

# THE STATE OF THE UNION MEETING HOUSE

VOL. XI, NO. 1 READFIELD, MAINE DECEMBER 2018

## Meet Us at the Meeting House!!

### Board of Directors

Jim Tukey, President  
Nancy Durgin, V.P.  
Karen Peterson, Sec.  
Milton Wright  
John Perry, Treasurer  
Marianne Perry  
Amy Black  
Joan Wiebe  
Flo Drake  
Rick Wilson  
Bonnie Harris

### Advisory Board

Evelyn Adell Potter  
Don Harriman  
Jack Smart  
Tony Castro

### Historian

Marius Péladeau

Mark your calendars for Summer 2019!

We are excited to be hosting a variety of activities - great music, terrific comedy, interesting talks - on **Tuesdays at 7:00 pm** from June 4th thru September 10th at the Union Meeting House. In addition, there will be Children's Programs on Saturdays at 10:00 am.

Dave Mallet will be headlining Readfield Heritage Days Events on August 10.

And, of course, we will again welcome everyone to our annual Dinner at the Weathervane, International Dinner, Strawberry Festival, and Pumpkin Festival.

2018 was a year of utilitarian accomplishment, making the Meeting House safe and comfortable. The 2-1/2 year new floor and underpinnings project was completed. A new membrane covers the entire crawl space thus protecting the floor and sanctuary art for centuries to come. There is a new electrical system and new bathroom, with hot water! The preservation of the historic plaster ceiling is underway.

Also in 2018, we formed a Community Outreach Committee of nine residents to recommend community centered functions to the Meeting House Board. They are looking into developing plans for using the Old Vestry after 10 years of disuse.

Now, in stages, we are ready to begin the multi-year restorations to the tower of this beautiful one-of-a-kind building:

- Architecture and engineering plans of the tower that includes the clock room and belfry;
- Reconstruction of the clock and belfry portions of the tower, with new clock faces;
- Architecture and engineering design for a new bell saddle and replica spire;
- Removal of temporary roof, reinstallation of bell, installation of new spire.

And, we are warming up to heating the building! And perhaps some new carpets, in the original 1867 pattern. Stay tuned for details in an updated Five Year Plan.

As we welcome two new Board members and one new Advisory member, we are reminded of how fortunate we are to have the generosity of our loyal members, donors, grantors, sponsors, and your pledges to move our mission forward.

Thank you one and all and "Meet Us at the Meeting House!"

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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](http://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.

## Marius Péladeau resigns from Board of Directors

One of the Union Meeting House's staunchest supporters, Marius Péladeau, resigned from the Board of Directors in October. He has guided restoration work for nearly a decade, and has taught others to better appreciate the building and the craftsmen who built it. His deep knowledge and expertise for historical restoration is matched by his skills as a fundraiser!

Marius will continue to support restoration of the Meeting House as a volunteer, as a researcher and as our Historian. Not one to stay idle, he will also pursue historical research and writing, while staying in touch with friends throughout Maine and New England. We're thankful for the improvements you have brought to the Meeting House, Marius, and appreciate that you will still be there to help in the future.



## A Recap of the Past Summer

### The Work

After completing replacement of floor timbers in May, we needed to do a few smaller jobs: A waterproof membrane was placed over the soil in the cellar space to reduce dampness and protect the new timbers from deteriorating.

Our bathroom has been upgraded, now with hot water, and Tony Castro has been painting all new surfaces in the trompe l'oeil style—wait until you see it!

We upgraded our electrical system, to give more outlets and more lighting and to make installation of new electrical devices easier in the future.

At summer's end, we began the crucial conservation work on the ceiling--see details on page 3.

### The Fun

It's been a busy and enjoyable summer for our members, volunteers and neighbors. A few events: Quilt Raffle, Strawberry Festival, Yard Sale, Quilt Show, Birdie Gogins Comedy Show, Silent Auction, Members' Social and Pumpkin Festival. How many did you attend or participate in?

All of the Fundraising activities this year have added over \$8,000 to our bank account, and have brought many people to the Meeting House for the first time. We appreciate the work of volunteers and the enthusiasm of our guests for making this a really great year!

Wait until you see what is on tap for 2019!

## Changes on the Board of Directors

At the Annual Meeting in October, Nancy Durgin and Karen Peterson were re-appointed for 3-year terms on the Board. Also at the Annual Meeting, the following Officers were elected: President Jim Tukey, Vice President Nancy Durgin, Secretary Karen Peterson & Treasurer John Perry. The Board voted that Marius Péladeau would continue as RUMH Historian.

At the November regular meeting, the following persons were elected as new members of the Board: Rick Wilson & Bonnie Harris. Tony Castro was elected to the Advisory Committee.

We are very pleased with the support given to the Meeting House by all of these individuals.

## Ceiling Plaster & Trompe l'oeil Painting Conservation

Project to save the ceiling is 25% complete!

In October, Tony Castro began the meticulous work of strengthening and reattaching the 150-year-old ceiling plaster. Earlier this year, it became evident that the plaster was coming apart from the supporting lath above. Without his efforts, gravity will surely take a catastrophic toll on some or all of the ceiling.



Loose plaster being held in place while consolidant is injected above.

### How does he do it?

Tony and his assistant Chris work on both sides of the ceiling. First, from the attic, they paint every visible bit of plaster with a dilute "consolidant" (a type of glue) to keep it from crumbling. Next, from below, and working 22 feet above the floor of the sanctuary, they gently push loose plaster back up in place, against the lath. Then, back in the attic, they bore holes in the lath through to the back of the plaster. They inject a thicker consolidant through these holes to re-connect plaster and lath. Finally, still in the attic, they apply thick consolidant to the top of original plaster keys.



Photo of lath after completed re-attachment. Note the holes in lath through which consolidant has been injected.

Low temperatures prevent the use of the consolidants that strengthen and re-adhere the plaster, so work has ceased until next April. By mid-May 2019, Tony will have completed work on the south half of the ceiling (Phase 1). In late summer and fall of 2019 he will complete conservation of the north half of the ceiling (Phase 2).

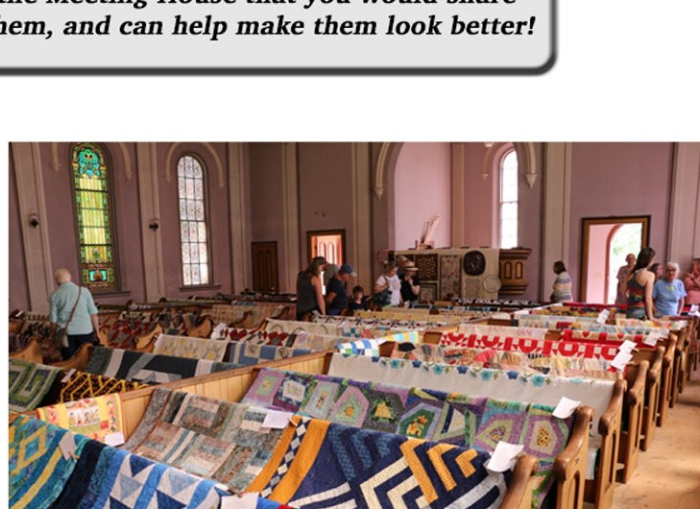
Phase 1 is being done with a \$17,250 grant from the Maine Historic Preservation Fund, which is administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The rest of Phase 1 will be paid by your contributions. We are now seeking grants and donations to fund the \$38,000 cost of Phase 2 work.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this article are those of RUMH and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

Do you have photos from past events at the Meeting House that you would share with us? Movies, too! We'd love to see them, and can help make them look better!



Our new President, Jim Tukey, giving a tour to Ron & Charlene Lockwood from Mt. Vernon.



Quilt Show, August 11, 2018. Over 100 quilts, one dating to 1825, were on display. Thanks to Joan Wiebe for organizing this beautiful and diverse display!

## It's Membership Renewal Time!

Your Membership in the Readfield Union Meeting House is beneficial to both of us. For us, Memberships give us confidence that our restoration work is important, and shows other donors and granting foundations that we have a reliable base of support. Of course your money helps, too! Benefits to you, our Members, include being part of the restoration of this Readfield landmark and our annual Members-only event.

We have several Membership levels for individuals and for businesses. Please consider a Membership renewal, a new Membership, or a Holiday gift Membership. Use the enclosed Membership application. We hope you will share your e-mail address with us--it saves the cost of several mailings each year!

The enclosed survey will help the Community Outreach Committee as they work in creating future programs of interest to the community. Please fill out the survey and return with your Membership application. Thanks!

## Donate to the Meeting House

Rather than writing a check, you can now donate to RUMH through a secure PayPal link at our web site, <https://unionmeetinghouse.org/donate/>

We have just signed on with Amazon Smile, which gives you a painless way to donate to RUMH with 0.5% of the price of your Amazon purchase. There is no extra cost and no service fees. To use this option, sign on to Amazon using the following web address: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/01-0393119>

Detail from original 1868 stenciled glass window



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