

The Year in Review – Fremont NH 2018

2018 was an eventful year for Fremont. The weather started off bitterly cold for the first two weeks of the year with temperatures barely reaching 10 or 15 degrees above Fahrenheit and often below zero. It caused a sharp decrease in business due to many people staying home or inside their places of business rather than brave the cold & snow.

A BLIZZARD took place on January 4th & 5th dropping 12 inches of snow in Fremont and closing schools and businesses for two days. A NOR-EASTER took place on January 17th causing the same effects leaving roughly 10 inches on the ground. Another heavy snowstorm took place on February 7th again causing many area schools and businesses to close.

March came in like a lion and never stopped! THREE NOR-EASTERS took place in just 11 days!! The first struck on Friday, March 2nd consisting of mostly rain & high winds; the next one happened on March 7th & 8th leaving 13 inches. The 3rd Nor-Easter took place on March 13th - Town Election Day with blowing winds and dropping 23 inches of snow on Fremont. This was the 2nd year in a row that a major snowstorm struck on Town Election Day which was held at the Ellis School Gymnasium. Surprisingly, there was a larger voter turnout in 2018 with 592 people voting compared to 542 in 2017. There was fear that a 4th NOR-EASTER would strike on March 20th & 21st but its wrath stayed pretty much south of New Hampshire hitting the southern coast of New England and Cape Cod. It only dropped 2 inches of snow here in southeastern New Hampshire.

In late June Fremont was in the midst of a prolonged nine-day 90's-plus Heat Wave. The heat wave finally came to an end on July 6th. It was a hot, sweltering, humid heat wave that taxed electric companies and caused power outages on the north side of Fremont twice. This was the longest Heat Wave in New Hampshire since 2002 and the first when temperatures over 90 degrees covered the first five days of July since 1955. August was a very hot, humid month with several downpours making it the fifth rainiest August in New Hampshire history.

Autumn was pleasant weather-wise but the Fall Foliage in southeastern New Hampshire wasn't spectacular in 2018. The leaves were still on countless trees as late as November 6. A few trees finally became bright & colorful in very late October and early November -- normally autumn leaves have all fallen off most trees by October 20th. Leaves hung on to many trees late in the season despite a very heavy wind and rainstorm on Saturday, November 3rd.

Winter struck early in November with heavy snow falling by mid-November. Small snow squalls also took place during the month causing winter to seem like it was here to stay. By December it seemed to many that we had an annoying winter already. December was cold and mild with hardly any snow during the month.

Two very rare BLUE MOON Lunar Eclipses took place in January. The January 31st one was an unusually large looking moon and it showed how the upper-left side of the moon was covered

in a reddish color. People enjoyed seeing how much larger the moon looked in the evening sky during these two Lunar eclipses.

A 2.7 Earthquake centered at East Kingston, NH struck the region on Thursday, February 15th. It was one of three Earthquakes to strike New Hampshire in early 2018.

Historical town highlights in 2018 included the opening of ALTAEROS with their SUPER TOWER in the former Olsen Gravel Pit off Route 107 near Jackethole and opposite Benson's Cafe. Altaeros' mission is to expand affordable, state-of-the-art connectivity to rural communities around the world. The Altaeros Super Tower uses the world's first autonomous aerostat (dirigible) platform to deploy high-speed mobile broadband in rural markets at a fraction of the cost of alternatives. Each Super Tower which can hover upwards of 850 feet high, replaces a network of 15 traditional cell towers and seamlessly integrates into the existing cell network.

Altaeros was founded by the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in 2010 and operates out of Greentown Labs, the largest clean technology incubator in the United States, based in Somerville, MA. The company which will employ 20 to 25 employees here in Fremont premiered their first tethered hot-air Super Tower on Wednesday, December 5th. The aircraft is housed in a seven-story building erected on the company's 160-acre Fremont property.

In March 2018, the Nevada County California Sheriff's Office confirmed that an autopsy performed on the severely decomposed body found on November 26, 2017 on the banks of the Yuba River four miles south of Washington, California. The human remains, found by a jogger, was those of Kurt Andrew Collins formerly a resident of Fremont. (Please note: This writer accidentally referred to him as Kyle Collins instead of Kurt Collins in the 2017 Fremont Town Report). The autopsy failed to determine the cause of death, nor was there any evidence Collins died of foul play.

Collins, 61, had long been a suspect sought in connection with the 2016 shooting of Steve Wolf, as well as the killing of Michael Mahoney in July 2016, and the death & disappearance of Joseph Charles Murphy in October 2003. Kurt Collins grew up in Fremont between 1963 and the 1980's when he moved to northern California and became an elusive hermit & gold-pro prospector for over 30 years living in several encampments along the Yuba River. Collins was a quiet, highly intelligent young man while growing up in Fremont.

The popular ROCK YOUR BODY GYM in Fremont won a world's record for dancing 39 hours straight over New Year's Eve 2018. This feat got them into the 2018 Guinness Book of World Records. Sara Cloutier, of Fremont and owner of the club was also featured in People Magazine's "Half Their Size" January 15, 2018 edition pages 64 & 74. Congratulations to all the members of Rock-Your-Body Gym for winning this incredible feat and to Sara Cloutier for losing 151 pounds out of 301.

TODD SMITH, born 1984 in Lynn, MA, the son of James “Jim” & Cindy Lou Smith, grew up in Fremont at 278 South Road. Smith achieved national fame in the field of World Wrestling Entertainment by winning many regional & national titles as part of a duo wrestling team called HANSON. Raymond Rowe was the other partner. Smith was a student of the world-famous wrestler known as “Killer Kawalski.” I’m sure no one will want to “mess” with this world-famous Fremont wrestler! Congratulations Todd!!

The 2018 NEW HAMPSHIRE RENAISSANCE FAIRE was held for the first time in Fremont at Brookvale Farm on Martin Road during the weekends of May 12 & 13 and 19 & 20. This popular annual event formerly held for several years on Thorn Road in Kingston, needed larger facilities for its growing popularity and therefore moved to Fremont where they had plenty of parking and room for expansion. The event attracted nearly 5,000 spectators from all over New England. This event which was extremely well organized by very professional organizers, became a colorful, exciting, and intriguing event that promises to continue to do well in the years ahead at this convenient southeastern New Hampshire event venue.

The 33rd ANNUAL FREMONT GRASS DRAGS & WATER CROSSING COMPETITION took place over Columbus Day Weekend October 5 thru 7 at the Peterson’s Brookvale Farm on Martin Road. This event is the largest of its kind in the world and was packed with close to 60,000 people attending the three day event. The event has expanded by including lawnmower races, helicopter rides, and a small race car driving track. Dozens of skimobile & motorcycle dealers, food, clothes, and souvenir vendors, etcetera all filled the open field under large and small tents. Hundreds of spectators from all around the country and Canada camped with campers & tents in a designated area on the spacious grounds. It is almost a surreal event seeing this massive event taking place in little ole’ Fremont. Traffic was seriously backed up during the weekend on Routes 101 & 125 because of this event and another major event happening just around the corner on Shirking Road called the Seacoast United ANNUAL SOCCER TOURNAMENT in Fremont & Epping. This major event also attracts thousands of people from all over New England and New York State over Columbus Day Weekend. Seacoast United recently built a huge indoor Sports Facility building and are also expanding its parking lot facilities. Most of the soccer fields are in Epping but a portion are also in Fremont.

ELECTION DAY was held on Tuesday, November 6 and Fremonters turned out in strong numbers. Here and across the nation the election technically became a referendum on the Donald Trump Republican Presidential Administration. Here in Fremont Republicans took the day, but in New Hampshire other than the Republican Governorship of John Sununu Jr, the Democrats took complete control of the State Senate, State Legislature, U.S. Senate, US Congressional Districts, and State Executive Council. New Hampshire wavers between being a red state (Republican) & a blue state (Democrat) -- therefore it is often considered a purple state that can go either way in national elections.

Walter Welch, age 40, of Fremont was shot & killed on Saturday September 29th on the Route 101 Beede Road Overpass in Epping. Welch was allegedly shot in the head by a NH State Trooper who claimed Welch had a pistol in his hand when he approached Welch’s pick-up truck

after stopping him for driving all over the highway before exiting onto the Exit 6 overpass. Relatives said “Welch had been depressed recently, but it was not like him to act the way he did when driving or pulling a gun.” The official report on this incident came out in January 2019 exonerating the Trooper for shooting at Welch because the report indicated that Welch “may have shot himself in the head” just before, or during the time the Trooper was closing in on him.

ETHEL EDNA TILLEY, aged 100 (as of October 19, 2018) was presented with the historic 1909 Boston Post Cane by the Fremont Town Selectmen on Saturday, December 15th at a presentation held in the Town Hall. Tilley was born in England and migrated to the U.S. after she married her late husband. She has lived in Fremont since 1980. She was especially proud to have the Fremont Girl Scouts on hand as she was a proud former Girl Scout Leader.

REVEREND FRANK O. KING became the new pastor at the People’s United Methodist Church in Fremont effective June 1st. Rev. King brings a cheerful personality and many years of proven experience to his new congregation in Fremont. He replaces Reverend Nancy Collins who retired from the ministry.

ROADS REPAVED - Much to the relief and great pleasure of many Fremonters and local travelers, a section of Beede Road between Woodman’s Causeway (a.k.a The Sunken Cassey) and the Epping town line was repaved in June. Red Brook Road was rebuilt and repaved in early September and Road Agent Leon Holmes Jr and his helper Butch Porter are to be commended for the fine work done on repairing these worn-out roads.



HISTORIC SIGNS - The Fremont Historical Society paid for, and erected with the help of Road Agent Leon Holmes Jr, several new Historic Markers around town in August & October, including four WELCOME TO BLACKS ROCKS VILLAGE signs; signs for the 1911 Fremont Town Hall, Woodman’s Causeway, Albert “Pokey” & Ruth Fuller Memorial Park, Fellows Brickyard, State Senators Ezekiel Godfrey, Perley Robinson, & Isaiah Robinson homes, 1878 Tramp House, 1820 Poplin Town Pound, the 1853-1864 Fremont Poor House, Jackethole, Zaccheus Clough’s 1750’s Hook-In-The-River Inn, the 1764 Daniel Brown Homestead, the 1749 Benoni Gordon House, and the 1897 Fremont Railroad Depot. THANK YOU to the Doolan Family of Phillipsburg,

Maine who donated the funds for this purpose in memory of their son Michael Doolan who lived in Fremont for six years before he died in 1993.

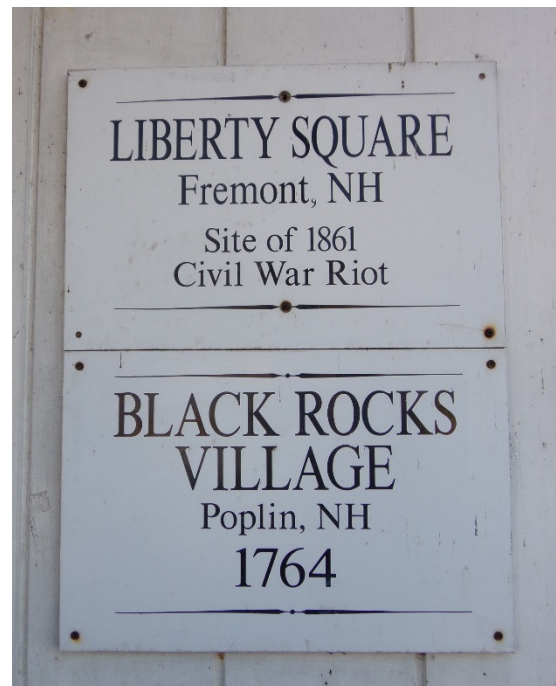
SQUIRREL ARMAGEDDON - The highways and byways of New Hampshire proved especially fatal to thousands of squirrels this past summer & autumn. 73 were found dead between Fremont & Durham in August by one local Fremonter. Hundreds were killed on Route 101 and other major highways. Apparently, because 2017 was a bountiful year for nut trees, thousands of squirrels

were born in 2018 and while the nut crop wasn't as plentiful this year, squirrels had to extend their feeding ranges while searching for adequate food supplies -- hence many had to cross busy highways and roads looking for food. Also there were many squirrels experiencing a rare brain virus that contributed to their confusion when crossing roads & highways. Needless to say, many were hit and killed in record numbers throughout New Hampshire and elsewhere. Sadly, several Fremont roads were littered with dead squirrel carcasses. The last time this had happened was back in 1968 -- ironically 50 years ago.

PROPOSED NOISE ORDINANCE - During the week of September 10 through 14th, a controversial Town Ordinance recommending the implementation of a NOISE Ordinance aroused considerable controversy among Fremonters. Dozens & dozens of townspeople voiced their objections to it on Social Media (FACEBOOK) saying it was too constrictive even including whistling, leaf blowers, snowblowers, music playing, loud voices, etcetera. A crowded public hearing held on September 13th made it clear most Fremonters were not in support of this ordinance and the Town Selectmen wisely withdrew the proposed ordinance. Many Fremonters voiced concern that it covered ridiculous scenarios and was an unreasonable intrusion upon their civil liberties and made that fact clearly known. One Fremonter (and not this writer) even compared it to fighting King George II and his unfair 1734 Mast Tree laws placed upon early American colonists if they cut certain sized White Pine Trees illegally, this among other unfair laws imposed by King George III in the 1760's & 70's eventually led to colonists declaring their American Independence in 1776.

The WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA CEREMONY took place at the War Monument in front of the 1911 Town Hall on Saturday, December 15th with the Fremont Boy & Girl Scouts in attendance. Rev. Frank O. King, Town Selectmen, & Vietnam War veteran Tom McGall all gave special remarks and posted a decorated wreath in front of the Monument. Gerry Tilley has coordinated this annual program for nearly a decade and her hard work and efforts are much appreciated.

The Fremont Historical Museum was open between April & November and over 160 people visited the museum. The Museum is open for anyone wishing to make a special appointment by calling FHS President, Matthew E. Thomas at 603 895 4032. THANK YOU to all that donated Fremont artifacts and funds to help support this educational and important local museum. Thank-you to FHS member Jessica Parson for assisting with opening the Museum. The Society also opened the 1800 Fremont Meetinghouse in October for tours of that historic local treasure and gave tours of the 1819 Village Cemetery. The rusty old metal



flagpole which has stood in front of the 1800 Meetinghouse since the 1960's was taken down in April. Flags will instead hang on brackets attached to each side of the meetinghouse front door.

WWI MEMORIAL TREE CUT DOWN - The 100-year-old James Matthew Forsaith Memorial Tree was cut down in early May. It stood between 288 & 292 Main Street (across from the Town Hall). It was planted in 1918 in memory of Forsaith who died in World War I. He was from Chester but loved Fremont and spent a great deal of time in his adopted town. For many years a small American flag would be placed in front of the tree during Memorial Day.

IN MEMORIAM

Gertrude "Trudie" Butler, aged 95, died December 20, 2017 was unfortunately left out of last years Fremont In Review. Trudie was a 10 year member of the NH State Legislature, served as Fremont's Health Officer for many years, was President of the Fremont Universalist Society for over 25 years, founded the FREMONTER Newsletter back in the late 1970's; and did much to support Fremont Boy Scout Troop #1.

Robert Rydeen, aged 77, died July 17, 2018. He was a longtime Fremont Town Moderator who very capably performed that duty fairly and wisely. Bob was an enthusiastic member of the Fremont 225th & 250th Anniversary Committees, fought diligently to keep out a proposed Oil Refinery in Fremont & Raymond during the late 1970's, and generously offered his services in several capacities for the Town of Fremont. His optimistic and cheerful demeanor will be greatly missed.

Daniel Horsburgh, aged 66, died June 26, 2018. Dan loved Fremont, its history, and scenic countryside. He and his family thoughtfully preserved forever roughly 300 acres in 2016 of prime woodland off Beede Road that contains a beautiful, scenic pond on it by selling it to the Southern NH Land Trust. The Horsburgh & Boden Families owned and operated Poplin Farms Egg Plant just over the Fremont line in Brentwood during the 1960's and 1970's. His pleasant, yet reserved style will be missed by those who were fortunate to know this quiet man.

This author wishes to again extend his deep appreciation to so many who enthusiastically support preserving Fremont's proud heritage through donations of memorabilia and funds. May 2019 be a truly happy, healthy, productive, and prosperous year for all my fellow Fremonters.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew E. Thomas
Town Historian

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." ~
Marcus Garvey