped hundreds of thousands of Americans attend college. Senator Jeffords’ thumbprint was on several landmark national education laws. Both Stafford and Jeffords saw themselves as following in Morrill’s footsteps in working to provide educational opportunities for all.

The program ended with the singing of the song “Justin” from the musical “The Morrill of the Story,” written by Strafford teachers. It was a fitting conclusion, for while Justin Morrill’s accomplishments were far reaching and for which recognition — like the U.S. postage stamp — still keeps coming 125 years after his passing, Morrill’s entire life was deeply rooted in Strafford.

*John Freitag,
Strafford Historical Society*



THANK YOU TO THE FRIENDS OUTGOING DIRECTOR

Tracey McFadden became the Director of The Friends of the Morrill Homestead in October 2018. Since that time, she led the Friends through a COVID-19 pandemic, then the 2023 flood that closed the site. Tracey has navigated virtual board meetings and many other meetings to keep the presence and the positive image of the Homestead alive in our Strafford community.

Tracey knows a lot about Strafford and about history in relation to Senator Justin Morrill — from his work and his endeavors in education and horticulture, to the way he stayed connected to his hometown of Strafford. Tracey has supported the Homestead by building and sustaining the vast number of summer programs, beginning with an Open House in June and ending the season with AppleFest in September.

Tracey’s long career as a third grade educator and reading specialist and her eight years as a summer camp director prepared her to be the director of The Friends of the Morrill Homestead and to be more central to Strafford where Tracey has lived and raised her family. As her daughter Kelsey said, “Mom is passionate about education of all kinds.”

Cameron Speth, vice chair of the Friends Board, stated how much she will miss Tracey’s dedication. “Tracey could always be counted on to guide us in making good decisions generally over the years and specifically in times of chaos and closures.” Board chair, Ingrid Webb, felt that Tracey was hard-working, reliable, and easy to work with.



There is no doubt that Tracey is committed to her work in the Strafford community and to the important service the Homestead provides in bringing families and individuals to our town. But Tracey is not going far. She will continue to support the Mini-Auction for the Gallery in the Garden and she is training the new director who started in March. Leaving the position allows Tracey more time to travel, visit her daughters, and enjoy the flexibility of life after the wonderful work she has done as director.

The Friends want to extend a huge thank you to Tracey, for her steadfast leadership, organization, and steady sense of purpose.

*Kumari Patricia
Director, Friends of the Morrill Homestead*



Volunteers serving cheese samples at AppleFest

Who’s Who on the Board...

INGRID WEBB - DEDICATED EDUCATOR

Ingrid Webb was a member of the original Board of The Friends. We have been very fortunate to have her on our current board and, indeed, as a wonderful Chair for several years.

Ingrid has dedicated a lifetime to education. She was a high school sophomore when her father moved the family to Norwich, VT to become a professor at Dartmouth College. Eight years later she became a teacher at the Newton School in Strafford. Shortly after, she met and then married David Webb who also accepted a teaching position at Newton. The Webbs taught hundreds of Strafford children over decades of service and are warmly remembered for it.

Ingrid was passionate about local history, and she introduced her students to outstanding people in the community by having students interview them. She took her classes annually to the Morrill

Homestead, and it became a vital part of her curriculum. She combined this amazing local resource with cultivating an appreciation for people important to local history.

After she retired from formal teaching, Ingrid has never stopped being engaged. She and David go to Guatemala every year and, while there, volunteer in a local school, sharing their knowledge and wisdom with the children. Ingrid is also a watercolor artist. Toward the end of her career, Ingrid taught art to all grades at Newton. She often put her students on the school bus for a visit to the Morrill Homestead where they would paint. Our “fence art” featured at AppleFest began with Ingrid’s Homestead art projects.

Ingrid is devoted to her family and grandchildren. Her daughter and family currently live in Cambridge, UK, and often chat by zoom and even read books and have

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

We’re looking forward to opening the Morrill Homestead and welcoming you back for our 2024 season! As we were closed for much of last summer, due to the July floods, we are especially eager for you to join us at our many events and to meet our new director, Kumari Patricia.

I’d like to recognize our many volunteers who make our events so special. Our board members work tirelessly with community volunteers hosting these events.

This season, volunteers are needed for our June Open House, which will feature a puppet show and ice cream social. Help is also welcome for our other events, such as the Gallery in the Garden Gala, which will include the *Minis for Morrill* Auction and the *After the Flood* Art Show in the Carriage Barn. Volunteers contribute in various ways, from making appetizers to welcoming visitors viewing and bidding on art.

Our end of season 19th century Apple & Cheese Harvest Festival welcomes visitors from all over the state and beyond who come to taste Vermont cheese and apple desserts. Our volunteers bake apple desserts and serve them at the Festival. Visitors also enjoy the Victorian gardens, which are maintained by volunteers alongside our master gardener.

If you are interested in helping out in the gardens or at an event, please contact Kumari at director@morrillhomestead.org.

Volunteering is a great way to meet people and learn more about the Morrill Homestead.

*Ingrid Webb
Chair, Friends of the Morrill Homestead*



lessons together. Her daughter and son-in-law are both professors and are moving to New Haven, CT, in the fall. Visits will be much easier, and I suspect that they will continue to enjoy sharing their wide array of interests.

*Cameron Speth,
Vice Chair, Friends of the Morrill Homestead*