

FRIENDS OF SAXONVILLE

NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2013

Hundreds enjoy Saxonville Jingle Bell Day with Families

by John Stasik



The above headline in the MetroWest Daily News on Sunday December 2nd said it all. On a cold, snowy Saturday afternoon, hundreds of visitors jingled and mingled, shopped and strolled through Saxonville. Families and neighbors participated in this unique community event created by Robinsons Hardware, the Friends of Saxonville, and many local businesses and organizations. From the Pinefield Shopping Plaza at the corner of Nicholas Road and Water Street to the Walgreens' Shopping Center at the corner of Hamilton and School Streets, visitors enjoyed 20 events and 38 activities. There was something special for everyone.

More than 200 friends and neighbors filled horse drawn wagons to tour Saxonville Village and get a jingle going that lasted throughout the afternoon. The two most popular activities were the wagons and the new, cleverly "constructed-for-the-event" Jingle Bell Café that featured non-stop entertainment, activities and refreshments.

Mill owner John Finley and his capable crew totally restored and repainted the large vacated space of the Roxbury Carpet Store on Concord Street to create the Jingle Bell Café in time for our event. The results were terrific! Everyone enjoyed the lively music of the Cameron Middle School Jazz Band, the High School Jazz Band, the High School Show Choir and the Cloud Nine Girls Choir.

Throughout the village there were also games for the kids, raffles and prizes from local vendors and organizations, and best of all, warm refreshments and tasty seasonal treats. All of this was free, thanks to our very generous sponsors and

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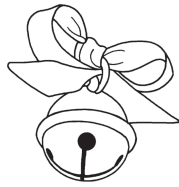
(Above) Horse drawn wagon on McGrath Square provides an up close tour of Saxonville for Mrs. Claus (Carol Casselman) and 30 jingling riders. © John Stasik (Below) Enjoying the tree lighting ceremony at the Athenaeum. © Fred Casselman

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Jingle Bell Day

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Raquel's Vignettes

(Above) Friends of Saxonville volunteers Jon Melegos, FOS President David Longden, Mary Stasik and Jeremy Longden take a moment from a busy afternoon serving holiday visitors in The Jingle Bell Cafe. © John Stasik

contributors, all of whom are listed on the back cover of the enclosed Jingle Bell Day program. At each stop along the way, participating businesses encouraged visitors to shop and dine with special promotions, coupons, activities and entertainment. Of special note was Mrs. Claus visiting every store she could find, to the absolute



(Right) Participants make ornaments at Robinsons Hardware © John Stasik



Raquel's Vignettes

(Above) The crowd at the Jingle Bell Café enjoys a live performance.

A special thanks to our Sponsors and Contributors who made Jingle Bell Day possible. Please thank them when you have the opportunity.

delight of every child. Photos with Santa and the Roving Barbershop Quartet, "The Saxonville Special," added their own extra special touch to Jingle Bell Day.

New businesses, **Lincoln Liquors** and **LandoZ Hometowne Grille** had their grand openings on Jingle Bell Day and **Saxonville Studios** held their open house this weekend. Both the **FHS Holiday Marketplace** and **Edwards Church Alternative Fair** were in full swing as well. The day ended fittingly with the lighting of the Tree on the front porch of the Athenaeum with seasonal music provided by Charles Rousseau's antique Fire Truck.

Jingle Bell Day was yet another opportunity to discover the breadth and depth of Saxonville's commerce and culture. The event was "... a hit with the whole family" according to The MetroWest Daily News – a time and place where, as the Friends of Saxonville like to say, "community, culture and commerce connect."

For more pictures and information about Jingle Bell Day, Discover Saxonville and the Friends of Saxonville, visit our website at www.Saxonville.org. ❖



(Left) FOS board member Laura Melegos hands out programs. © John Stasik

(Below) The Cameron Middle School Jazz Band under the direction of Christine Dupuis, (second row right), one of five music groups entertaining guests in the Jingle Bell Café.



Raquel's Vignettes

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Zēta Pizzeria & Kitchen

by David Longden

A few years ago, John Gripeos decided to come out of retirement. He wanted to buy a restaurant, but didn't want to run it by himself. So he talked to his family. He convinced his son Dimitri to give up his research work in California and move to a place on the east coast, called Saxonville, to help him run the business. They would be partners; John would do much of the cooking, and Dimitri would handle the business side of things. And so the idea of Zēta Pizzeria & Kitchen was born.

The restaurant started as Georgio's Pizza and Restaurant in 2004. Many of us remember the same

building as the former location of the Cumberland Farms on Concord Street in McGrath Square. After the store closed, a few businesses passed through, but none lasted very long until Georgio's moved in. The new restaurant owners offered good pizza and sandwiches for a reasonable price. They were successful

despite the fact that there were other, similar food providers not far away. The food quality and convenient location made it very popular with the school kids in the afternoons and their parents in the evenings. The owners added a few dinner plates like broiled and fried fish, and it soon became a favorite hangout.

John and Dimitri Gripeos quietly bought Georgio's in February 2010. At first nothing changed, and most customers did not notice that the restaurant had changed owners. But slowly, the regulars started to detect that something was different. Dimitri was putting

his marketing skills to work. The menu gradually expanded. A few Greek items were added, like Gyro plates. The pizza seemed to taste even better. New faces appeared behind the counter.

Suddenly, in August of 2011, a new sign appeared and the secret was out. Georgio's had become Zēta Pizzeria. I am told that the word "Zēta" can mean two things in the Greek language. First, it is the Greek word for the letter Z. Second, it means "to ask for." So "Zēta pizza" means literally "to ask for pizza." Although the pizza was very good, the salads became the most popular, with the Greek Salad the top seller (Dimitri's personal favorite is the Grilled Chicken

Salad, although he likes the others almost as much). Dimitri reformatted the little restaurant with a new look. Soon the website was updated, menu boards were replaced and even more menu items added.

Zēta Pizzeria & Kitchen is now a different, more modern eatery. Working with a dietician under contract with the CDC in Atlanta, Georgia, Dimitri is adding four to five dishes to the menu that will be recommended as part of a Healthy Living program. Low sodium, low fat

and low calorie will be the standard requirements for this program. Zēta Pizzeria is proud to be a part of it, and will make sure the taste is up to their standards. The overall goal is to provide healthier menu items. They will soon introduce a gluten-free pizza crust and plan to have a different gluten-free menu item each day of the week.

This year, besides healthy menu items, Zēta Pizzeria will be slowly upgrading the fixtures in the seating area, transitioning toward the look of a full service restaurant. John Gripeos will be retiring again soon and (continued on p. 5)



(Left to right) Dimitrios Gripeos, John Gripeos, Tara Smith, Shannon Sanderson, Ray Laboissonniere, Peter Killeen. © Damianos Photography



A work in progress; owner Dimitrios Gripeos in part of the newly redesigned dining room. © Damianos Photography

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going back to his homeland, Greece. Dimitri will take over full operation of the restaurant. Based on the success they have had so far, he is actually considering opening a second location in the near future, although no decision has been made yet regarding where or when.

Besides providing great food, Zēta Pizzeria has continued Georgio's tradition of support of local Saxonville non-profit organizations like the churches, schools, and of course, Friends of Saxonville. They are a welcome member of our community and of our organization. ❖

Save the Date: Tuesday, April 9!

by David Longden

Join us for our **Annual Meeting** of the Friends of Saxonville. We have some exciting things to tell you this year, and we don't want you to miss out on the news.

The meeting will be held at Edwards Church in Saxonville at 7:30 pm. Plan to arrive at 7:00 pm to chat with the Friends' board of directors and other members of the organization. Meet your neighbors and others interested in Saxonville, chat about issues and enjoy some refreshments. The Athenaeum restoration proposal will be discussed.

Bring a family member, friend or neighbor with you. All are welcome, not just members. ❖

Trivia Question ?

What was known as the Black Road in Saxonville?

..... ?

Look for the answer on the Friends of Saxonville website, www.saxonville.org. ❖

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The Washout of '79

by James L. Parr



Looking west from the south side of School Street and Queens Way (where the Walgreens' plaza stands today). The image was submitted by Sue Lewis as three separate 3 x 3" photographs. Lynne Damianos combined them into this panoramic view. © Sue Lewis.

The Sudbury River has overflowed its banks during some violent and memorable storms over the years, notably the hurricanes of 1938, 1954 and 1955. However, the photo above is from none of those notable storms, but rather from a rare winter rainstorm that hit in January 1979 drenching the MetroWest area and flooding low-lying areas along the Sudbury's winding path through Framingham.

The 1979 storm began around 7:00 pm on Wednesday, January 25 and by 7:00 am Friday morning, over four inches of rain had fallen in the area, bringing the total rainfall amount for that January to 11.4 inches and breaking a 161 year old record. Flood conditions arose when the persistent rainfall was unable to be absorbed into the frozen ground, forcing it to run off into the rivers and waterways. On the town's south side, residents on Circle Drive, Edgell Road and Tafton Road were evacuated, although Assistant Public Works Director Jim Hanscom stated that Saxonville was the hardest hit area in town. Several of the evacuees took shelter in the Danforth Museum, where a temporary Red Cross emergency shelter was set up. Senator Edward Kennedy and Governor Edward King declared Middlesex County a disaster area, allowing residents and businesses to apply for federal disaster funds.

Despite the intensity of the storm, town officials were well prepared to handle any emergency situations,

having learned from the experience of the Blizzard of '78 just one year earlier. Most Saxonville residents survived the storm with minor basement flooding and the inconvenience of closed roads. Several businesses in the Saxonville Mills Industrial Park did not fare so well. The Industrial Park occupied the buildings of the former Roxbury Carpet Company, which had closed in 1973. Floods along that stretch of the Sudbury River were common, and had frequently caused production shut-downs at the carpet factory. In 1977 the Army Corps of Engineers began construction of a levee and gate system for flood control. Completion of the massive project came too late for Saxonville Mills' owner John Finley and one of his tenants. The surging river flooded the basement of Building #9, then occupied by a moving company. "He had eight feet of water filling a 15,000 sq. ft. space. We lost that tenant," Finley recalled.

A little more than 30 years later, another wet week in town saw the Sudbury rising again and threatening the people of Saxonville. Continuous rains during a three-day period in mid-March, 2010 swelled the Sudbury to a record 12.92 feet, five feet above its normal height and almost three feet above flood stage. For days, concerned town officials kept watch on the river in Saxonville, but the flood control system constructed in 1979 prevented any serious damage in the area.

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The mission of the Friends of Saxonville is to educate the public about the special identity of Saxonville, an historic neighborhood of Framingham, Massachusetts, and to preserve, enhance, and protect its cultural, economic, environmental and historical qualities.

Membership fees help support our initiatives, newsletter, and our annual Discover Saxonville events.

Please renew your membership or consider joining us for the first time. If you renewed already – Thank you!

If your membership is not up to date, this may be the last newsletter you will receive.

Memberships or Donations:
Pay online at **www.saxonville.org**

Or detach form below and mail your check to:

Friends of Saxonville, P.O. Box 3236
Framingham, MA 01705-3236



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Membership year runs May 1 to April 30

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I am interested in: ___ Athenaeum ___ Nature Trail ___ Fundraising ___ Rail Trail ___ Danforth Bridge
___ Expanding and improving the Historical Walk ___ Volunteering to complete specific tasks



The Washout of '79

(continued from p. 6)

From ancient times, the Sudbury River has provided for the people living along its banks, generously offering food, a means of transportation, energy to run mills, and a quiet oasis for boaters and nature lovers. Yet every few decades or so, the river reminds us of its power and potential for destruction, and as we head into the rainy months of March and April, we must keep that fact in mind. ❖

James L. Parr is a teacher at the McCarthy School and a board member of the Framingham History Center. He is the author of several books including the recent My Name is James and other poems for all ages.



FRIENDS OF SAXONVILLE

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Jeff Underwood of Robinsons in Saxonville

FOS Window Clings

by John Stasik

Show your support for the Friends of Saxonville! Display this window cling on your front door window or car window. Members get one free, and can purchase extras for \$1 each (\$2 for nonmembers). Pick one up at the Annual Meeting on April 9, or mail a self-addressed stamped envelope (with your request and the appropriate fee) to Friends of Saxonville, P.O. Box 3236, Framingham, MA 01705.

The Friends extend a special thanks to business members **Lisa Thompson Graphic Design** for the design and to **Tony Nasch at Windjammer Promotions** for their production.

