

Report of the Town Historian Fremont in Review 2010

2010 was another challenging year for not only Fremonters but for the nation as a whole. The economy continued to dominate the agenda for the nation, state, and local community. Town officials are working hard to find ways to cut the budget so to reduce some of the financial burden off local taxpayers. Many people continued to lose work, had homes foreclosed, and struggled to find new employment. New Hampshire has fortunately been weathering the Recession considerably better than the other 49 states because of our state's history of frugality and fiscal responsibility. Unlike so many other states, the strength of New Hampshire's economy is fortunately spread over a much more diverse number of industries & businesses rather than just upon one or two specific types of trades. New Hampshire's rate of unemployment at 5.7% is almost half of what the national rate is at 9.9%. Let's all hope that 2011 will see the economy improve so our friends, families, and neighbors can lead more financially stable lives.

Early January started off with a frigid cold spell that even brought destructive freezing temperatures to Florida which destroyed many important food crops down there, thereby forcing the price of certain fruits & vegetables to increase significantly at the supermarkets. Severe weather continued to dominate the local situation right up until April.

Two Fremont residents were arrested in early January for allegedly throwing a 357 magnum and pieces of a sawed-off shotgun out the window of their vehicle onto various Fremont roads. The pieces were later recovered after a local citizen came across it and reported it to local police. The guns were evidence connected to an alleged 2009 Fremont counterfeiting case being investigated by local & state police as well as by US Secret Service Agents. Both later received prison sentences for their roles in this case. A brother of one of the two previously arrested Fremont residents was also arrested in August 2010 for allegedly growing 20 marijuana plants behind his brother's house on Main Street.

On **February 25 & 26 the GREAT NOR-EASTER WIND STORM** took place throughout central and southern New Hampshire causing more damage around Fremont than the 2008 Ice Storm. High winds measuring between 50 to 93 mph in southeastern New Hampshire caused innumerable trees to fall around town blocking several roads, landing on roof-tops, and knocking out electrical power for over five days in various parts of town. Many people lost roof shingles and trim boards on their homes. Flooding took place at Red Brook on Main Street, Clough's Bridge on Danville Road, Bog Bridges on Sandown Road, Cavil Mill (Turner's) Pond on Scribner Road, Tibb's Grove, and along the Piscassic River on Leavitt & Martin Roads. It was nearly impossible to get around town due to all the many detours blocking usual routes of travel. **One of the two historic Poplin Squire Trees toppled over from its perch on a small knoll overlooking the old Black Rocks Mill site in Fremont Village during the storm.** The tree with its massive 16 ½ foot circumference, estimated to be roughly 250 to 275 years old was older than the town itself which wasn't incorporated as a town until 1764.

Fortunately, the weather didn't get frigid cold during the several days that electrical power was out, but it was cool enough for some to seek alternative shelter with family, friends, and at hotels

around the region. Because it was school vacation week, schools were closed only one additional day. Residents at the Colonial Poplin Nursing Home were evacuated because of generator break downs. It was a very memorable weather disaster that unfortunately will easily get confused with several other floods and storms that have afflicted New Hampshire over the past five years.

The **March Flood of 2010** took place between March 11 & 14 dropping nearly 7 inches of rain and causing flooding in various parts of Fremont. School was cancelled for two days and Red Brook washed out Route 107 near Red Brook Road again, as well as Copp Drive, Leavitt Road, Sandown Road at Bog Bridges, Clough's Bridge on Danville Road, and elsewhere throughout the town. Severe floods have almost become an annual occurrence in town every year since 2006 with the exception of 2009.

The **Heavy Rainstorm of March 29-30, & 31st** dropped another 5 to 7 inches of rain in the area causing flooding again in all the usual places around town, but not as severely as the one in mid-March. This storm only forced part of Main Street between Red Brook Road and Danville Road to be closed as water was still rising because of all the small streams emptying into Spruce Swamp and beyond. Red Brook on Main Street, Maple Glen Brook on Danville Road, and Great Brook on Sandown Road became large rivers instead of brooks causing waterfalls and powerful cascades along their route to empty into the swollen Exeter River. **March 2010 became the rainiest March ever recorded since the last quarter of the 1800's.**

Fremont's **2nd Annual Deliberative Session** took place on January 30th at the Ellis School Gym. The 24 Warrant Articles were discussed or amended in 3 ½ hours with 78 voters in attendance. March Town Elections took place on March 9th with 932 people casting votes out of 3,045 registered voters. Mark Pitkin became the new Town Road Agent, and Annmarie Scribner becoming the second woman in Fremont history to be elected selectwoman...and the 3rd to hold the position. Pearl Davies was appointed in 1966 to fill out the remainder of her deceased husband's term.

Spring was much more pleasant than the past two with little rain falling and the budding of leaves and flower bushes occurring about three weeks earlier than usual. The flowers on lilac bushes were nearly past by the time Memorial Day came -- a very unusual and rare occurrence. Weather during summer and autumn was absolutely one of the best weather wise in decades with the sun shining every weekend except one weekend day-- Sunday, August 21st. The autumn foliage was also one of the best viewing years in many years with colors being very distinct and colorful.

Black Rocks Village Condominiums on Hall Road (in the section of Fremont known historically as Black Rocks Village since the 1720's) built their first condo building in March 2010.

In April several used hypodermic needles were found along various Fremont roadways. Police speculate that because of an increase of burglaries in the area, many of the burglaries are related to drug crimes involving hypodermic needles.

A dedication ceremony took place at the Fremont Safety Complex on May 15th in recognition of the new Solar Panel installed on the building. This is one of Fremont's first steps to "go green" and to become more environmentally conscious.

On Saturday, June 12th, the circa 1900-1903 Fred George Carriage Repair Shop located at 179 Sandown Road, was destroyed in a Fremont Fire Department controlled training burn. Fire Departments from Raymond, Brentwood, Sandown, Chester & Danville attended the all-day burn. On Wednesday, June 9th, the Fremont Police Department also used the house as a training resource for handling potential domestic situations including, hostage, homicide and kidnapping scenarios. This was the fourth house located on this site dating back to circa 1764 when one of the three Brown Brothers - Daniel built a house here nearby his brothers' Enoch and Nathan's homes.

On Wednesday, June 30th, the huge old maple tree within the front inside wall of the Village Cemetery on Main Street across from the 1800 Meeting House, was cut down. For decades it was a beautiful tree with bright red leaves that encouraged leaf peepers to stop and take photos.

On Friday, July 2 a Fremont woman hit a telephone pole and then a large tree right next to 57 Sandown Road (the old 1908 Fremont Band House) and was ejected from the vehicle. Had the tree not stopped her, she would have crashed into the house. Given the speed and severity of the two crashes, she was very lucky to have survived her injuries.

HEAT WAVE - New England, including Fremont, was gripped by a weeklong heat wave between July 2 and July 10 with temperature ranging in the 90's and up to 104 degrees. The ground was parched, lawns turned brown, and some towns imposed water bans. According to weathermen, June and July were the hottest months on record. 2010 was turning into the hottest year on record. Nine of the 12 months proved to be the hottest on record by the end of the year. There was little rainfall in June or July.

The Fremont Village Market was sold by owners Steve & Bruce Gillingham to Jitendra Patel in mid July. The Gillinghams owned the store since 1990.

On September 10th, 94 year-old Lillian Pratt of Fremont was awarded the **Boston Post Cane recipient** for the town. She became the 23rd Fremont recipient since 1909 to be honored with this prestigious New England tradition. The Boston Post Cane was first awarded to George H. Floyd in 1909. Mrs. Pratt is a Gold Star Mother losing a son in 1969 in the Vietnam War.

On September 14th, NH Primary Day, Fremont voters approved changing the annual Fremont School District Meeting to SB-2 by a vote of 732 to 153 starting in March 2011.

The Fremont Historical Society hosted a **CELEBRATE FREMONT FESTIVAL** on September 18th which attracted 400 to 500 people. Over 45 craft & food vendors participated as did five antique cars, and the renowned 1960's all-girl "SHAGGS BAND" made a special guest appearance much to the delight of those in attendance. The People's United Methodist Church held a successful Turkey BBQ and the "BAD COUNTRY BAND" performed great music to an

appreciative audience. Numerous Fremont organizations participated and made for a truly old-fashioned and enjoyable country festival. Many thanks to all who participated and attended.

A magnitude 3.1 earthquake was felt by some in Fremont at 11:28 pm on Saturday, September 25th despite the epicenter being located in Boscawen, NH. This was the largest earthquake to strike New Hampshire since the Tamworth-Ossipee Earthquake of 1940 which measured 5.5.

The **25th Annual Grass Drags & Water Crossing Event** held over Columbus Day weekend attracted nearly 50,000 spectators over the 3 day event. It is the largest event of its kind in the world with skimobiles racing down a 500 foot grass track, and snowmobiles racing around a large pond. High flying stunts, concerts, an oval turf race track, antique snowmobile displays, swap meets, free-style snowmobile show, and over 150 vendors coming from all over the nation, made this one of the most exciting events of its type in years. The event was expanded considerably this year making it even more of a diverse attraction than ever before.

The November 2, 2010 General Election saw 1501 Fremont voters cast ballots during this historic election - the highest voter turn-out in Fremont during a non-Presidential Election in NH.

A Blizzard hit New Hampshire on December 26 & 27 leaving 8 to 9 inches of snow on the ground in Fremont. High winds and snow drifts occurred. The storm was not as bad as predicted and was actually worse in central and northern New Hampshire.

FREMONT PEOPLE IN THE NEWS:

In May, ten-year-old **Brendan Howard** became the 2,000,000 fan in the Fisher Cats Merchants Auto Stadium in Manchester winning season tickets and other prizes for holding that unexpected honor.

Six-year-old **Marilyn Dunn** learned the importance of generosity early in life when she requested guests attending her 6th Birthday party bring her food instead of presents. In addition to the all the food she was given, she collected \$85.00 in cash, all of which she happily presented to the Fremont Food Pantry in September.

Roy Olsen had an unexpected encounter with a deer while driving on Route 125 in Brentwood. As he was driving north on the evening of April 6th on his way to buy dog food in Epping, he suddenly had a deer's head come crashing through his front windshield covering him in glass and blood. The deer was hit by a car heading south, but somehow became decapitated when it deflected off Olsen's car. He suffered a broken arm and several cuts from the glass. As his wife said, "he looked like he walked out of a horror movie" but fortunately he survived the dangerous encounter.

Trevor Arp was selected as one of 40 Under Forty candidates recognized for outstanding Business Leadership skills, and was honored at a special reception in March. He is a senior director of video products with Comcast North-Central Division.

Frederica McAfee Richardson a former Fremont resident for over 20 years was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for her pioneering service as a member of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP's) - the first women in history trained to fly American military aircrafts during World War II so more male pilots would be ready for combat operations overseas. In 1943 Frederica received her pilots license and according to NH US Senator Jeanne Shaheen, "Richardson was a member of a very small, elite group of women who made such an incredible difference in the war effort. I'm really pleased that we are finally able to honor that service to America." Richardson died in 2004 and is buried in the Knowles-Chase-Leavitt Cemetery in Fremont.

Andrew Kohlhofer ran as an unsuccessful candidate for U.S. Congress during the NH State Primary in September.

OTHER MILESTONES:

Darrell Turner - died Jan. 13 aged 59 - Darrell was a lifelong resident of Fremont and served 34 years as a member of the Fremont Fire Department and held the rank of Deputy Fire Chief.

Florence Hall - died Feb. 27 aged 86 - Florence was a Fremont native who worked many years in the Spaulding & Frost Cooperage and managed the Cooperage Forty Pound Gift Shop. She served as the very capable Fremont Town Hall custodian for many years.

Howard Page - died March 8 aged 81 - Howard was a longtime Fremont resident who owned Brentwood Box Company for years just over the Fremont town line. He was the proud owner of a 1929 Model A Ford which he exhibited for many years in local parades.

Jay B Hull - died July 8 aged 41 - A skilled mechanic, Jay owned Hull Automotive Services in Kingston. He was a well known race car driver who raced at many popular races tracks up and down the East Coast. He was well known for his kindness and generosity.

Orris F Johnson - died July 25 aged 87 - Orris served many years as librarian of the Ellis School and also for a time with Brentwood schools. She served as a Fremont Library Trustee.

Dwight "Pop" Tuttle - died July 28 aged 77 - Dwight was a longtime popular cook who owned and operated "Pop's Fried Clams & Onion Rings" from his portable food trailer for 25 years on Route 107 in Fremont. Anyone who knew Dwight affectionately called him "Pop."

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew E Thomas
Fremont Historian

"I lived a dream life (almost too exclusively, perhaps) when I was a lad and even now my thought goes back for refreshment to those days when all the world seemed to be a place of heroic adventure in which one's heart must keep its own counsel."

~ Woodrow Wilson