

## FREMONT IN REVIEW – 2007 - REPORT OF THE TOWN HISTORIAN

The weather took center stage in Fremont for 2007. The year started off pretty warm with an amazingly warm 69 degrees taking place on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The preceding four weeks were unusually mild and warm giving New Hampshire residents a break on their heating oil bills. The warm weather spell came to an end on January 15<sup>th</sup> when an Ice Storm struck the region, causing power outages and hazardous driving conditions. Fortunately the storm struck on Martin Luther King Day when many people could stay home from work. A **Valentine's Day Nor-Easter** caused high winds, heavy snowdrifts, thick ice on roads, and coated the region with 8 to 10 inches of snow. Many Valentine Day dinners out had to be postponed due to the Nor-Easter. Much of February and March was marked with frigid cold spells.

March 6<sup>th</sup> proved to be a bitterly cold day, becoming the **coldest day ever recorded in March** at Concord, NH. Interestingly enough, December 2007 proved to be the snowiest December on record in New Hampshire since 1876 with 45 inches falling upon the Granite State. Another **Nor-Easter struck on March 16<sup>th</sup>** leaving behind 9 inches of snow. A **severe snowstorm later struck on April 4<sup>th</sup> that caused major power outages in parts of Fremont and the region leaving thousands without power for more than 15 to 18 hours.** Several Fremont roads had to be closed due to downed electrical wires and fallen trees including one large pine tree that fell across Sandown Road just south of Great Brook.

A very rare and devastating **April 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> Nor-Easter Snow/Rainstorm** left about 1½ inches of snow before it turned into heavy rain causing extensive flooding and becoming known as the **Flood of 2007**. This was the third major flood in New Hampshire in as many years. According to Fremont Road Agent Guerwood Holmes, the Flood of 2007 caused much more extensive damage on roads and bridges in Fremont than the **Great Mother's Day Flood of 2006**. Many homes and properties were flooded, roads washed out, road shoulders eroded away, and damage at Cavil Mill Pond on Scribner Road was more extensive than in the 2006 Flood. A brook crossing under Hooke Road became a ferocious river creating beautiful cascading rapids through the hemlock-wooded forest along that road. This historian can attest personally and through town records that no flood in Fremont history can compare to the extensive 2007 Flooding that occurred around Fremont – even affecting places around town where previous floods had never impacted before. Schools were closed for days. Telephone and Internet services were disrupted in Fremont and the region until April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> due to flood damage at the Verizon Substation in Raymond. Seventeen year-old Lester Barthelemy of Fremont saved an 80 year-old woman who got caught in the floodwaters while trying to drive her car through the Piscassic River flood waters overflowing the Sleeper/Ingalls Bridge on Martin Road.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Hail Storm struck the south side of Fremont accompanied with 60 mph winds, moderate lightning, and near torrential downpours. Hail the size of Jefferson nickels covered lawns and roadsides, shredded tree leaves, and broke tree limbs.

Summer and autumn were pleasantly warm but drought stricken. Very little rain fell between July and October. The autumn foliage was the nicest it has been in several years...very colorful and long lasting.

**Other notable events of the year included the following:**

- **The Iraq War** wages on with several Fremonters doing their part in that war-torn middle eastern nation. This war has now lasted longer than the Civil War (1861-1865) and WWII (1941-1945).
- At the 243<sup>rd</sup> Annual Town Meeting & Elections voters defeated for a third year in a row a petition to adopt SB-2 (Senate Bill 2) to replace Fremont's traditional Town Meeting form of government by a vote of 516 Yes to 353 No. The vote failed to receive the 60% necessary for passage. **901 votes were cast during the Town Election of 2007 making it the largest voter turnout in Fremont's history.** Fremonters also adopted for the first time zoning that allows Flexible-Use Residential, Commercial Highway, and Corporate Commercial Zoning. Fremont was one of supposedly only two towns in New Hampshire that has not adopted similar zoning districts. In 2006 Fremonters voted in a 1 ½ mile Fremont Village District along a portion of Main Street.
- 130 voters attended the 2007 Town Meeting which lasted just 1 hour and 45 minutes. Fremonters voted to recommend to national public officials that the US start taking steps to control climate change.
- 160 voters attended the 2007 Annual School District Meeting. **Public funded Kindergarten was passed for the first time in Fremont at this School District Meeting.**
- A Cable Study Committee worked diligently through much of the year investigating options for the town to approve a new cable service contract.
- Students at Ellis School created a **Chain of Kindness** consisting of thousands of paper links that were stretched along Main Street from the Ellis School down to the Town Hall. Each chain symbolized an act of kindness performed by the students over a period of time. It was an unusual and outstanding display of positive and thoughtful deeds enthusiastically endorsed by Ellis School students. This chain done in honor of Rachel Scott, who died in the 1999 Columbine School Massacre, exemplified what admirable steps Fremont youngsters will take to prove what a positive force they can be within our community.
- **Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)** was found in Fremont during the late summer. Fremont took steps to spray mosquito pools around sections of town as a preventative to human infection.
- Phase I construction of **"Cooper's Village"** – a nine-unit retail plaza was started in late July. This will be Fremont's second business plaza since the 1920's and 30's when

John Ellis opened a small retail plaza at 528 Main Street located just west of the Fremont Railroad Depot. Ellis's Plaza consisted of a grain store, general store, restaurant, and gas station. Ellis also rented out summer camps out behind the plaza in a shady pine grove. When completed, the stone-fronted shops of Cooper's Village, located on the grounds of the former historic 1874-1999 Spaulding & Frost Barrel Cooperage, will have a bandstand, picnic area, sidewalks, and horse shoe pits to make for an inviting retail shopping experience.

- **Black Rocks Village** located at 5 Hall Road in Fremont Village opened in early 2007. It now houses the Fremont School Supervisory Union and Benson's Driving School. This impressive building was a partial reconstruction of the historic circa 1764 Merrill-Chase Tavern –Fuller-Hall House that was demolished in 2004. Black Rocks Village was the common name used during the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to denote the business center of Fremont.

- Tammi Bertolami and Matthew Thomas researched, compiled, proofread and printed out a comprehensive 525 page **Vital Record of all known Poplin / Fremont Births, Deaths, Baptisms, and Marriages encompassing all the years between 1710 to 2006**. In addition to compiling Fremont's Vital Records, another record book consisting of numerous Fremont Obituaries of various residents dating between the years 1900 and 2007 was also compiled so all these Fremonters would never be forgotten or lost to history. Another accomplishment achieved by Mrs. Bertolami in 2007 was the updating of all known burials in various Fremont cemeteries so if gravestones break, disappear, or become unreadable in the future, the location of deceased individuals within Fremont cemeteries would never be lost to future generations of Fremonters. The completion of all these important historical projects now puts Fremont in the envious position of having its history thoroughly documented for the benefit of future historians, genealogists, and interested townspeople.

- The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual **Fremont Grass Drags & Water Crossing Championship** held over Columbus Day Weekend drew over 25,000 spectators from around the country and Canada. The event this year featured for the first time both motorcycle and off-road 4-wheel vehicle races and competitions which drew additional spectators to this the largest event of its kind in the U.S.

- The **Fremont Lightning Girls U-14 Soccer Team became NH State Champions** in November after playing in a phenomenal, hard-fought game with Hampstead. The Fremont girls played with true grit and won the title in a well-deserved, team-oriented fashion. These girls did Fremont proud and their hard work, team spirit, and dedication to playing smart and hard won them this proud accomplishment.

- **Patrice Whareem** was appointed the new Fremont Postmaster on November 10, 2007, replacing Acting Postmaster Hope Gagnon who served Fremont between October 2006 and November 2007.

- The **Fremont Garden Club** continues to work hard to promote gardening and to beautify various town buildings and landmarks throughout much of the year. Their dedicated efforts are much appreciated and do much to enhance the community.
- **Reverend Everett Kuder** became the new minister of the People's United Methodist Church on July 1, 2007. He succeeded Reverend John Loker.
- **Bonnie Lee Rice** of Fremont was honored in March 2007 by U.S. Senator John Sununu and the NH Air National Guard for five years of service and dedication in helping military families stay in touch with military service men and women stationed around the globe. She has provided an invaluable service to military families by keeping them in touch with soldiers, helps them send packages to soldiers, and keeping families advised of financial assistance.
- **Michael Ordway, Jr.** is a chip off the old block. This 18 year-old racecar driver is following in his famous father's racing footsteps. Young Ordway is the son of Michael & Cathy Ordway of Fremont, and has become a rising star in the International SuperModified Association, racing the powerful open-wheeled short track cars that made his father famous back in the 1980's and 1990's. Junior won important races in Michigan, and at Lee USA Speedway during 2007. Michael Jr. dreams of one-day becoming a NASCAR driver and possibly racing in the Indy 500.
- Notable passings in 2007 included Planning Board Chairman **Larry Stilwell**, a good-natured, hardworking resident who worked hard to update and strengthen Fremont growth control ordinances. Larry loved Fremont and he and his devoted wife Linda took great pride restoring their historic 1823 colonial-style home. **Rev. Milton Smith**, a Fremont native who was the son of two parents who were both ministers, served as Chaplain of the NH Legislature in 1976. Rev. Smith passed away in May at the age of 82. **Lura C. Marcotte** was a former longtime Fremont resident who died in November. Lura was a very popular store clerk at the old Vining's Market in Fremont for over twenty years, and was a longtime member of the Fremont Methodist Church Choir. Her cheerful, optimistic personality will be sadly missed by all those who knew this delightful lady. **Holly Knowles** lost her admirable fight with cancer in December. Holly was an extremely gifted artist and painter, and had an effervescent personality that brought joy and pleasure to all who knew her. A Christmas ornament of her design was selected by the White House Historical Association and hung on the White House Christmas Tree in 1999. **Donald Ryan** passed away in August. Don was a former member of the Fremont School Board and was a tenacious fighter for the underdog and less fortunate. His admirable fighter-instincts will be missed. **Nancy Walker** passed away in October. She was an outstanding foster parent to many children in need through the years. Her commitment to providing a stable, loving home to foster children through the years is a severe loss to those she gave so much to. **Shirley Parmenter** a former longtime resident of Fremont passed away in May. Her jovial personality will be missed by all who knew her. **Richard Monahan** died in July and was a 23-year resident of Fremont known for his love of the outdoors and gardening. **Veteran Actor Lee Bergere, 88**, who portrayed Abraham Lincoln on Star Trek, and was known as "Joseph" (the household butler), in the hugely popular television show

“Dynasty,” died in Fremont in January. He began his acting career in 1936 as an understudy to Danny Kaye in the Broadway production of “Lady in the Dark.” His television debut was with James Dean in the live production of “Thunder on Sycamore Street.”

Many thanks to all those who work so diligently to make Fremont a special town to live in. I wish one and all a truly happy, healthy and productive 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew E Thomas  
Town Historian