



# Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation

## COMMON GROUND

NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2010

### Upcoming Events

*Schedule as of March 1, of the 2010 events for the Historic Site and for the Foundation. More to be added later.*

#### May 28

Opening of the Coolidge Historic site  
Plymouth, Vermont

#### June 10

"An Evening of Coolidge" will be held at the Paramount Theater in Rutland, Vermont co-sponsored by *The Rutland Herald* and the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation.

#### July 4

Commemoration of the Birth of Coolidge  
President Obama will have a wreath laid at Calvin Coolidge's Gravesite at the Homestead in Plymouth Notch, Vermont. An informal parade will leave the Homestead at 12:00p.m. and walk a few hundred yards to Coolidge's Gravesite to commemorate our Thirtieth President's 138th Birthday—July 4th 1872.

*Members of the Coolidge family will be in attendance.*

#### August 7

Plymouth Old Home Day

9:00a.m. Annual Meeting of the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation

9:30a.m. Trustees Meeting of the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation

1:00p.m. Ceremony to Dedicate the President Calvin Coolidge Museum and Education Center *(Time subject to change.)*

Official opening of the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation, Inc.'s new headquarters offices.

#### September 4 & 5

Plymouth Folk & Blues Concerts

#### September 13-Oct 15

History Exploration Programs

Explore where Calvin Coolidge, our President from Vermont, grew up. Learn about life in this 1800's hilltop village.

#### September 19

Plymouth Cheese & Harvest Festival

#### October 7

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum,  
Boston, MA

9:00a.m.—4:30p.m. CCMF 50th Anniversary Symposium,  
Smith Hall, *Guest Speakers to be announced.*

5:30p.m.—9:30p.m. 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner and  
Cocktails, Library Pavilion, *Guest Speaker to be announced.*

#### October 17

Coolidge Historic site closes

#### December 11

Coolidge Holiday Open House

## Program Committee Sets Schedule for "A Summer of Coolidge"

Bolstered by 14 new committee members, the Program Committee has been working hard planning the beginning of the 2010 season called "A Summer of Coolidge."

As the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation is set to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Foundation in 2010, it is fitting that we take advantage of this important anniversary to bring the legacy of President Calvin Coolidge to the nation and to highlight what the Foundation has accomplished in the last 50 years.

Thanks to the support and leadership of *The Rutland Herald*, "An Evening With Coolidge" is being planned at The Paramount Theater in Rutland for June 10, 2010. A keynote speaker will address the crowd with an important look back at the Coolidge presidency and what contributions were made during his six years in The White House. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will be served. *Information will be announced soon.*

Who can forget Fourth of July? The only U.S. President to be born on Independence Day, hundreds will gather at The Notch at 12 Noon on Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup> to walk with the Vermont National Guard Color Guard a few hundred yards to the burial place of Calvin Coolidge and numerous Coolidge family members. Traditionally, the White House sends a beautiful wreath, which will be laid on the tombstone of President Coolidge. Following at The Notch, a guest speaker will address the crowd



July 4, 2007 celebration of Calvin Coolidge's Birthday

and share stories and history of our 30<sup>th</sup> U.S. President. A solemn and respectful event, all are welcome to commemorate President Coolidge's birthday, his birthplace, and his legacy.

The National Advisory Board of the Coolidge Foundation will be invited to a dinner gathering the evening of Friday, August 6<sup>th</sup> in Woodstock, Vermont. This will be an occasion for the NAB to get re-acquainted, meet the current Board of Directors and Foundation staff, review the new Strategic Plan, and hear all the details of the new Coolidge Education Center and Museum at Plymouth Notch. *Information will be announced soon.*

*continued on page 2*

Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation  
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Plymouth Notch, Vermont 05056

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fax: 260.572.3389

web: [www.calvin-coolidge.org](http://www.calvin-coolidge.org)

email: [info@calvin-coolidge.org](mailto:info@calvin-coolidge.org)

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9 to 5

Named the biggest event in the State of Vermont in 2010 by *The Vermont Standard*, the official opening of the Calvin Coolidge Education Center and Museum at Plymouth Notch is scheduled for Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. This impressive construction project will be complete and it will be an exciting day to visit the Homestead that was the birthplace of Calvin Coolidge. Also known as Old Home Day, starting at 9 a.m., the Foundation's Annual Meeting will be conducted in the Union Church with keynote speakers and attendance by numerous dignitaries on hand to see the new Center. Governor Jim Douglas will be on hand for the official ribbon cutting, followed by guided tours that will take visitors through the new Center, where vaults protect the Coolidge memorabilia, the Museum displays the history of his life and times, and the beautiful new Foundation offices will be visible. Throughout the day, families will enjoy the activities at The Notch, including food and other refreshments, banners and buttons of the Coolidge presidency era, entertainment, and a



The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

full day of fun for neighbors, supporters, visitors and guests. *You won't want to miss this important event.*

Culminating a whirlwind summer of activities, Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup> will be another stellar event. The Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. The program begins with a day-long symposium of speakers from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Space is limited. Speakers will discuss the relevancy of Calvin Coolidge today. Among notable authors and scholars will be Richard Norton Smith, Amity Shlaes, Gov. Michael Dukakis, and others. The symposium will be broadcast on C-SPAN. Attendees will be allowed to tour the JFK Library at the conclusion of the symposium. In conjunction with the symposium, a gala dinner celebration will follow at 6 p.m. beginning with cocktails in The Pavilion, and dinner in Smith Hall. Musical entertainment and the guest keynote

speaker will be announced soon. Space is limited. *Look for more details in the Spring-Summer Newsletter and at [www.calvin-coolidge.org](http://www.calvin-coolidge.org).*

October is the traditional wine and cheese festival at The Notch. The public is welcome to come for a final event before The Notch closes for the season. *Date to be announced.*

The Program Committee has been hard at work planning an enhanced program schedule for the "Summer of Coolidge." *The full, detailed schedule will be announced in the Spring-Summer issue of the Newsletter.*

### Members and Friends

We would like to keep you informed of news updates regarding our Dedication Ceremony August 7<sup>th</sup>., our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium at the JFK Library on October 7<sup>th</sup>., and other activities. Please send your email address to:

Karen Mansfield  
[info@calvin-coolidge.org](mailto:info@calvin-coolidge.org)

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**Please mark your Calendar** to attend the Dedication Ceremony of our President Calvin Coolidge Museum and Education Center at Plymouth Notch VT on August 7, 2010, and our 50th Anniversary Symposium at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum in Boston on October 7, 2010.



March 23, 1965

Dear Mr. Coolidge:

You will never know how honored I am to be asked to serve on the Board of Sponsors for the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation and it is with deep appreciation that I accept this invitation.

President Kennedy was always so interested in the historical landmarks of our country and I know he would consider this a most fitting memorial to your father.

I am indeed proud to be chosen to serve on this Committee in President Kennedy's place and shall look forward to being informed of the progress and future plans of the foundation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacqueline Kennedy".

Mr. John Coolidge  
Diamond Glen Road  
Farmington, Connecticut

## Students Discover — *If You Were There on August 3, 1923*

The unique story about how Calvin Coolidge was sworn in as the 30<sup>th</sup> President of the United States by his father is the topic of a new history and writing Outreach Program made available to local schools by the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation. Students unravel the details of this series of events, think how this news was communicated and what it meant. They imagine the roles of people who happened to be involved that night and the stories told afterward. Students examine a replica of the "Lincoln Drape" lamp used in the swearing-in, a Coolidge family photo album, period newspapers, and a telegraph key. They view the presentation, "I Was Ready," told mostly with photographs, and take on a role of one of the 17 people directly involved that historic night.

Partners tell each other the story from their point of view and then write a short narrative telling of their experience as that person. Questions arise: "How does a switchboard work?" "Why is it called swearing in?" "What did President Harding die from?" "What kind of lamp was it?" "What

are the words of the Oath of Office?" The Education Coordinator from the Coolidge Foundation recently visited the Ray School in Hanover and shared this presentation with Alice Eberhardt's Fourth Grade. Here is a sampling of stories written by this enthusiastic class.

Our story begins. On August 2, 1923, Vice-President Coolidge went to the dentist in Woodstock, chopped rotting wood out of a maple tree in front of the homestead, helped a neighbor use a horse rake, and made plans to leave Plymouth Notch the next day to visit friends. That night President Warren Harding died in San Francisco.

*Where were you and what did you experience on the night of August 2 to 3, 1923?*

### **Aurora Pierce, Housekeeper to the Coolidges for 48 years**

One day, when I woke up, John told me the news. I feel so honored to be the President's housekeeper! But knowing they did not ask me to come downstairs for the inauguration is embarrassing. I was sleeping, but I woke to the sound of talking. It

was coming from downstairs. I heard the words "ready . . . inauguration . . . president . . . states . . ." Thinking of nothing of those words at that moment because I was so tired, I drifted off to sleep again. The next morning I heard John shouting to me, "My son is the President, Aurora!" A lump formed in my throat. I suddenly remembered everything. How foolish of me so I blamed everything on the Coolidge family. A few days later, the newspaper came out. " . . . sworn in by his father by the light of a *dirty* kerosene lamp," it said. How insulting! Sweat and blood came out of cleaning everything! Those were the most interesting days of my life.

*by Mindy Wu*

### **Grace Goodhue Coolidge, wife of Calvin Coolidge**

I was woken up when my husband heard the news that he was to become the President. I was shocked, yet excited and didn't know what was going to happen next. At first, nothing was happening but then reporters of magazines and newspapers came to get a good article about the tragic event. My husband told me not to wake up our housekeeper because we didn't need any more people at the event slowing us down for making Calvin the official 30<sup>th</sup> President. There was a guard outside the white wooden house, making sure no one was going to come in. I was very overwhelmed. Finally at about 2:45 in the morning, my husband said the Oath with the Lincoln Drape lamp putting brightness on the eight people's faces around the dining room table. I was sad that President Harding had died but I was extremely happy that Calvin was the new president.

*by Molly Cook*

*Thanks to all for your support.  
We look forward to another  
great season!*



### **Wilder House Restaurant Plymouth Notch, Vermont**

**802-672-4313**

**Open 7 days 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
May 23rd – October 18th**

**Bus groups and larger parties are  
welcome with reservations.**

**Your Hosts, Kim and Nancy Yale  
Email Nyale1@aol.com**

**Winfred Perkins, husband of  
Bridgewater's telephone  
operator, Nellie Perkins**

I was being shaken by something. Then I heard shouting. I slightly opened my eyes and saw my wife. She told me President Harding had died and I needed to inform Calvin Coolidge. After I heard that news, I rushed into my clothes. I put them on so fast I forgot to tie my shoes. I got in my car and floored it to the Coolidge Homestead. I went so fast that my speedometer never worked again. John Coolidge came to the door. I informed him about Harding's death. He woke Calvin up and told me he was awake. Then I went home and got a good night's sleep.

*by Brian Pattison*

**Erwin C. Geisser, President  
Coolidge's Stenographer**

I feel so important! I just typed the Oath of Office for the just elected President Coolidge. I'll tell you the story from the start! I was sleeping in a comfortable bed at a hotel in Bridgewater when I was told a message sent from White River Junction said that President Harding had died in San Francisco. I raced out of bed, got dressed so fast that I forgot my jacket, and dashed for a taxi\*. I kept on telling my driver to hurry up. When I finally got there, I was just on time to type the Oath of Office. I made three copies just in case.

*Written by Hayden Smith*

*\*Actually Geisser got a ride with  
Coolidge's Chauffeur, Joe McInerney*

**Joe E. Fountain  
22 year old Editor of the Spring-  
field (VT) Reporter, also repre-  
sented the Associated Press.**

I am so happy! I was at a Presidential Inauguration with only seven other people! Can you believe those other reporters tried to make us turn around? Preposterous! Wouldn't you agree? It was the best night ever. I got a great interview and a raise. Plus, I shook the President's hand! I also signed the Oath of Office. You can read it.

*by Thomas Kim*

**If you'd like to have a presentation  
in your school on either side of the  
Connecticut River, contact:**

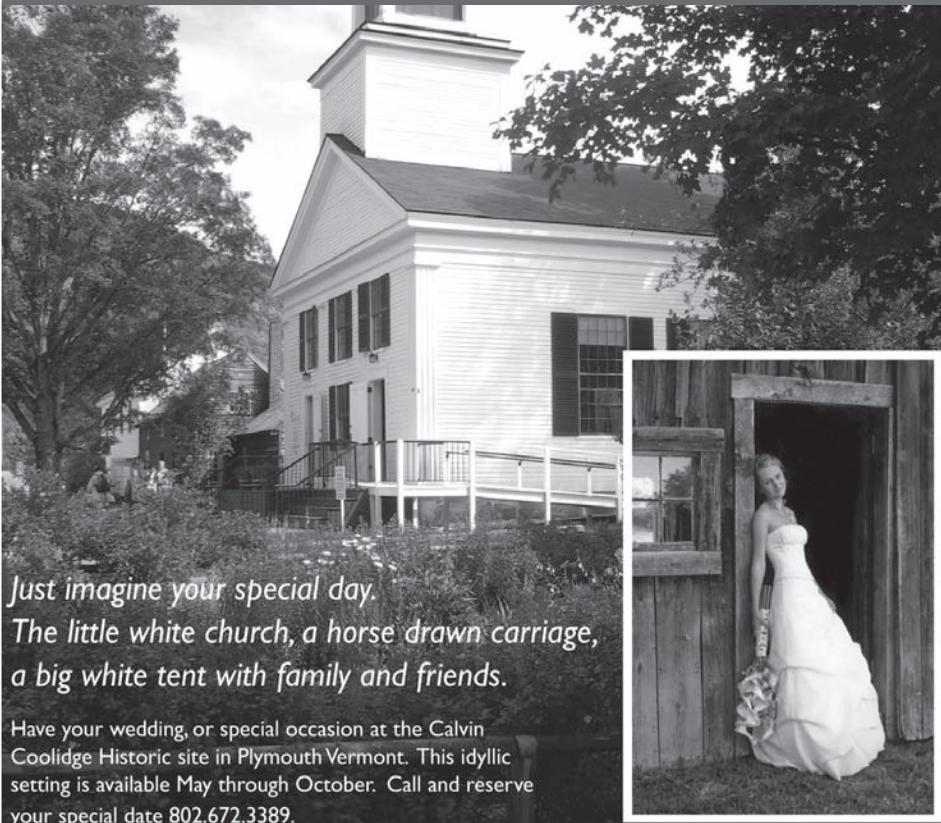
**education@calvin-coolidge.org**

Programs can be tailored to meet teachers' goals and have been presented from Fourth Grade through High School U.S. History classes. Outreach Programs are funded in part by a grant from the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation. Also, reservations can be made to bring classes to the Coolidge site for History Exploration Programs, scheduled from the end of May through mid-October.

Last year, 501 students from the towns of Bridgewater, Cavendish, Chester, Chittenden, Killington, Ludlow, Mt. Holly, Plymouth, Randolph, Rochester, Rutland, Shrewsbury, Springfield, Stockbridge, Wallingford, Windsor, the Upper Valley Waldorf School, and the Mid-Vermont Christian School took part in these programs.

*Diane Kemble  
Education Coordinator*

**Weddings at Plymouth Notch**



*Just imagine your special day.  
The little white church, a horse drawn carriage,  
a big white tent with family and friends.*

Have your wedding, or special occasion at the Calvin Coolidge Historic site in Plymouth Vermont. This idyllic setting is available May through October. Call and reserve your special date 802.672.3389.

Photograph of the Union Christian Church  
at Plymouth Notch by Paul Gutheil.

Paige Hiller Wedding Photography  
www.paigehillerphotography.com – 802.457.9203

## Institution Building at Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation



Board member Barbara O'Connell (left) and Program Committee member Ann Shriver Sargent admire the progress made on the construction of the Education Center.

We are pleased to share with you our current success in building the stature of Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation. We start by announcing that in 2009 we achieved the best operating year in recent history. This success resulted from the Trustees' implementation of a new business model wherein expenses were judiciously trimmed while our annual fundraising more than doubled. This banner operating year was augmented by the brilliant success of the Capital Campaign which contributed non-operating income exceeding \$550,000.

Much of this financial success reflects the excitement here in Plymouth Notch over our new President Calvin Coolidge Museum and Education Center. This public/private partnership with the State of Vermont is the fulfillment of a fifty-year dream of John Coolidge and our Sponsors. The presidential building is an elegant one and most importantly, blends in inoffensively into the Plymouth Notch setting. Our new headquarters and meeting rooms are on schedule and on budget for completion. The dedication will occur on August 7, 2010. Please note that date on your calendar that you can share the festivities with us in Plymouth Notch.

Our Foundation is coming of age. A strong infrastructure is being built to improve our effectiveness even more. Each Trustee and staff member has joined forces to elevate the competence of our organization to achieve our mission: *to open the eyes of the world to Calvin Coolidge*. Gerard Jones and his team are revitalizing governance as is consistent with the evolving changes in for-profit organizations. Andy Kostanecki is orchestrating a concept for technology and social networking. David Roberts is introducing internal controls and investment management theory. Michael Galbraith is developing plans for expanding membership. Mimi Baird is refining our development model. Frank Barrett is guiding the architecture and construction of our building.

Our operating policies are under review, our financial and information systems are being clarified, our selection processes are enhanced and our management skills honed. A creative communications strategy is being crafted to broadcast our message and: *to become the gateway to all things Coolidge*.

Under Program Chair Barbara O'Connell, education and scholarship will triumph as we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a grand symposium at the President John F. Kennedy Library and Museum in Boston on October 7, 2010. Speakers of national repute will recapitulate the best of Coolidge and the relevance of his achievements and philosophies. No American President has better navigated our nation through times of turmoil and change. No American President has displayed stronger ethical values.

"A Summer of Coolidge" is packed with activities for families and guests and laced with the lessons of thrift and frugality, hard work and scholarly application. It highlights spiritual development, moral power, character, culture and religion.

None of our success can be accomplished without the strong financial, moral and scholastic support of our Trustees, National Advisory Board members, staff, members, donors and friends. Thank you for our success in 2009. Join us in an even more successful 2010.

—Robert P. Kirby, President  
Board of Trustees



President Calvin Coolidge Museum and Education Center to be dedicated by Vermont Governor James H. Douglas on August 7, 2010.



## Cheering Capital Campaign Contributors

Just as the capitol pages in Washington, D. C. cheered Vice President Calvin Coolidge, we salute and thank the many donors who have contributed thus far to the Coolidge Foundation's Capital Campaign. With your generous support, we have raised \$3 million of the \$4 million campaign goal and are on target to raise the final \$1 million during 2010, the fourth year of the campaign.

The campaign celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation, and funds a new facility and a strengthened endowment to ensure continued financial health. The 12,000 square foot President Calvin Coolidge Museum and Education Center, now under construction, will be open year round on August 7, 2010 for the study of the life and legacy of Calvin

Coolidge, for the presentation of programs in American history and civics, and for the examination of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of our state and federal government. A spacious conference space will host symposiums, lectures, musical and dramatic presentations, and be available for public meetings and receptions. A modern classroom will serve students of all ages in their quests for knowledge and enlightenment.

As you review the accompanying list of donors, please thank those who have lent their support. If you are not among them, we invite your contribution. During the upcoming public phase of the campaign, we will broaden our reach. We were awarded a *We the People Challenge Grant* by the National Endowment for the Humanities and each gift to the capital campaign garners a match. Naming opportunities are available at all levels

of giving, which will be further outlined in our upcoming mailings.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact our Development Director Bill Brooks through email [bbrooks@gmavt.net](mailto:bbrooks@gmavt.net) or phone (802) 453-4634. Elsewhere in the newsletter are photographs of the construction progress on the new Center. Further information on our mission and activities can be found on our website [www.calvin-coolidge.org](http://www.calvin-coolidge.org). The Coolidge Foundation is a nonprofit educational organization; all gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law.

**Thanks again to our marvelous capital campaign donors and foundation supporters. We look forward to being with you at one of the many celebratory events planned for 2010.**

## New Accession

We wish to thank Mr. John Almon Waterhouse for having deeded to the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation, Inc. all rights and title to the Book:

*Calvin Coolidge Meets  
Charles Edward Garwin*

Copyrighted 1984  
By John Almon Waterhouse

Published by Academy Books  
of Rutland, Vermont.

This book is essential to helping us understand Calvin Coolidge's view of the world. Students of Calvin Coolidge will find it of value for years to come.

We here at the Foundation thank Mr. Waterhouse for his generous donation of this work. It is a significant accession with which to celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

It is of note that shortly after this book was published our Foundation received a letter from Ronald Regan (*see right*).

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 3, 1984

Dear Mrs. Donald:

As a great admirer of our nation's 30th President, I am delighted to have the inscribed copy of Calvin Coolidge Meets Charles Edward Garman which you sent to Clement Conger for me on behalf of The Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation, Inc. I look forward to sharing in the Foundation's most recently published work on "Silent Cal," and I hope you will convey my deep appreciation to everyone who joined in this thoughtful gesture of friendship.

With my kind regards to you and your colleagues,

Sincerely,



Mrs. Kathleen Donald  
Executive Secretary  
The Calvin Coolidge Memorial  
Foundation, Inc.  
Plymouth, Vermont 05056

## 2009 Annual Giving Campaign

Our 2009 Annual Giving Campaign was a resounding success this year with over \$132,500 raised to offset operating expenses. We thank our Coolidge friends for their loyal support and for paving the way to an unprecedented 50th Anniversary year in 2010. If your name was inadvertently left off the giving list, please contact Karen Mansfield at 802-672-3389.

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*To Become the Gateway to  
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#### Mission Statement

*To Open the Eyes of the World  
to Calvin Coolidge*

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*John Coolidge with his grandchildren, Christopher C. Jeter, John W. Sayles and Jennifer Sayles Harville, celebrating their Great-Grandfather's birthday of July 4.*

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**Special Events!**  
August 7, 2010  
Dedication Ceremony  
October 7, 2010  
50th Anniversary  
Symposium

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