

Report of the Town Historian 2016 Fremont NH, Year in Review

2016 was a fairly eventful year in Fremont. Our small town is not exempt from the steady march of time with several changes, both good and bad, taking place. Fremont has a population of roughly 4,400 so it is not necessarily the quiet, little, remote country town that it used to be. Traffic continues to increase on our roads as more and more people move to southeastern New Hampshire and the pressures of growth continue to bombard the region.

The Winter of 2015-2016 was one of the mildest on record with only 28 inches of snow recorded in Concord, NH. There were no major snowstorms during the winter season. Daffodils bloomed by March 26th. Many more maple trees were tapped around Fremont this year than in years past. It turned out to be a relatively good year for maple sugaring.

Spring brought only a little rain, and the absence of meaningful rainfall during late spring and the summer and autumn months became so serious that this year experienced the worst Drought in Fremont since 1965 and 1957. Several Fremont wells went dry, and numerous residents had to initiate water conservation methods long into the autumn months. It wasn't until the very end of the year that the drought began to recede to the point that southeastern New Hampshire which was the hardest hit part of the state, could finally lower the severe drought warnings down to mild. The Exeter River in parts of Fremont through the summer was as dry as a desert bone. When a good rainfall took place on October 20th and 21st the sound of falling rain was like music to many people's ears because of how elusive rain has been during the past 6 months. It was a great relief to see the water rise almost to normal levels in the river by late November.

200 years ago in 1816 New England experienced the Year Without A Summer. There was a frost in every month of the year killing crops and the cold weather helped prevent gardens and crops from growing which caused considerable food shortages throughout the region. Ironically, the summer of 2016 lacked much needed water for various crops in New England creating local food shortages with apples, pumpkins, and other fruit and vegetables.

The former Henry & Phyllis Turner House at 272 Main Street (the John Prescott Lovering Inn/ Capt. Nathan Brown Tavern/ True's Hotel) in Fremont Village (formerly Black Rocks Village) which stands directly opposite Sandown Road, was finally restored inside and out by late December. This historic landmark built circa 1756 is now 260 years old and looks so much better with its gray vinyl clapboard siding, white trim work, new 6 over 6 windows, new doors & sidelights, and its new sunrise door ornament with dentil moldings above the main front door. The renovation of this historic old Tavern & Hotel, (Fremont's 2nd most historic landmark after the 1800 Meetinghouse) which was the site of the first Fremont/Poplin Town Meeting in 1764, and witness to many significant events in Fremont's history, has done much to enhance the appearance of Fremont Village, making it look historically quaint, tidy, and visually

appealing to passers-by. THANK YOU TO THE NEW OWNERS OF THIS PROPERTY FOR RESTORING AND PRESERVING THIS VERY IMPORTANT HISTORIC FREMONT LANDMARK! They even restored and renovated the former ICE HOUSE on the property which was the last surviving Ice House still standing in Fremont.

The cleaning and restoration of brickwork on the 1940 Fremont Motors Garage in Fremont Village earlier in 2016 has also done much to make the village look nice and attractive. THANK YOU TO ONE AND ALL who take great pride in maintaining their Fremont homes and businesses by keeping them so neat and attractive. It shows that Fremonters take considerable pride in who they are and what their town looks like. Consequently, Fremont has one of the most attractive town centers in southeastern New Hampshire to visit or drive through.



On Thursday, March 24, Ellen Horsburg, aged 94, was presented the Boston Post Cane by Fremont Selectmen Gene Cordes, Neal Janvrin & Roger Barham. She has been a resident of Fremont since the early 1950's where she and her late husband Robert Horsburg owned &

operated Poplin Farms Egg Plant on River Road in Brentwood for roughly 20+ years with William & Rose Boden. The Boston Post Cane has been awarded to the oldest senior citizen of Fremont since 1909.
(Photo courtesy of Neal Janvrin)

The heroin/fentanyl epidemic that has struck New Hampshire especially hard these past couple of years, continues to wreck havoc in Fremont and other New Hampshire communities. Nearly 500 people statewide died from overdosing these two lethal drugs. There was a major drug bust on April 6th in a parking lot in Fremont Village. Thirty to 50 marijuana plants were discovered growing in the deep woods in Mountain Pastures near Whittier Hill off Moose Meadow Road on August 31st. The value of the crop was roughly \$50,000.

Water hoses exploded inside Ellis School on April 5th causing considerable damage to several classrooms.



Leon Holmes Sr chose not to run for re-election as Fremont Selectman in 2016. He had formerly served as Town Selectman from 1983 to 1992. Roger Barham was elected in his place.

(L to R: Gene Cordes, Neal Janvrin, Roger Barham. Photo courtesy of Heidi Carlson, April 2016)

Jonathan Collins made statewide news for having to unexpectedly deliver his newborn baby daughter at his Fremont home on August 10th.

A seven-year-old boy snuck out of his family's home on Beede Road early Wednesday morning, August 23rd and was found by police walking down Route 101 towards Walmart so he could buy matchbox cars. Fortunately he was found before any serious harm could happen to him.

Shawn O'Brien, aged 51 of Fremont was promoted to Brigadier General of the NH National Guard at a special ceremony on Sunday, October 16th in Concord, NH before an audience of 200 people. Shawn becomes the highest ranking military official ever in Fremont's history! He'll be in charge of overseeing the NH National Guard's role in domestic operations. "I cannot think of a better person for this role," said Major General Bill Reddell, the adjutant general during the promotion ceremony.

The "Electric Eleven" participating in the Rock Your Body fitness studio Guinness Book of World Records competition from 8:00 am Friday morning, December 30th until 11:59 pm Saturday December 31st, accomplished their goal by exercising in the longest fitness class which lasted for 39 hours and 59 minutes -- beating the former record of 39 hours and 20 minutes set in 2012 in the United Kingdom. Sara Cloutier, of Fremont who owns the fitness studio was extremely proud and pleased by the outstanding performance of her team of dedicated exercisers. Congratulations to all for a job WELL DONE!! Fremont is VERY PROUD of you all!!!

A Danville woman and her nine-month old daughter escaped serious injury and possible death when her SUV went out of Park and rolled into the Exeter River at Clough's Bridge becoming submerged in 6 feet of water on Monday, October 24th. She had stopped to take foliage pictures of the old swimming hole when the incident happened. Fortunately, the mother had taken the baby out of the car before it rolled into the river. Back in 1959 a young boy drowned at Clough's Bridge after falling from the bridge railing, and in 1963, a young unmarried couple died while parked in their car late at night on the path to the Clough Bridge swimming hole and died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

43 year-old Joseph DeKorne of Fremont died in a roll-over crash on Route 101 in Candia, NH when he lost control of his pick-up truck while traveling at a high rate of speed eastbound just east of Exit 3. He crashed into another vehicle and rolled over around 7:30 am. His truck came to rest on its roof in the middle of the highway.

On June 14, Stacey L T Light, aged 51 of Fremont sadly lost her life in a motorcycle accident that occurred on June 12 in Loudon, NH. She was the beloved owner and operator of the well-known Hampton, NH business Classic Clips Cat & Canine Grooming Salon.

Tragically, on December 3rd two Fremont teenagers died in a single car crash on Route 107 in Seabrook, NH. Taylor Nelson aged 19, and Austin Anderson aged 17 both died from their injuries after hitting a tree. A candlelight vigil took place at the Fremont Soccer Field on Wednesday night December 7th with 200 people in attendance. The community of Fremont pulled together to lend comfort and support to the bereaved families.

In May someone was stealing car stickers off vehicle windshields at Evenflow Automotive Repair Shop on Main Street. The culprits have yet to be found.

A new minister replaced Reverend Stephen Bascom at the People's United Methodist Church on July 1st. Her name is Nancy Collins and she comes to Fremont from serving as pastor of Aldersgate UMC in Worcester, MA. Welcome to Fremont Nancy!

The Rydeen Family of Fremont discovered a black widow spider in a bag of grapes they bought at a local supermarket in July. This made statewide news and the supermarket was forced to check the remainder of their grapes as a preventative measure.

After an unprecedented volatile modern Presidential Election year, Republican candidate Donald J. Trump beat Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton in Fremont by a vote of 1591 votes to 965. This was the largest voter turnout in Fremont history with over 2,600 votes cast.

The Spaulding & Frost Community Café opened its doors in late August in the Cooperage Plaza on Spaulding Road.

The basement of the 1911 Fremont Town Hall is being remodeled throughout late summer and autumn of 2016. It is being finished into offices, a larger meeting room, renovated Food Pantry space and an enlarged Cable TV studio.

A proposed asphalt, concrete recycling plant on Shirking Road in Shirking Woods brought considerable concerns and questions by many Fremonters during public hearings.

The 31st annual Fremont Grass Drags & Water Crossing Competition took place on Columbus Day Weekend at Peterson's Brookvale Farm on Martin Road. Over 45,000 people attended the event this year enjoying good weather for most of the weekend.

Many appreciative thanks to the members of the Fremont Garden Club for their amazing dedication towards beautifying Fremont's public buildings and properties. They generously donated and erected a new WELCOME TO FREMONT, NH sign near the Danville town line.

(L to R: Leon Holmes Jr, Dennis Howland, Jared Butler. Photo courtesy of Mary Kaltenbach, September 2016)



The annual Wreaths Across America Ceremony was held inside the Fremont Town Hall on a snowy December 17th. Christmas wreaths were placed earlier onto numerous veterans graves in various Fremont's cemeteries as a token of remembrance and appreciation.

A very Happy New Year 2017 is cordially extended to all Fremont residents by this writer. Thank you to one and all who help make our town a wonderful place to live.

IN MEMORIAM -- We remember some longtime Fremont residents.

Barbara Bassett - Aged 87, died January 14, 2017. Barbara was a pillar of the Fremont community. Over the past 55 years she was a highly respected teacher at the Ellis School from 1968 until 1995; served as Town Treasurer for 20 years; and was the longest serving Fremont Town Librarian from 1984 until 2011. She worked hard to help make the new 2002 Fremont Public Library building a reality after serving 18 years in the former one-room schoolhouse on the corner of Beede Road & Main Street that was converted into a Town Library in 1965. Thanks to her professionalism and love of books, she generously donated the funds necessary to automate the Fremont Library card catalog system. She was always engaged in doing many worthwhile projects that either enhanced the community or taught her family a love for various useful hobbies and projects. She was truly an exceptional and level-headed individual who lived her life to the fullest and who loved her family unconditionally. She deeply cared for her many friends and her beloved community, and as a result she will be sorely missed. Fremont has truly lost a genuinely gifted and important pillar of our community.

Gordon Copp - aged 74, died March 6th, 2016. "Gordie" was a lifelong resident of Fremont who served as a good-natured, very capable former Fremont Police Chief, longtime police officer & Fremont firefighter. He unselfishly donated countless hours in helping make many Fire Department projects a reality. He also did an exceptional job of perambulating Fremont's Town boundaries with various adjoining communities back in 1987 & 1988, and in later years. He leaves a loving and devoted wife and three children who loved their father with exceptional devotion.

Carol McFarland - aged 80, died unexpectedly on July 23, 2016. Carol lived many years in Fremont before moving just over the town line into Chester 25 years ago. She worked many years in Fremont at the former Vining's Market, and Fremont Village Market. She was an active and dedicated member of the People's United Methodist Church in Fremont, and generously volunteered for, or financially supported many various community projects. Most important of all, she was often the first person to start a fund drive to help a family or person who suffered an unexpected illness, injury, devastating fire, or lost a family member. Her heart was always in the right place and she LOVED Fremont and its residents...she will be sorely missed by many friends, family and local residents.

Patricia Johnson - aged 80, died August 19, 2016 -- Pat moved to Fremont in 1964 with her husband Richard. She worked 31 years for the IRS Office in Portsmouth and generously lent her extensive knowledge of tax codes and financial recordkeeping abilities to help both the town and local citizens. She was an active member of the Fremont Firebelles which raised monies for the Fremont Fire Department; helped re-invigorate the Fremont Memorial Day ceremonies back in 1979, and she with her husband, were outstanding Fremont Village landlords who were very kind to their many grateful tenants and neighbors.

Robert Wines - aged 71, died August 2, 2016 -- Bob moved to Fremont in 1977 and was a longtime lawyer. He was a former Fremont School Board member and lent his knowledge and expertise in many ways within the Fremont community. His somewhat unpredictable sarcastic personality, all done in a well-meaning manner will be greatly missed by those who knew him well. He leaves behind a kind and thoughtful wife and four devoted children.

Compiled and respectfully submitted by,

Matthew E. Thomas
Town Historian



2016 Town Report
Appreciation presentation
to Patricia Martel at
Deliberative Session 02
February 2016

L to R: Selectmen Neal
Janvrin, Gene Cordes,
Leon Holmes Sr and Pat
Martel.

Photo courtesy of
Heidi Carlson