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Affiliate Associations

Preservation Society of Pawtucket ♦ Great Road Historical District

Astronomer Francine Jackson talks about Last-in-a-Lifetime Event “Transit of Venus” at BVHS Annual Meeting & Elections Sun. May 20 1:30 pm North Gate

By *Francine Jackson*

On June 5th, 2012, the planet Venus will do something it will not do again for over a century: Pass directly across the face of the Sun. This phenomenon occurs only four times every 243 years, so this is a sight that you might want to mark on your calendars.



The mystical 5-pointed star set on a rose with the 40 year path of Venus plotted relative to the sun.

Previous transits of Venus were very important in learning the size of the solar system. For centuries, there were no other means of determining the yardstick for measuring the distance between the Earth and the Sun – the astronomical unit. It was known that all the planets were proportion in

distance to their motion around the Sun, but to actually measure that distance was very difficult. It was Edmund Halley, of comet fame, who realized the mathematical significance of a planet passing directly across the Sun, and the information that could impart.

Astronomer Francine Jackson will introduce you to Venus transits, and lead you through the centuries of discovery and observation. She will tell you of many pioneers, some of whom risked their lives trying observe this unique phenomenon in order to learn one of the most important measurements in science: The size of our solar system.

Francine Jackson is Director of the Frosty Drew Observatory in Charlestown, RI. She also is on the staff of Brown University’s Ladd Observatory, a Lecturer at Framingham State University, and performs programs at the University of Rhode Island Planetarium.

The Blackstone Valley Historical Society will hold its Annual Meeting and Election of Officers on Sunday Afternoon, May 20th, 2012 starting at 1:30 PM, in the downstairs hall.

After the meeting BVHS will host a talk by Astronomer, Francine Jackson. Light refreshment will be served.

North Gate Toll House, located at 1873 Old Louisquisset Pike (Route 246), Lincoln, RI, is the headquarters of the Blackstone Valley Historical Society, which is dedicated to the history and antiquities of the Northern Rhode Island communities of Pawtucket, Central Falls, Lincoln, Cumberland, North Smithfield and Woonsocket.

She has studied the historical aspect of transits of Venus for over thirty years.

BVHS NEEDS YOU

MEMBERSHIP Record Keeper Someone with good recordkeeping skills and computer skills, knowledge of spreadsheets and/or a simple data base. Keeps track of current membership list; updates the mailing lists; sends out renewal notices in late June for upcoming year which is July 1 to June 30; distributes membership cards. Is a committee person and does not have to regularly attend BOD meetings.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN someone who has a good rapport with people and can, with members of a committee, reach out to the community of Blackstone Valley and recruit new members to enhance and make the Blackstone Valley Historical Society membership grow.

BVHS SLATE of NOMINEES

- President**Jason Dionne
- Vice President**John Houghton
- Secretary**Francine Jackson
- Treasurer**Lori Melucci
- Members-at-Large** Gail Harris
Glenn Laxton
Bob Ferri

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Adieu!

Another term of office for BVHS is coming to a close. May 20 is the annual meeting and election of officers and the newly elected officers will take up their duties as of July 1.

As I look back over these last 6 years much has been accomplished by the Society. To name a few: the Society has recovered from a very minus financial balance in 2005 to a comfortable positive balance in 2012. There have been many upkeep and maintenance projects planned and accomplished by hard work; some by ourselves and others by professionals; a DVD about the Society was produced; the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Society was celebrated; the Society was involved in a research partnership with the Rhode Island Historical Preser-

vation & Heritage Commission and the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office on a study to determine the likely locations of the Nip-sachuck battlefields; and a massive renovation project was undertaken to convert the fire station into a state of the art archival storage area. This work was made possible by grants from various organizations, donations from the membership and by the most able work and planning of the several Boards of Director.

In addition, there have been many varied interesting historical programs and some spectacular music programs.

All this has been accomplished with the very hard work of the members who served on the board of directions and com-



BVHS President 2006 - 2012

mittees and the help and support of the membership over these last 6 years. I cannot thank them enough for all the work they have done and the support they have given me. I would list the names, but I'm sure I would forget a few. As I bid you goodbye from the presidency, I urge you to give your continued support to the newly elected Board.

Pat Armitage

"World's End" Walking Tour

Take a walking tour Saturday, May 19th 11-12:30 p.m. through historic Saylesville, including a visit to **Arnold House** and **Saylesville Meeting House**. On the deed from Thomas Arnold to his son Eleazer in 1687 he describes the land where Arnold House is built as "world's end." It was built in 1693 along Great Road, one of the earliest roads in the colonies. Two stories high, with a pilastered chimney, the home so dominated the modest dwellings of



nearby farmers that it earned the title "Eleazer's Splendid Mansion." With its massive chimney end wall, the house is a rare survivor of a once-common Rhode Island building type known as a stone-ender.

The **1703 Saylesville Meeting House** was built on land donated by Eleazer Arnold for the purpose of erecting a meetinghouse. It is the oldest continuously used meetinghouse in Rhode Island.



Take a Hike

You'll want to join this Historic New England event Saturday, May 5, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. for a walk through the beautiful, rolling trails of Lincoln, Rhode Island, and learn about the history-filled landscape from the seventeenth century to today. Tour begins at Arnold House and travels through Gateway Park to Chase Farm Park and back again. Special guest Hearthside's Kathy Hartley will speak about Chase Farm.

