

## Report of the Town Historian

2013 started off as a long, cold challenging winter complete with a blizzard on February 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> that forced the US Post Office to cancel mail delivery for the first time in recent memory. Despite high gusty winds, snowdrifts, and over 18 inches of snow, electrical power fortunately did not go out in Fremont during this blizzard - quite a surprise considering all the many power outages that have plagued the State of New Hampshire over the past eight years during a variety of floods, snowstorms, ice storms, and tropical storms. There was a Nor-Easter on March 8<sup>th</sup> that left 9 to 11 inches of snow on the ground. Over-all, it was a winter with many snowstorms, followed by a mostly wet spring. June was a very wet month, and July through mid-August was very hot and humid with many days in the 90's. After mid-August the remainder of the summer was comfortably pleasant. September through mid-November was primarily dry and pleasantly warm with some of the most colorful autumn foliage seen in many years here in southeastern New Hampshire. December saw plenty of snow on the ground assuring that it would definitely be a white Christmas.

Former Town Clerk **Shannon Bryant** who was appointed to the position back on October 29, 2012, won her bid for Town Clerk in her own right during the March 2013 Town Elections. Shannon resigned the position on July 25, 2013 to take a job elsewhere. She was succeeded by her Deputy Town Clerk **Sharon Girardi** who was appointed by the selectmen as the interim Town Clerk until March 2014 Election Day.

Town voters at the March 2013 Town Election also voted to combine the Town Clerk and Town Tax Collector positions together starting in 2014. This measure had failed the two previous years but was approved on the third try. Therefore, **Sharon Girardi** who was elected to that single position, will be the LAST elected Tax Collector in Fremont's history as she was elected to that position in March 2013. **Leon F Holmes Sr** won election to the Board of Selectmen during the March 2013 Town Elections. He had served as a former Selectman between 1983 and 1992.

Former Fremont Police Chief **Neal Janvrin** settled his lawsuit against the town out of court in July. He was the longest serving Police Chief in Fremont's history serving 23 years in that capacity. He was elected to that position in March of 1989, and in 1994 became the first appointed Chief of Police in Fremont's history. Former interim Police Chief **Denny Wood** was appointed to the position back in September 2012 by the Selectmen. During a Police Chief search process conducted by the Selectmen and a Community Search Committee, Interim Chief Wood was succeeded on August 1, 2013 by **Lt. Jon Twiss**, a 28 year veteran of the Derry, NH Police Department and appointed by the Selectmen as the Town's new Chief of Police. He was officially welcomed to Fremont during a Public Meet & Greet Open House held in October.

56 year-old **Dulce Compres-Nunez**, of Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic was vacationing in New Hampshire when she and her male companion **Yefrey Perez** were riding on an ATV along the Rockingham Trail in Fremont when it crashed on August 15<sup>th</sup>. The ATV crashed about 100 yards south of South Road into a large rock and tree killing her at the scene despite efforts to revive her. Perez, the driver, suffered minor injuries. Both passengers were wearing helmets,

and alcohol was not believed to be a factor - though speed might have been. Unfortunately, on a bumpy, unpaved wooded trail, even moderate speeds can sometimes become a crash factor thus no charges were brought against Mr. Perez.

**Greta J St Germain**, a two-term selectwoman, resigned her position on September 6<sup>th</sup> as she was moving out of town. She was the FIRST ELECTED female selectman of Fremont being elected in 2008. **Pearl Davies** was APPOINTED as the first Selectwoman back in 1966. **Annmarie Scribner** was elected as the third Fremont Selectwoman in 2010. Longtime former Selectman **Gene Cordes** agreed to fill the remainder of Greta's term until March 2014.

The Fremont 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee continued to meet throughout 2013 and decided to hold a FREMONT 250<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY FIELD DAY CELEBRATION on Peterson's Field off Martin Road, in lieu of a Parade. This will be a more cost-effective measure in an effort to keep expenses for this special celebration at a reasonable cost.

## **Fremont will celebrate it's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary between Thursday, June 19 & Sunday, June 22, 2014.**

A worthy and appropriate array of enjoyable and educational events are scheduled to make for a memorable celebration. **This milestone celebration will honor the memory and many contributions made by former Poplin / Fremont residents and servicemen & women dating back to when the Town was incorporated as the *Town of Poplin* on June 22, 1764.** This celebration gives us an opportunity to discover, and appreciate, the very proud and honorable heritage of our little community which dates back to the first settlers of the 1720's to the wonderful place it is in 2014. When Fremont was originally a part of Exeter from 1638 to 1742 we were part of one of the oldest settled towns in the United States. At that time Fremont was a frontier town located on the outer western fringes of the more settled eastern seacoast towns of New Hampshire. Our town has one of the most colorful, exciting histories of any southeastern New Hampshire community. Fremont **truly has a heritage to be very proud of.**



Rutledge Frost's restaurant Stand at 325 Main Street circa 1940 (still stands across from the old Spaulding & Frost Cooperage). This was later William & Alice Copp's restaurant, and then Dick Piper's restaurant.

Businesses started opening in the Cooperage Plaza off Spaulding Road during 2013 for the first time. The Plaza plans to erect another business building as part of the complex within the near future. *KTM Properties; Environmental Restorations, Inc.; and Stepping Out Dance Academy* are three of the businesses that opened in the Cooperage Plaza.

Several new homes were built in the Cooperage Forest Housing Development off Spaulding Road & Frost Lane.

Poplin Café at 665 Main Street celebrated their 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2013.

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual FREMONT GRASS DRAGS & WATER CROSSING COMPETITION took place over Columbus Day weekend attracting over 45,000 spectators from around the country and Canada. This is the largest event of its kind in the nation.

**Wreaths Across America** held its second observance in Fremont on December 14<sup>th</sup> with a special ceremony held at the War Monument in front of the Town Hall. Christmas Wreaths are placed on each Veteran's grave in all the Fremont cemeteries. Gerry Tilley of Fremont has done a very commendable job of organizing this worthy tribute to our fallen servicemen and women these past two years.

#### **IN MEMORIAM of longtime Fremonters.**

**Ted "Teddy" Bolduc** passed away unexpectedly on April 8, aged 50. Ted was the youngest child of nine children born in Fremont to Phyllis "Teet" & Joseph Bolduc Sr. He was the very affable, good-natured, hard-working, devoted son and friend to all who knew him. Teddy assisted his father in the horse-pulling ring at Deerfield Fair for many years when his father was horse-pulling director and announcer at that popular fair for well over 25 years. Teddy was admired and well liked around his old hometown of Fremont and in nearby Raymond and Epping where he previously lived. His passing was a tragic loss to his very large circle of friends and family.

**Ariela L "Aja" Mahoney** passed away June 20, aged 74. Aja who was a founding member of the Fremont Garden Club and was a devoted Fremonter who did much to enhance the floral beauty of the town. She loved gardening and did a magnificent job of landscaping her Chester Road property. She willingly devoted time, money and services to several worthwhile Fremont organizations and causes.

**Richard P Johnson** passed away on September 6 at age 82. "Dick" served as a former Fremont Police Chief from 1979 to 1986 and was a member of the Fremont Fire Department for many years. He drove the town school bus for many years as a retiree. He was a devoted husband, father, friend, and neighbor to all who knew him. He served in the US Marines during the Korean War and earned a Purple Heart. He and his wife Patricia were excellent landlords who genuinely cared about their tenants and took great pride and care of their former apartment building in Fremont Village.

**Richard “Dick” Rand** passed away on November 2 at age 75. Richard was a lifelong Fremonter who loved the history of his native town. He served his beloved community in a very capable and dedicated manner. He ably served as a Cemetery Trustee for several years; was a longtime member of the Fremont Fire Department; was an outstanding town maintenance man who took excellent care of Fremont’s various public properties. He loved Fremont and its many longtime residents and would often joke with townspeople *“that you better be good, because I’ll be the last person you’ll see”* ...meaning he was the local gravedigger who dug the graves for countless townspeople for over fifty years dating back to 1960! He had a wonderful sense of humor and was a genuinely nice person to all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

**Robert D Burleigh** passed away on November 13 at age 82. Bob was a proud Fremont native born into two very old Fremont families...the Holmes & Burleigh’s. He was an active member of the Fremont Historical Society who took great pride in his hometown and did much to help preserve its history by transferring old Fremont movies to video or DVD’s. He was especially proud of being a former employee of the Spaulding & Frost Barrel Cooperage, was active as a former Fremont Baseball Coach, and was the founder of *The Country Roads Band* that performed at various venues in Fremont and elsewhere within the region. He will be greatly missed by many family, friends, and neighbors.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew E Thomas

Town Historian



Colonial Militiamen lining up in front of Fremont’s 1800 Meeting House during NH’s observance of **New Hampshire at Yorktown, Virginia Bi-centennial Celebration** on September 12, 1981. The Battle of Yorktown in October 1781 ended the Revolutionary War with an American victory.

Photos Courtesy of Matthew Thomas Collection