

Report of the Town Historian – Fremont in Review – 2012

The winter of 2011 and 2012 was the 2nd warmest winter on record in NH in 117 years. Peepers were heard in town as early as March 13 and buds appeared on trees as early as March 20. Temperatures went up as high as 81 degrees on March 21st...almost unheard of in springtime. Amazingly, daffodils and forsythia flowers bloomed on March 22nd. The summer of 2012 became the hottest on record within the United States causing severe droughts, wild-fires and Dust Storms in various parts of the nation. Though hot in Fremont, the town was fortunate to have had enough rainfall during much of the summer to avoid severe drought. Autumn in New Hampshire was pleasant with mild temperatures and average foliage colors. December saw a couple of minor snowstorms, one of which was an 8-inch snowstorm shortly after Christmas causing slippery driving and downed tree branches but fortunately no power outages.

The price of gasoline continued to remain high throughout 2012 with prices reaching as high as \$3.87 in October and as low as \$3.29 around Christmas. The downed economy continues to make life for so many difficult and challenging. Housing sales increased within the United States during 2012 but new job creation continued to lag behind with the national unemployment rate hovering between 8.2% to 7.8%. The cost of food, gasoline, heating, clothes, vehicle repairs, entertainment etc. all continued to rise in price. Most people have learned to make do with less and have less disposable income. Food banks and Food Stamps have all seen an increase in services during 2012.

The 4th SB-2 Fremont Deliberative Session held at the Ellis School Gym on February 6th was attended by only 34 voters including the necessary town officials. The 2nd SB-2 School Deliberative Session was held on February 4th at the Ellis School Gym with only 44 voters in attendance including school election officials, voting to amend, or not amend, an \$11,049,000 budget.

The March 13th Annual Election Day saw 505 voters out of over 2,900 registered voters. **Brett Hunter** was re-elected as Selectman for another three year term. Voters again voted down nearly all warrant articles that might add significant sums to town property taxes.

In the early morning hours of March 7th a pick-up truck crashed through the west wall of the Historic 1756 John Prescott Lovering Inn-Captain Nathan Brown Tavern-True's Hotel-Phyllis Turner House at 272 Main Street at Liberty Square in Fremont Village. **This historic home was the site of the Town's very first Town Meeting on August 27, 1764.** Many Town Meetings took place here until 1787 and 1789, when they were moved to three other taverns located elsewhere in town until the 1800 Meeting House was built and utilized for Town Meetings between 1801 and 1911.

This historic old Tavern was used as a stagecoach stop and was visited by the famous American orator and statesman Daniel Webster in 1840 during a campaign stop on behalf of presidential candidate William Henry Harrison. It was last used as a Hotel between 1872 and 1906. Since

then it has been a private residence. The Turner Family has owned the house since 1946. The damage was repaired by late summer 2012.

On Friday, April 6th a spectacular two-alarm fire completely destroyed a mobile home located at 217 Main Street which stood just west of the former Rowe's Gas Station. A 66-year-old female tenant who lived alone in the mobile home was rushed to the hospital after suffering some serious facial burns which caused her to be flown by medical helicopter to Massachusetts General Hospital. She was frantically trying to wave down help alongside Main Street as the fire quickly engulfed the circa 1960 mobile home. It was believed a candle started the fire.

A new road was built just south of 134 Sandown Road in April 2012 to be called Jacob's Cove after builder Jacob Donigian.

The Fremont 250th Anniversary Committee completed the construction of the 1802 Town Pound on May 26, 2012 by placing an ornate iron gate upon the entranceway and a large granite capstone over the gate.

American flags were placed upon telephone poles along Main Street between Liberty Square to the 1800 Fremont Meeting House. Between Memorial Day and into September. In 2011 they were placed along Main Street between Liberty Square & Sand Hill.

Fremont Postmaster **Patrice Wharem** resigned her position in July and was replaced by **Cheryl Vincent** in October.

The Fourth of July was celebrated very quietly in Fremont. Hardly a firecracker was heard anywhere in town.

A few Fremonters have been negatively impacted by the unfortunate Hepatitis C outbreak that took place at the Exeter Hospital which was caused by 33-year-old medical technician David Kwiatkowski who allegedly administered several contaminated needles on over 3,000 hospital patients between March 2011 & 2012. This irresponsible behavior caused national alarm because he had also worked in several hospitals throughout the United States.

Dennis Acton of Fremont became a candidate for NH State Senate in 2012 from District #23. His bid was unsuccessful. Fremont has not been represented in the NH State Senate since 1869.

William F. McCain, a former Fremont State Representative in 1991 died on July 31, 2012 in New York. He withdrew his candidacy for Speakership of the NH State Legislature in 1991.

76 acres of land known as the Smith Property abutting parts of the Glen Oakes Conservation Area in Spruce Swamp was acquired by the town on April 2, 2012 from brothers Richard & Robert Smith. The property has been in the Smith Family for generations.

93-year-old **Cecelia O'Connell** was presented on August 2nd with the historic Boston Post Cane by the Fremont Selectmen in honor of being the oldest Fremont resident. The presentation of the Boston Post Cane has been a tradition throughout over 400 New England towns and cities since its inception back in 1909. Mrs. O'Connell has been a resident of Fremont since 1955 when she married former Postmaster James O'Connell.

Neal Janvrin whom has served 23 years as Fremont's Police Chief was removed from office on August 20th. No reason for his dismissal was provided and he plans to challenge the dismissal in court seeking to be re-instated as Police Chief if successful.

Brentwood Police Officer, and former Fremont Police Officer **Denny Wood** was appointed as the interim Fremont Police Chief.

The Fremont 250th Anniversary Committee met throughout the year planning a suitable and worthy celebration to commemorate the town's 250th Anniversary in 2014. A "**CELEBRATE FREMONT FESTIVAL**" took place at the Ellis School on September 22nd. Volunteers are always welcome and are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6p.m. at the meeting room in the Safety Complex.

The 27th *Annual Grass Drags & Water Crossing Competitions* took place on the Peterson / Brookvale Farm on Martin Road during Columbus Day Weekend. An estimated 40,000 people attended the event which is the largest event of its kind in the country.

A 4.0 Earthquake was felt throughout Fremont and much of New England on October 16th at 7:12 pm. No damage was reported within the town.

Fremont Town Clerk **Lori Holmes** resigned her position on October 30, 2012 after 13 years in that position. The Fremont Deputy Town Clerk & Tax Collector **Kathy Arsenault** resigned her position in August 2012. Both the Town Clerk & Tax Collector were exonerated by a judge later in the year for a lawsuit initiated by the selectmen in March 2012 for supposedly violating their oath of office under state law and an improperly administered town ethics code. **Shannon Bryant** was appointed interim town clerk on October 29th by town selectmen to fill the position until Town Election Day in March 2013.

Hurricane Sandy struck the northeastern United States on Monday, October 29th. It impacted Fremont later in the afternoon of October 29th and was accompanied by 50 to 60 mph winds and steady rain. Electrical power went out around parts of Fremont around 5:20 pm and was not restored until 5:10 pm on Wednesday October 31st. Several trees and branches fell, some knocking out power lines around town, but over-all very minimal damage was caused around town. Fremont Interim Police Chief Denny Wood and Officer Derek Franek escaped serious injury after being struck by a hanging electrical wire that was snapped off a house by a passing tractor trailer near Schrieber's Automotive Shop on Main Street (Route 107) during the hurricane / tropical storm. Both officers received minor electrical burns.

BID & DESTROY featuring Danley Demolition of Fremont premiered on the National Geographic Television Channel on October 10th. The object of this new Reality Show is to see how quickly a building can be demolished and what potential antique or valuable finds can be discovered during the demolition process. **Lee & Rita Danley**, and their daughter **Gina Surette** have operated their demolition business out of Fremont since 1997. Their work was discovered on YouTube and someone thought it would make a great Reality TV show. So far it has been a wonderful success and it is planned to make additional segments for future television viewing. It is a small world indeed when you see Fremonters starring in their own TV show!

A **record number of Fremont voters (2,502)** turned out to vote during the 2012 Presidential Election on November 6th. Fremonters favored former Republican Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney 1380 votes to incumbent Democratic President Barack Obama's 1039 votes. Fremonters gave the majority of votes in every contested race in this election to the Republican candidates. Fremonters have voted only twice since 1864 for a Democratic Presidential candidate and that was in 1996 for William "Bill" Clinton by a vote of 539 to 538 for Republican candidate Robert Dole. In 1864 Fremonters voted for Democrat General George McClellan with 69 votes to Republican Abraham Lincoln's 62 votes. The town went Democratic as well in 1868 with 85 votes for Horatio Seymour to 78 votes for Republican General Ulysses S. Grant. 150 years ago on December 13, 1862 during the Civil War Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia, **Fremont lost 5 Union soldiers in that one battle alone...**the most ever lost in any given battle Fremonters have fought in during any War dating back to the American Revolutionary War 1775-1781.

Lewis Builder's ***Black Rocks Village Condominiums*** on Hall Road in Fremont Village continues to build several 2 & 4-unit condominiums within the development creating a tight-knit looking "city" for residents aged 55 and above.

The 2nd annual ***"Wreath's Across America"*** Ceremony took place on Saturday, December 15th at the War Monument in front of the Town Hall. Forty adults and children attended. They placed blue, gold, and black stars upon the Albert "Pokey" Fuller Memorial Tree a few feet east of the Town Hall in honor of veterans who served, died, or were missing in action.

FREMONTERS IN THE NEWS

Allie Burke, a talented Fremont photographer was awarded the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce "Best Business Award" in October.

Michelle Farrar, Guidance Counselor at Ellis School was named New Hampshire Middle School Counselor of the Year.

Eleanor Corliss, a 93-year-old Fremont native and former resident, published a book called ***"Life-lines"*** in March. It spans 75 years dating back to 1937 sharing poetry and stories of her eventful life. She now lives in central New Hampshire.

Aaron Rogers who was the last child born in the 20th Century from Fremont, was born on

December 12, 2000. He also has the distinction of being among a small group of people celebrating his 12th birthday in 2012 that fell on 12-12-12.

IN MEMORIAM

William G. Scholes passed away on April 1st aged 70. He and his wife Kate owned and operated the Provider Bus Company formerly based here in Fremont.

Kathleen L. Copp passed away on October 28th aged 66. She was the former owner of Copp's Flower Center in Fremont for many years.

Byron E. Walker passed away on November 7th aged 89. He was a longtime 79 year resident of Fremont before moving to Epping. He and his wife Betty (Yeaney) Walker owned and operated two businesses in Fremont - Walker's Turkey Farm and Walker's Stables. He was very musically inclined and sang and performed music for various retirement homes almost to the time he passed away.

Roland H. Schreiber passed away on November 11 aged 88. He earned several medals during his four years as a soldier serving during World War II. He also operated Dairy Farms in Fremont & Plaistow, and owned and operated school buses for the Fremont School District.

Mary E. Murphy passed away on November 15th aged 62. She served many years as secretary at the Ellis School and operated her own crafts business called Country Cottage Crafts.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew E. Thomas
Town Historian



The Teacher is Jim Gough, he is retiring this year after 28 years of teaching at Ellis School. The students are 8th graders, Jilyssa Bolton, Kate Breton, Catherine Boyd, and Sarah Richard. The time capsule was from the 8th grade class of 1997. Inside were many encouraging letters from teachers, a yearbook, and many treasures from students. The girls had heard that there may be a time capsule in the school and hunted for it for several weeks. They finally found it in November of 2012 in the Town's safe located in the school's corridor. They were able to contact the class of 1997 about the discovery. The Class of 1997 got together just before Thanksgiving and opened the capsule and had a wonderful time reminiscing about old Ellis School times.

Photo and write-up Courtesy of Theresa Blades, Ellis School