

THE STATE OF THE UNION MEETING HOUSE

VOL. XI, NO. 2 READFIELD, MAINE APRIL 2021

President's Message:

Welcome back! I hope this finds you all healthy, recuperating from a long and trying year, and getting out again.

At the Meeting House, we have set Zoom aside, opened the doors, and are working at getting back to normal. Our Summer Series of music, the Strawberry Festival and Pumpkins Aglow are back. Saturday morning tours have resumed. The Vestry renovation into a Community Center is underway.

Our greatest challenge continues to be restoring the Meeting House. After completing major renovations from the foundation, to and including the ceiling, we are focused on the "Push to the Top". Our five member Building Committee is developing comprehensive contract documents for the complete restoration of the tower and belfry, which includes reinstallation of a fully restored clock with three new 8-foot diameter clock dials. We define this scope as Phase 1 of the contract. Phase 2 is the construction of a replica of the original 30-foot spire (lost in a winter storm of 1916) and topped with a period weathervane. Together, this will reach 100 feet above the ground level. We are looking to receive bids for both phases this September. We're hoping to minimally be able to fund and award Phase 1 for completion in 2022, at an estimated cost of \$350,000. Achieving the required additional estimated funding of \$150,000 for Phase 2, the Spire, would be a pleasant and exciting surprise. Funding for Phase 1 is not yet a done deal, and once again, we need your help to close the deal. And maybe, possibly, get a spire, too?

Thank you for your generosity in this last grand "Push to the Top".

Stay healthy,
Jim Tukey

Board of Directors

Jim Tukey President
Nancy Durgin, V.P.
John Perry, Treasurer
Amy Black
Larry Dunn
Bonnie Harris
Cynthia McInerney
Marius Péladeau

Advisory Board

Evelyn Adell Potter
Christopher Dumaine
Jack Smart
Bob Harris

The Readfield Union
Meeting House is
located at:
22 Church Road
Readfield, Maine

Mail should be
addressed to:
Readfield Union
Meeting House
P.O. Box 451
Readfield, ME 04355

See us on Facebook:
[www.facebook.com/readfield.
union.meeting.house/](http://www.facebook.com/readfield.union.meeting.house/)

Check out our web site:
www.unionmeetinghouse.org

The Readfield Union Meeting
House is listed on the
National Register of
Historic Places.

It is a 501(c)(3) entity
under I.R.S. laws. Gifts to
the Readfield Union Meeting
House are tax deductible.

**There's something
happening every
week this summer
at the Meeting
House.**

**Why not meet here
with friends, enjoy
a show, see the
remarkable artwork,
and support our
restoration work?**

**For further infor-
mation, see our
web site, or find us
on Facebook.**

Readfield Union Meeting House 2021 Events

Saturdays, June 26 - August 28, 10am-12noon
Tours of Meeting House

Tuesday, July 6, 7pm
Ed Desjardins & Katie Daggett

Saturday, July 10, 1-3pm
Strawberry Festival Drive-Thru, shortcake to go

Tuesday, July 20, 7pm
Brad Terry & Peter Herman

Tuesday, August 3, 7pm
High Spirits

Saturday, August 14, Heritage Days,
3 pm Organ & Horn Recital,
4 pm Pie Sale

Tuesday, August 17, 7pm
Kevin Libby

Saturday, August 21, 1-3pm
Walk Down Memory Lane with Ev Potter & Charlotte Killam

Saturday, August 21, 7pm
Pat Colwell and the Soul Sensations

October 31, 6-8 pm
Pumpkins A-Glow

Recent donations to Readfield Union Meeting House Company

We very fortunatly have received 4 major contributions to our restoration work in the last three months:

- * The 1772 Foundation, in collaboration with Maine Preservation, has awarded the Meeting House a \$10,000 grant in support of the repair and painting of windows, cornice trim and front "pents". The work will be accomplished this summer.
- * Kennebec Saving Bank has recently awarded the Meeting House a generous \$10,000 donation toward our restoration fund. The gift will be used in the upcoming work to restore the clock tower and belfry.
- * The Readfield Enterprise Fund is providing a \$10,000 no-interest loan to purchase building materials used in improvements to the Vestry. All labor for the work is being donated by volunteers and by local contractors.
- * Readfield voters have again approved a \$5,000 donation from Town funds toward the Meeting House restoration efforts.

Our appreciation goes out to these organizations, and to many other individual donors for their continued financial support of our work. The community's generosity is making the restoration of our town's community facility a reality.

Readfield Union Meeting House Co. Grant Program

Historically, one-third of the income received by RUMHCo has been competitively-awarded grants from more than a dozen charitable foundations. Deb Curtis, an experienced and tireless grant-writer, is managing our grant program. Deb's latest Grant Program update is as follows:

"In concert with the Push To The Top fundraising campaign, the Meeting House is seeking funding from several Maine-based foundations for support of its restoration of the tower, belfry and spire. We have submitted proposals this spring to the Elsie & William Viles Foundation and the Belvedere Historic Preservation Grant Program, both of which support restoration initiatives. Additional funding requests for support of the tower and spire restoration will be submitted to other funders throughout the year. Applications are also in the works to Home Depot and Walmart to support renovations to the Vestry."

Tower Clock restoration is nearing completion

Our restorer, David Graf, has had to replace or repair a few of the parts of the clock, and these parts are nearly complete. All parts of the clock will then be thoroughly cleaned and re-painted before a final re-assembly of the clock. The Building Committee is making arrangements with Mr. Graf to bring the completed clock back to Readfield in September, and to set it up for display in the sanctuary of the Meeting House. We will not be able to install the clock in the tower until tower restoration is completed in 2022. Although the clock will not be functional until it gets back into the tower (there is not enough room to allow the 90-inch pendulum to swing in the sanctuary), it will be a beautiful symbol of the progress being made to restore the historic brick church.

Mr. Graf is also creating 3 new replicas of the clock dials to be installed on the tower next year. The dials are nearly 90% complete, and should be ready to ship back to Readfield in September. He is also re-creating new clock hands. Dials and clock hands will be exact in appearance to the originals, including gold leaf, but will benefit from modern materials and coatings to last for many decades. With thanks to generous donation of storage space by local contractor, John Cushing, the new dials will be safely stored until they are re-installed by the tower restoration contractor next year.

More than 60 donors have sponsored the restoration of various clock or dial components. Donations and grants have provided about 85% of funding needed. See our Facebook page for details on how you can adopt a part of the clock and help to fund its restoration, or email unionmeetinghouse@gmail.com for more information. Thank you in advance for your support and interest.

Exterior painting and repairs are begining in July

The work to be performed by Mid Maine Restoration will begin soon. The work will include:

- * Repair and paint the stained and stenciled glass windows on South wall.
- * Repair and tighten loose trim and cornice, scrape, prime and paint.
- * Fabricate and replace missing and rotten cornice pieces on back of building.
- * Fabricate and install new attic window per specs provided by White Chapel Joinery.
- * Paint the two triangular pents at the front of the building.

Vestry Improvements

Work is resuming on the Vestry remodel; work had been on hold pending a Change of Use application to the Readfield Planning Board, which was approved in May.

Previously, Larry Dunn and several volunteers have replaced the roof over the kitchen wing, have gutted the interior of the kitchen and bathroom while strengthening and leveling the floor, and the roof framing has been secured to the main structure. Animal nests under the kitchen were eliminated, and the air quality inside the Vestry has been greatly improved as a result. A quantity of framing lumber has been generously donated by By The Board.

Work is now beginning on remodeling the kitchen and bathroom wing of the Vestry. The recent loan by Readfield Enterprise Fund enables purchase of plumbing and electrical supplies, as well as new entry doors. Local plumbing and electrical contractors will now “rough in” utilities, and then sheet-rocking the interior of this area can begin. New vinyl siding will be installed on the kitchen ell.’ The original heating system can then be re-installed, a new ADA-compliant bathroom will be installed, and new or donated kitchen appliance can be put in place. If you have appliances to donate, or if you can assist in framing, painting or moving equipment, please call Larry Dunn at (207)512-0742.

When the kitchen/bathroom renovation is complete, work will begin to improve the larger part of the Vestry downstairs, followed by work to improve access to the second floor of the Vestry.

Membership in the Readfield Union Meeting House

Readfield Union Meeting House has had many loyal members over the years. Membership dues have ranged from \$5 for students to \$200 for corporate. This year there has been a slight decrease in our membership numbers. A question has risen on whether a person who has donated money for a specific project or made a general donation is automatically a member. In the past the Board of Directors has said “no” to this question.

A Donation is any case where a person gives to an organization, but receives no ongoing tangible benefit for their generosity. A Membership, on the other hand usually does have some tangible benefits. In the case of the Readfield Union Meeting House, benefits have included wine and cheese events for members only, gifts, such as the covered cups or reduced ticket prices. Membership is powerful because it helps to create a sense of belonging to an engaged community that supports a specific mission. In our case, it is the restoration and preservation of Readfield's historic meeting house.

The Membership committee would appreciate your comments and thoughts. Contact Nancy Durgin at (207)685-4481.

History of the Union Meeting House

Earlier this year the Board approved the concept of publishing the history of the Meeting House on which Board Historian Marius Péladeau has been working for several years. An Editorial Committee has met to discuss further plans that will lead to presenting price quotes to the Board for a final decision. The work is delayed because the Maine State Library – a prime resource source - has been closed for asbestos removal. However, work continues. And many old illustrations, some never previously published, have been gathered. State Historian Earle Shettleworth, Jr. has just added a glowing Introduction to the emerging book.

It's not too late for any contribution to the book that you may have. If you have memories or photos of the Meeting House, please contact Péladeau at 158 Thorp Shores, Readfield 04355 or at mpeladeau@roadrunner.com. Please watch for further updates as publication moves forward.

Did You Know?

Did you know that the Vestry building, now just 50 feet south of the Meeting House, was originally built 1/4 mile away, where the “Iron Fence” house is now? It was moved across the fields, using horse or oxen power, to its present location in 1869. Moving houses was relatively common 150 years ago, but, as the photo shows, it took quite a few people and draft animals to accomplish. A real community affair!

Photo shows a house being moved, employing 72 oxen, in Portland, March 1893. It is reproduced from A Day's Work, Part II, and shown here with permission of the publisher, Tilbury House, and the author, W.H. Bunting.

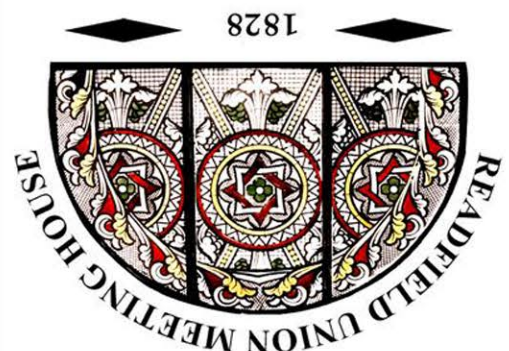
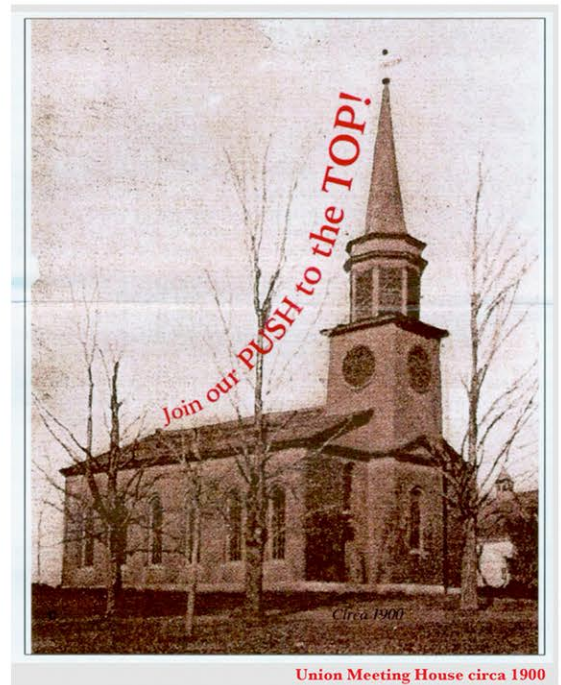


PUSH TO THE TOP

“Push To The Top” describes our effort to complete restoration of the Union Meeting House and the Vestry. It encompasses several individual projects, some of which are already underway, and were described in the previous pages of this newsletter.

However, Push To The Top has more projects to accomplish. The next undertaking, repair and restoration of the clock tower, belfry and roof framing, is about to begin. This is the most complex, and the most expensive, project we have ever done. This “tower and belfry restoration” project is critical to doing the next phases of work, which includes clock re-installation, building and installing a duplicate of the original 30-ft spire, and placement of a replica weathervane.

Included with this newsletter is a further description of the work to be done in our “tower and belfry restoration” project. We need to secure more of the funding for the project this summer so that we can start the work this fall. Without the necessary funding, the project will have to be delayed for another year, and cost will no doubt be much higher. We hope that you can budget a significant donation to this work. Your gift will be a big boost to our Push To The Top!



**The Union Meeting House Company
P.O. Box 451
22 Church Road
Readfield, Maine 04355**

This summer, our PUSH TO THE TOP Campaign is preparing for repair and restoration of the clock tower and belfry, to be completed in the fall of 2022. The diagram on the right is a “skeleton” view of the tower and belfry, showing the various timbers that need to be repaired (shown in yellow) or replaced (shown in red).

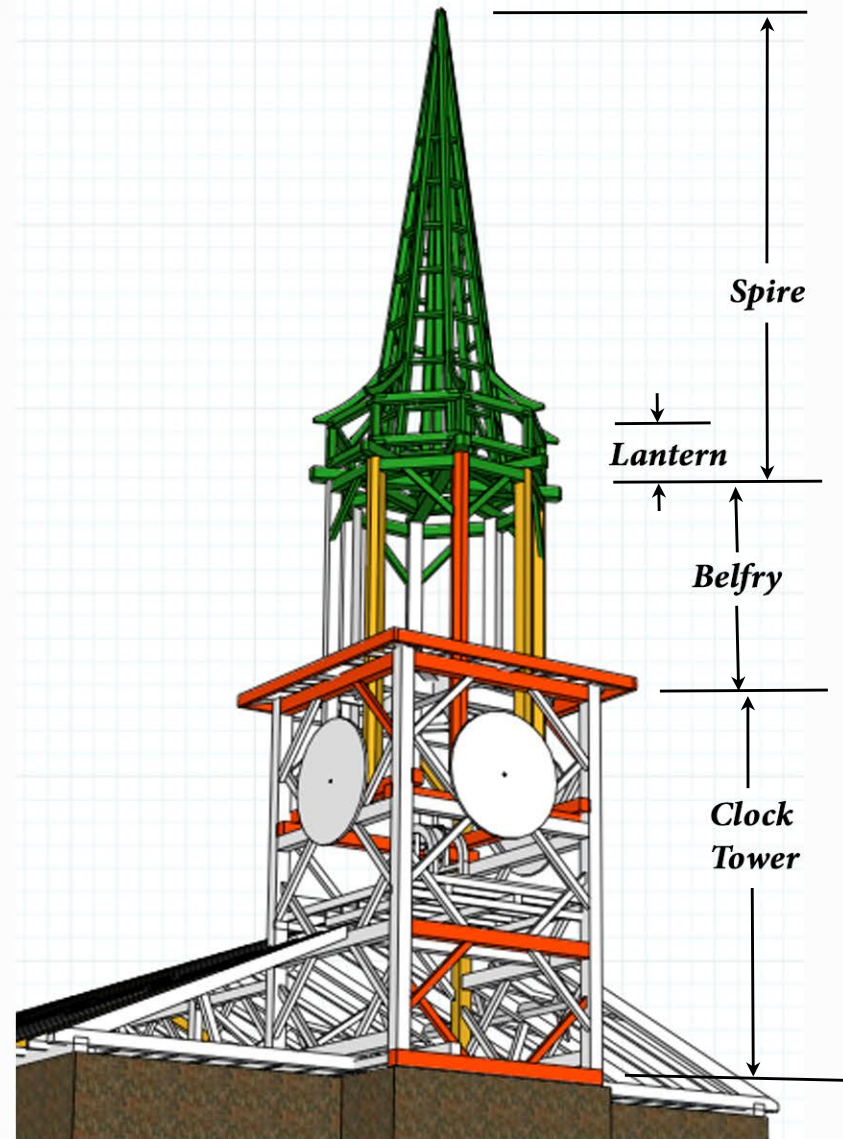
The pointed spire is shown in green, indicating that it will be completely new construction. However, the spire can be placed only after the clock tower and belfry restoration is completed. Not shown here is the new weathervane to be installed on top of the spire, 100 feet above ground level.

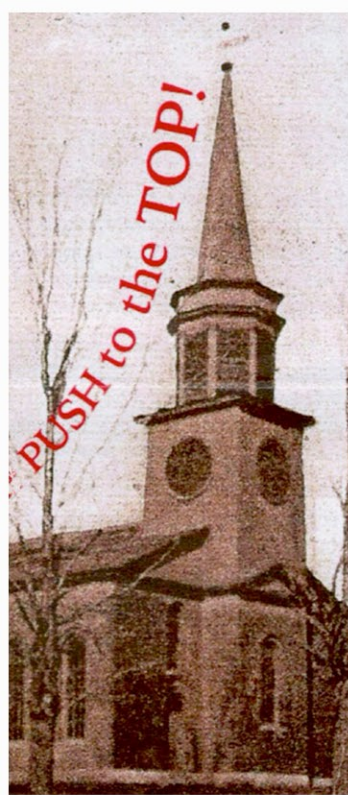
The damaged timbers in the tower and belfry are deeply “buried” in the framework, and thus will be difficult to get to and repair or replace. Thus this phase of work will need extensive planning and experienced workmanship. Total cost of the work is estimated to be \$350,000, and will include installation of new clock dials, repairs to some of the attic timber framing, and all new exterior siding, trimwork and roofing.

Our “kitty” for the tower, belfry and attic work now stands at \$224,387. This is about \$125,000 short of the budgeted cost of the work.

PLEASE DONATE to this important restoration work, or pledge a contribution to be paid by June 1, 2022. Fill out and return the attached PLEDGE FORM
Credit card payments can be made at
<https://unionmeetinghouse.org/donate-now/>

Readfield Union Meeting House Co. is an IRS 501(c)3 charitable organization.
All donations are fully tax-deductible.





Readfield Union Meeting House Company
PUSH TO THE TOP Campaign
PLEDGE FORM

I/We pledge to contribute to improvements and restoration of the Readfield Union Meeting House Company property, according to the following schedule. All contributions will be acknowledged.

My Schedule of Contributions:

Contribution being made now: \$ _____

Contribution to be made on or before December 31, 2021: \$ _____

Contribution to be made on or before June 1, 2022: \$ _____

Total of all contributions shown above: \$ _____

If this box is checked, DO NOT use my name for publicity purposes.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

e-Mail address: _____ *Phone:* _____

Signature: _____ *Date:* _____

If this donation is made in honor of another person, please print their name below:

This donation is in honor of: _____

Please return this form and any payment to: RUMHCo, PO Box 451, Readfield, ME 04355
We will send you a reminder before the due dates of December and June installments.

Readfield Union Meeting House Co. sincerely appreciates your support for our restoration work!
We are an IRS 501(c)3 organization, and donations are tax-deductible.