

Report of the Fremont 250th Anniversary Committee

~ Celebrating Poplin/Fremont 1764-2014 ~

THANKS to the **OUTSTANDING** support shown by the Town, numerous businesses, organizations, volunteers, vendors, and participants, Fremont's observance of its 250th Anniversary during 2014 was a truly memorable and exciting event.

The Fremont 250th Committee extends its deepest appreciation and thanks to one and all who so very generously donated time, money, muscles, and expertise, that when all combined, proved that Fremonters take exceptional pride in their hometown and can come together to joyously celebrate all that has been truly outstanding in this small little town.

The 250th Celebration consisted of a number of enjoyable activities and fundraisers. The Committee raised nearly \$20,000 over 3 ½ years to help offset celebration costs. They did this by funding and selling Fremont 250th sun-catchers; 250th decals; commemorative soda; a 72 page Souvenir Town History Program; 2014 Fremont Commemorative License Plates; and the first New Hampshire Town Flag ever made for sale to the general public. Fremont is one of only 10 New Hampshire towns that have an official town flag.

The Celebration consisted of a wide variety of activities starting off on Saturday, June 7th with a series of three ***Old Fashioned 1864 Baseball Games*** played in period costumes & with old-time equipment by numerous members of the Essex, Massachusetts Old-Time Ball Club. It was a perfect sunny day and all those in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the games between the Essex Team & the NH Granite Team. The NH Granite won two of the three games. The Fremont Troop #1 Boy Scouts also did a nice opening Flag-Raising ceremony. Stacy Newman of Fremont sang a magnificent rendition of the national anthem just before the ballgames unfolded. This event was ably coordinated by Michael Rydeen, Al Hinckley, Doug Brown, Leon Holmes Jr, and the ever dependable Fremont Parks & Recreation Commission.



Next came the ***Miss Fremont Scholarship Pageant*** on Sunday, June 15th at the Ellis School Gymnasium where the first Miss Fremont was crowned in 50 years. **Amanda Arsenault**, daughter of Steve & Kathy Arsenault of Fremont, was selected as the 2014 Fremont Queen from a talented group of six young ladies by a panel of judges. She was appropriately crowned by the **1964 Miss Fremont Bi-Centennial Queen Jane (Turner) LaBelle**. The lovely & charming

Megan Mission was selected as First runner-up.

Pageant Chairman Mary Wheaton-Pinder worked very hard with her daughter Jen Picone in

conjunction with the Miss Raymond Scholarship Committee to organize this highly successful and professional event that was attended by over 200 people. Awards of \$1,000, \$600, and \$400 were awarded to the 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place winners. A very special **Thank You** goes out to Amanda Arsenault for so admirably representing Fremont during all the celebration events as well as representing our town in the Raymond 250th Anniversary Parade. She made Fremont extremely proud with her genuinely sweet personality, intelligence, & beautiful singing voice...truly, who can ever forget her amazing rendition of *Ava Maria*? Congratulations to one and all who worked so hard to make this pageant such a tasteful, inspirational, and successful event.

The major portion of the 250th Celebration took place over an unbelievably sunny & perfect four-day period between June 19th and 22nd. **The Spirit of Fremont Night** took place on Thursday, June 19th at the Fremont Ball-fields with a ***Proclamation issued by Governor Maggie Hassan Honoring the Town of Fremont, NH;*** followed by the very talented ***Paul Prue Blues Band*** performing an evening concert much to the delight of the 175 people in attendance. This was followed by a ***Fremont Past & Present Slide Show*** featuring townspeople, local landmarks, and scenic areas all around town. John "Jack" Rosa did a remarkable job coordinating the hundreds of slides from a large Fremont slide collection. The event concluded with the showing of cartoon movies on the newly acquired & unveiled 18-foot long inflatable Fremont Parks & Recreation movie screen. Free balloons, popcorn & pizza were generously



donated by local businesses.

On Friday evening, June 20th the 1800 Fremont Meeting House came alive with the hauntingly beautiful, yet delightful, spirited toe-tapping Celtic music performed by the immensely popular 30-piece ***Strathspey & Reel Scottish Society of***

New Hampshire. This concert was performed with a wide variety of Celtic musical instruments much to the happy delight of the 180 people in attendance. The concert was preceded by Eugene "Gene" Cordes representing the Fremont Board of Selectmen consisting of Leon Holmes Sr and Brett Hunter by welcoming all to Fremont's 250th Anniversary Celebration; followed by Town Historian & 250th Committee Chairman Matthew Thomas officially ***Dedicating the 1802 Poplin/Fremont Town Pound.*** The Pound was reconstructed in 2011 on the Meeting House grounds by members of the 250th Committee & various community volunteers as a lasting memento of Fremont's proud agricultural heritage.

Saturday, June 21st was the big day of the 250th Celebration. The day dawned bright and beautiful with mildly warm temperatures ideal for any outdoor celebration. A large 80' X 40' white tent served as the centerpiece of the Field Day Celebration held on the spacious Peterson Family's Brookvale Farm on Martin Road. Soon nearly 100 antique cars and trucks arrived from all over New England lining up in several neat rows sporting a vast array of colors, shiny chrome, polished wood, and clean, white leather seats. Residents Michael & Terry Sullivan did an amazing job organizing this incredibly popular aspect of the Fremont 250th Field Day awarding several trophies to vehicle owners bearing such titles like the ***B-52 Bomber Plane Crash Award; The 1843 Poplin Treasures Award, The 1800 Meetinghouse Award; the 1861 Fremont Civil War Award; and the 1734 Mast Tree Riot Award*** all paying homage to various colorful Fremont historical events or landmarks. These awards were the first of their kind ever awarded during a major regional antique car show.



The all-day Fremont 250th Field Day also encompassed a wide variety of other activities including 60 food & craft vendors; three bands that performed throughout the day including the acclaimed ***High Range Country Band*** from Nottingham, NH; the ever popular ***Side Effect Band*** from Leominster, MA.; and Fremont's renowned ***Shagg's Band*** featuring Dot, Betty, & Rachel Wiggin -- three of the four Wiggin Sisters that originally comprised "The Shagg's" founded here in Fremont back in 1968. They still have a national and world-wide cult-following that absolutely adores their original and quirky music often dubbed "the worst band you ever loved." ***DJ Mark Watson of Littleton, MA*** provided outstanding music & emcee services during the entire day.



In the morning the ***Fremont RC Model Plane Club*** put on an eye-catching stunt plane exhibition much to the delight of the numerous people watching it. The planes performed all kinds of stunts up in the air that lent another unexpected realm to the celebration. The colorful planes looked magnificent doing their loops and dives up over the blue skies of Fremont.



A spontaneous **FLASH MOB** consisting of nearly 100 dancers hosted by Fremont's **Rock-Your-Body-Dance Academy** suddenly broke the morning solitude by breaking into dance mode to the soundtrack of the popular 1984 movie "Footloose."

During the afternoon the NH State Police put on a **Canine Dog Demonstration** where a German Shepherd sniffed out illegal narcotics on people and in an on-site car. Hundreds of people thoroughly enjoyed the very popular demonstration.



The **REMAX REALTY Hot Air Balloon** was on hand late in the afternoon providing tethered balloon rides for a nominal fee. The colorful balloon looked spectacular as it lifted up into the sky giving people an awe-inspiring view of the entire celebration field.

Thirty members of the **First Newmarket, NH Revolutionary War Militia** set up an encampment and provided an informative interpretation of colonial camp life, militia demonstrations, and fired off cannons. **The 6th Maine Regiment** consisting of 10 re-enactors demonstrated Civil War camp life and fired off cannons and paraded regularly in unison as a regimental unit.



The Fremont PTA, and Fremont Parks & Recreation sponsored a **Bouncy House** as well as several children's games, face-painting, cotton-candy, and other fun activities for the enjoyment of local youth. The Fremont Cub Scouts under the leadership of Jamie Thompson did a bottle rocket exhibition for spectators. **Free Tractor Hayrides** were sponsored by the Peterson/Barthelemy/Lennon Families throughout the day. Participants couldn't believe the

hayrides were FREE as well as everything else during the entire 4-day Celebration except food and hot air balloon rides.

The ***Fremont North & South Tug-of-War Contest*** took place on the field with residents representing their respective side of town. In only true Fremont fashion would the rope actually snap in half with neither side winning the contest. Many attributed this unexpected incident as a wonderful sign that Fremont is over-all a truly united community despite occasional political debates.



The New Hampshire ATV Club of Fremont provided excellent motorized ATV transportation around the fairgrounds and displayed their equipment to spectators.

At 7:15 pm the 50-piece ***Timberlane Community Band*** from Plaistow, NH put on an uplifting evening concert under the Big Tent that was greatly enjoyed by hundreds of people. As darkness fell around 9:15 pm Stacy Newman of Fremont sang the national anthem in her usual outstanding manner as crowds of people poured in for the **FIREWORKS SHOW**. The **Timberlane Community Band performed the ever-popular 1812 Overture in conjunction with the First Newmarket Militia firing off several cannons. At the conclusion of the 1812**



Overture, the band launched immediately into playing the Star-Spangled Banner as *Pyrotechnico Fireworks of New Castle, Pennsylvania* began its spectacular fireworks display to the ecstatic delight of the crowd of 2,500. The awe-inspiring fireworks lasted over 20 minutes and became especially memorable because of the THREE truly spectacular GRAND FINALES that ended the fireworks show that concluded with a large lit-up sign that

proclaimed "FREMONT, NH 250th!" *Pyrotechnico* generously donated \$1,600 worth of additional fireworks that simply made the fireworks show all the more spell-binding to watch. The 250th Committee was grateful for their professionalism and generosity.

The Peterson/Brookvale Farm Fields were decorated with red-white & blue bunting and signage; bouquets of colorful balloons; and Fremont Town Flags proudly waving from flagpoles on site. Colorful pennants decorated the entire perimeter of the huge 80' X 40' white tent making the grounds look festive and inviting. Large 1000-watt generator lights illuminated the fairground as well as the two large parking lots located on the east side of Martin Road.

On Sunday, June 22, the fourth and final day of the 250th Celebration featured a tasty and FREE



Pancake Breakfast at the People's United Methodist Church. **The church bell was also rung at 9:30 am to commemorate the actual 250th anniversary of Fremont being incorporated as the "Parish of Poplin" on June 22, 1764.**

The Fremont Historical Museum & 1800 Meeting House were both open for free tours during the morning and early afternoon.

An 11:00 am Ecumenical Church Service was attended by 85 people in the historic 1800 Meeting House. The gifted and personable Reverend Steve Bascom of the People's United Methodist Church ably officiated the service. His sermon focused partly upon the uniqueness of Fremont and its proud and colorful heritage. The much-loved ***Grace Notes Acappella Quartet*** founded in Fremont in 1991 performed lively, uplifting gospel songs that never fail to inspire a genuine sense of appreciation and gratitude for their amazing musical ministry. The Methodist Church Choir also admirably performed appropriate hymns as part of this special church service.



Also on Sunday the Fremont Food Pantry sponsored a ***Millenium 5K Road Race*** that took place between Martin Road and Brown Brook Road on the north side of Fremont. Approximately 250 people participated in the successful race.

Also taking place on Sunday, June 22nd was a ***Find The Flag Competition*** challenging people to find seven different Flags associated with early American History on different flagpoles around town. Fremont Building Inspector Bob Meade hosted this activity.

At 1:00 pm the venerable 24-Piece **ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS SCOTTISH BAGPIPE CORPS** from Manchester, NH performed a two-hour outdoor concert on the lawn of the Fremont Safety Complex before an audience of 200 people. Their marches, demonstrations, and musical



performances were a huge hit. After their concert, a cutting of three **Fremont Birthday Cakes** -- all made by Fremont resident Yvonne Ouellette. The cake cutting honors went to 90 year-old Gertrude "Trudie" Butler - a longtime resident and former State Representative. Everyone was treated to a free piece of cake to enjoy.



The conclusion of Fremont's 250th Celebration ended in the late afternoon with a **town photo** of 60+ old and new residents being taken on the Town Common in front of the Safety Complex. **Over 4,500 people attended Fremont's 250th Anniversary Celebration.**

Due to the successful sale of various souvenir items, raffles, vendor fees, monetary donations, advertisements, Northside/Southside Fundraising Competition, and over-all frugal management of both Town and Committee raised funds, the 250th Committee had funds left over that were allotted for the following projects:

- 1) \$2,700 for a two-sided metal Town Historical Marker
- 2) \$500 for new Signs for five Fremont Cemeteries
- 3) \$1,000 for the 2nd Annual Fremont Scholarship Pageant
- 4) \$600 for planting trees and/or flower bushes on Town property
- 5) \$2,500 for producing a Fremont Town History DVD
- 6) \$1,000 for Fremont Historical Museum Acquisitions

A **72-page Fremont Commemorative Souvenir History & Program** was compiled by local historian Matthew Thomas. Carolyn Carr worked unceasingly to raise funding for publishing 750 copies of the 250th Souvenir Programs. She astutely raised triple the amount needed. Her diligence and hard work are greatly appreciated. There are still programs available at no cost, at the Fremont Town Hall. Get yours today!

SPECIAL THANKS to the following people & businesses who volunteered their services during the Celebration: Angelo Amengual, Tammi & Dave Bertolami, Heidi Carlson, Jon DellaPenna, Warren Gerrity, Bill & Connie Dolloff, Margaret Matick, Gerri Tilley, Mary Dutton, Charlie Sapienza, Anne Sloan, Dana, Jordan, & Alex Coulombe, Martha "Marty" Shaw, Steve Arsenault, Albert Peterson, Linda Lennon, Stacy Newman, Mark Pitkin, Allie Burke / Natural Images by Allie Photography, Barry Ferrara, Matt Gattinello of Reel Video Productions, Bruce White of Fremont Cable TV, Carol McFarland, Constance Greer, Rob Janvrin, Fremont Town Selectmen, Fremont Police Department, Fremont Fire Rescue Department, NH ATV Club, Fremont Boy Scouts, Fremont Pizzeria, Fremont PTA, Fremont Public Library, Fremont Friends

of the Library, Fremont Parks & Recreation Commission, People's United Methodist Church, Waste Management, and Tuck Woods.

A very special **THANK YOU** to Heidi Carlson, Scott & Brenda (Peterson) Barthelemy and the **entire Peterson/Lennon Family** for going above & beyond the usual call of duty. Their outstanding support, incredible kindness, and unselfish generosity in helping to make this celebration a success, was done in a spirit that exemplifies nothing but the **very best of human nature** and what the Town of Fremont has always been about!

The 250th Committee was comprised of the following members:

Chairman - Matthew Thomas, **Vice Chairman** - Michael Rydeen, **Treasurer** - Jean Ragonese, **Secretary & Vendor Coordinator**- Patricia "Trish" Coulombe, **Miss Fremont Scholarship Pageant Director** - Mary Wheaton-Pinder, **Souvenir Program Sales Coordinator** - Carolyn Carr, **Antique Car Show Coordinators** - Michael & Terry Sullivan, **Sound Stage Coordinator** - Dennis Acton, **Media Coordinator** - Felicia Augevich, **Decoration Coordinator** - Doug Brown, **Grounds Maintenance Coordinator** - Al Hinckley, **Grounds Lighting Coordinator** - Leon Holmes, Jr, **Publicity** - Robert Rydeen, **Stage Construction & Parking Coordinator** - Richard "Ric" Pinder. **Souvenir Sales Coordinator** - Sharon Thomas, **Outstanding Committee & Team Players** - Darlene DeMila-Amengual, Karen Gehalo, Lori Holmes, Donna Smith, Jeff Horton, Joe & Doris Nichols.

It was a tremendous pleasure working with so many dedicated and dependable committee members over the past four years. As their Chairman, there are not words enough to express my sincere gratitude to each and every one of them. You were all truly amazing!

We also fondly remember **JEAN (FRENCH) RAGONESE** our 250th Treasurer whose ancestral lineage in Fremont dates back into the 1750's. Sadly Jean passed away on July 16th at age 88 after a brave struggle with rapidly deteriorating health. Her dedication to the 250th Committee and to preserving and promoting Fremont's diverse heritage will long be remembered.

Hopefully the success of this 250th Celebration will encourage **Fremonters of 2039 to hold a 275th Celebration** in hopes of perpetuating the proud heritage and accomplishments of this amazing little town.

On behalf of the 250th Committee we THANK ONE AND ALL FOR A MEMORABLE, ENJOYABLE, AND EDUCATIONAL 250TH CELEBRATION!

Most appreciatively,
Matthew E. Thomas
Fremont 250th Anniversary Chairman

Photos courtesy of Meredith Bolduc, Heidi Carlson, Leo Danjou, and Bob Meade