

THE STATE OF THE UNION MEETING HOUSE

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Readfield, Maine

May 2017

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The Union Meeting House
is at 22 Church Rd.

Readfield, ME.

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Readfield, ME 04355

Phone: 207-685-4537

The link to Facebook is

[https://www.facebook.com/
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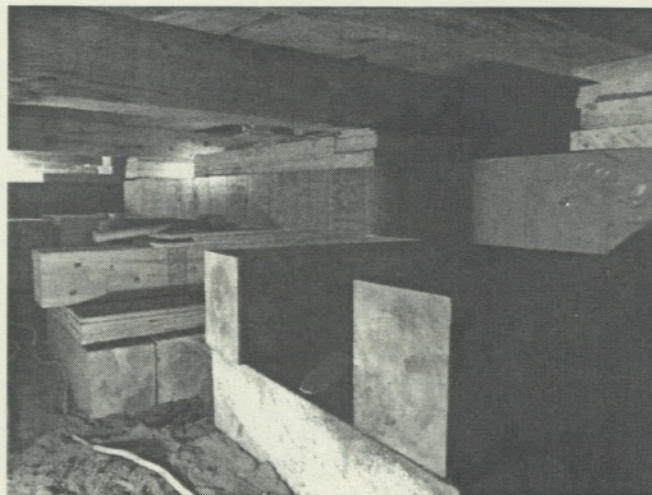
*The UMH is a non-profit
§501 (c)(3) entity under
I.R.S. law. Gifts are tax
deductible to the full extent
allowed by law*

PROGRESS IS THE WATCHWORD

It was a hard task in a brutally cold winter, but the professional crew of Maine Barn Company pushed forward and completed the first phase of rebuilding the floor substructure as a late spring was trying to arrive in snow-bound Maine. Some of the materials for Phase II have already arrived and both the Union Meeting House Board and Maine Barn hope that work can begin on Phase II this summer. Maine Barn has another project to which it is committed but it is our mutual hope that they will be able to fit the UMH into a late summer-early fall schedule.

This leads to a most important subject – the question of finances. We cannot engage Maine Barn without knowing we have the money to pay them. At this point we are committing ourselves to Phase II without all the necessary money on hand. (The total cost of Phase II will be \$131,369.) Some of our members have been very prompt and diligent about sending in their 2017 membership renewal and even adding a little extra to help us out. We hope that the remainder of the 2016 membership will dig out their membership slip and the return envelope so we can “reactivate” your membership in 2017. As Maine Barn gets underway we will have to make a series of scheduled payments to the firm and at this point we are in a tight position.

The Board has obtained a loan from Kennebec Savings Bank to serve as a “bridge” in case our income this year does not cover the cost of Phase II. However, as old-fashioned frugal Yankees we would rather not borrow money from the bank. Like you, we’d rather have the money in hand so the project can be completed free and clear of having to pay back the loan with accumulated interest. Thus, the more money we raise ourselves the less we will have to rely on the loan.



This photo shows the extensive cribbing that had to be built under the narthex beam to hold up the choir wall and steeple while the old rotted beam was removed and the new one installed. All this was accomplished during a very cold winter. (J. Tukey photo.)

THE PLEDGE DRIVE IS A SUCCESS

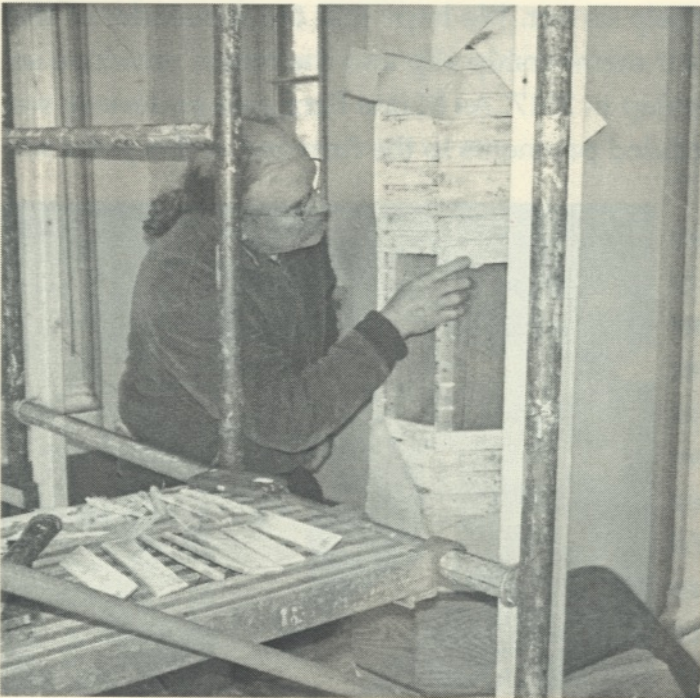
The hard-working Fund-Raising Committee last fall came up with the idea of trying to obtain pledges from our friends over a three-year period. Many of you have responded very positively. If you are a member and could see your way clear to promise a gift every year for the next three, we'd be glad to send you a pledge form. The knowledge that there are long-term pledges on the books helps the UMH Board undertake long-range planning with a little more certitude. It also shows vital support for our work when we submit applications for grants and loans. Write to us if you desire more details on how you can help the restoration move into the future.

WHAT EXACTLY WILL BE INCLUDED IN PHASE II THIS YEAR?

Now that the huge beam under the narthex (the vestibule area) has been replaced with a new pressure-treated white oak timber this will provide an "anchor" into which the new sanctuary framing can be attached. It will allow Maine Barn to connect the two large foundation beams under the north and south brick walls and the three equally large carrying beams that go east to west under the sanctuary floor to the narthex beam. These, in turn will allow the installation of the 144 joists (that go north and south) to span the entire sanctuary floor. (See diagram below.)

This will be an involved process. First, the rocky basement floor must be leveled as much as possible and new concrete pads dragged in and installed to support the vertical support beams that will hold up the entire substructure. Next, the floor must be jacked up to take pressure off the current vertical supports and to allow the rotted foundation and center carrying beams to be removed. However, since the foundation beams support the lath and plaster on which Charles Schumacher painted his famous murals, the jacking must be monitored very closely so as to not lift too high and crack the plaster. Likewise the jacking of the center support beams must be done carefully since they support the pews and it would be unfortunate if these become warped with too much upward pressure.

It is interesting to note that while Maine was once renowned for its bountiful forests, the huge white oak beams being used for the floor work come from North Carolina and are then shipped to Massachusetts to be pressure treated before arriving in Readfield.



Large pieces of plaster had come loose from the lath when the arch at the front of the sanctuary started to settle years ago. Tony Castro, the talented mural conservator, had to carefully reset the lath after the arch was properly supported and then reattach the plaster and fill in the numerous cracks. He will be back this spring to finish his inpainting now that warm weather has returned. (M. Peladeau Photo)

GOOD NEWS

As this newsletter was going to press the Board received exciting news. Chris Dumaine, the husband of our late Advisory Board member, Holly Hock Dumaine, has made a \$10,000 gift to the UMH in her memory and promises to do the same in 2018.

Holly, her mother and her aunts all had a long history of supporting the UMH and it is wonderful to learn that Chris recognizes that multi-generational record of giving and is willing to continue it.

In addition, a former Board member has pledged \$50,000 if the UMH can match it with "new money", such as memberships and other donations. This is the largest pledge the UMH has received and it is certainly a confidence-builder for the Board. What has to be done now is raise \$50,000 to match this pledge. All monies received after January 30 of this year count as "new money." If you give \$25 it will turn into \$50, and if you give \$50 it will turn into \$100. Things look positive.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

People rightfully ask what is the Board's long-term vision for the Meeting House. Long deferred maintenance must be undertaken so that the roof flashing doesn't leak, the roof rafters get repaired, and the tower and belfry don't continue to rot, all this while following the guidelines of the Department of the Interior that sets standards for buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Board does not wish to preserve the building as a bee in amber, nor as a beautiful diamond that is locked in a vault so no one can see it. Rather, the restoration is being undertaken so that the building can again become a center of community events. Back when the UMH was in better condition there were annually lectures, concerts, recitals, weddings and funerals on a regular basis. But after the fire chief said the floor was unsafe, the Board had to seriously curtail activities and finally, to make the decision to completely rebuild the floor substructure. All this is being done not to sit back and lock the front door. It is being done to again return the Meeting House to the welcoming role it once enjoyed in town - a site of entertainment and education.



Nancy Holland, a fine artist who has her studio in the local Masonic Block, has just finished a very attractive oil on canvas of the Meeting House. Nancy has donated the painting to the Meeting House. The Fund-raising committee is finalizing plans on how to use the painting to raise funds for the the UMH., (And stop and see Nancy's other fine work displayed in her studio.) (M. Peladeau Photo)

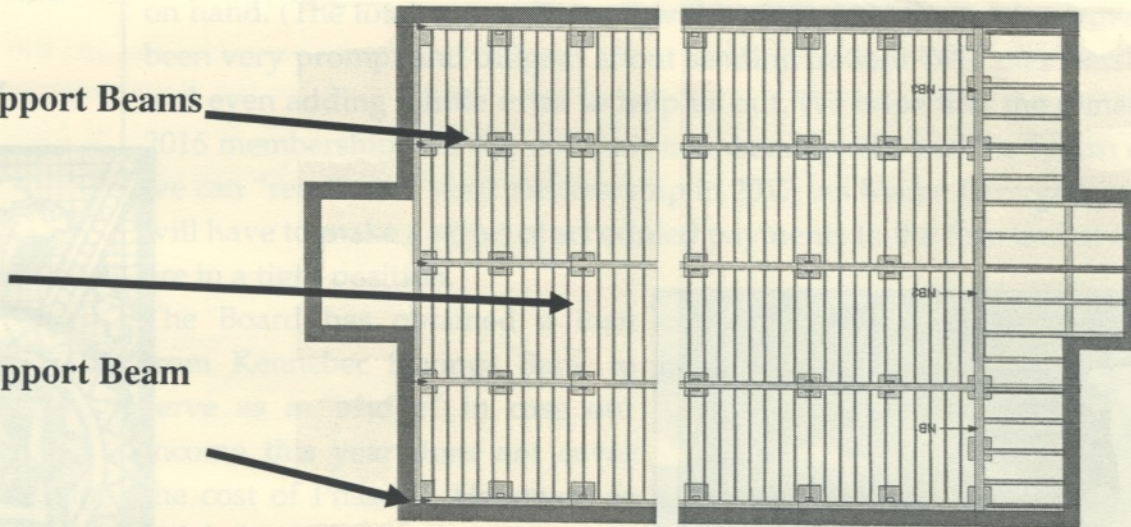
BUY A JOIST

The fund-raising committee has hatched an idea that holds great promise. It has started a campaign by which you can now physically "own" a piece of the Meeting House. Each of the 144 joists that hold up the floor costs \$25.00. If you contribute \$25 we will individually allocate each joist you purchase to you personally. Either by marking your name on the joists or by listing you in a special honor roll you will forever become a donor that history will remember as one who helped the Meeting House at a time of need.

The Center Support Beams

The 144 Joists

Foundation Support Beam



✂️ -----
 Clip this coupon and return it with your donation.

I (we) wish to buy a joist in the new floor substructure

The name you want on the joist _____

Your address _____

Each joist is \$25. Buy four and get one free. Think of making an unusual birthday or Christmas present to a friend or family member. If you want to make your donation a gift in someone else's name, send it to us. We will gratefully acknowledge your donation for tax purposes. Remember, you can buy more than one joist. They are \$25 each, \$50 for two, \$75 for three, \$100 for four (and one free fifth one).

UPCOMING

All Readfield voters are encouraged to cast their ballot on June 13, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Warrant article No. 27 appropriates \$5,000 to the Union Meeting House. To have such town support resonates with persons who receive our foundation grant requests so a positive vote on your part would be most appreciated.

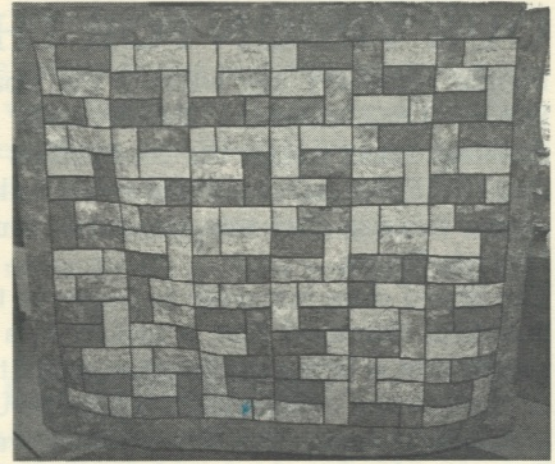
In previous decades the UMH was famous for its strawberry festivals. The Fund-raising Committee has decided to revive this enjoyable community event. The UMH will present a strawberry festival open to the public on July 15th in late afternoon/early evening.

During Heritage Days in early August the UMH will host a lawn sale. Start looking through your home's nooks and crannies and if you have something to donate give us a call. We will pick up the items. However, we will not accept electronics, clothing, jigsaw puzzles nor books.

We want more people to enjoy the Meeting House. Therefore, through the month of June the building will be open every Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon. A new schedule for July and August will be posted later. (Of course, we will be open during Heritage Days). Bring your friends by for a look-see. Our docents will be glad to show you the beauty of this unusual building.

Joan Wiebe has made a beautiful quilt which she is donating to raise funds for the UMH. It will be on display around town this summer and will be raffled during Heritage days. Keep your eyes open. Likewise, the talented Readfield artist, Nancy Holland, has done a striking oil painting of the Meeting House and she is donating it as a fund-raiser. It would be a striking addition to anyone's wall. Keep tuned.

We are also working on a festive wine and cheese social on the lawn during foliage season. More details to follow. All our events will be detailed in *The Readfield Messenger* and there will be posters around town.



Joan Wiebe, our talented Board member has made a beautiful quilt and donated it to the UMH to be raffled off during Heritage Days in early August. Titled *Stained Glass*, the striking lap quilt is 50" x 58". The quilt will be on display around town this summer. Look in the local media for where you can buy raffle tickets.

(M. Peladeau Photo)



Address Correction Requested

The Union Meeting House Company
158 Thorp Shores Road
Readfield, Maine 04355