

# THE STATE OF THE UNION MEETING HOUSE

VOL. XI, NO. 1 READFIELD, MAINE APRIL 2021

## Excitement Returns to the Meeting House

After a year with the blues, the Meeting House is back!!

The excitement returns with great music, stories, and the Strawberry and Pumpkin Festivals. (See What's Happening, below).

Our restoration mission continues after a pause (see Restoration News, page 2). Restoring and sprucing up windows, the eaves and cornices with fresh paint is scheduled for this June. Work on the clock and its three clock dials continues. A contract for the Tower, Belfry and Spire is planned for later this year, with work scheduled for 2022. Renovation of the Vestry kitchen and bath will commence soon.

We are in the early stages of our last three year "Push To The Top" Fundraising Campaign. Your continued participation and support has never been more critical, as we embark on our greatest challenge: the Tower, Clock, Belfry and Spire. With all of us working together, we can complete this historic mission.

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## What's Happening?

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS-** here's what summer events for 2021 will look like at the Union Meeting House. After a year with the blues, excitement is returning to the Meeting House!

The Meeting House is moving ahead with plans to resume in-person concerts and other favorite events. Several performers that were slated to appear last summer have signed up for this year. Dates with asterisks \* represent the Tuesday night "Meet Me At The Meeting House" concerts", with ticket prices \$10.

### Meet Me at the Meeting House 2021 Schedule

- April 15 Pizza kit sale & pickup
- June 22 Open Mic (free)
- July 6\* Ed Desjardins & Katie Daggett
- July 10 Strawberry Festival
- July 20\* Brad Terry & Peter Herman
- Aug 3\* High Spirits (tentative)
- Aug 14 Organ concert
- Aug 17\* Kevin Libby (tentative)
- Aug 20 Pat Colwell & Soul Sensations
- Oct ? Pumpkin Festival

\* \$10 Tuesday shows



Plenty of berries and whipped cream!



The Gawler Family, 2019

## Board of Directors

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

## Advisory Board

Evelyn Adell Potter  
Christopher Dumaine  
Jack Smart  
John Blouin

*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](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.

**Restoration News**

A year was lost on fundraising and restoration, but we're back in the saddle again, with our most ambitious fundraising and restoration program in history.

Contract work is scheduled for this June for exterior architectural restoration. The south side stenciled and stained glass windows will be scraped, refilled and painted. The eaves and molded cornices, including the front pents, will be restored and painted all around the building. The broken attic window in the back will be rebuilt. The existing white paint will be changed to "Meeting House Red", as will be the restored steeple, consistent with the original color scheme.

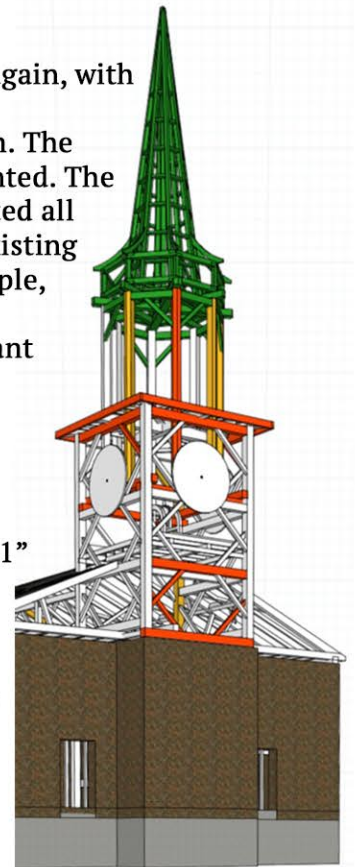
The Vestry will be back on line after renovating the kitchen and ADA compliant bathroom. Donated materials and volunteer labor makes this very affordable. A Community Center to complement the Meeting House is planned.

Tony Castro will be back to do more of his preservation magic on the foyer ceilings, and some minor repairs. Restoration of the clock and construction of three new 8' clock dials continues.

"Push To The Top", our greatest restoration challenge, is shaping up. "Phase 1" is the complete restoration of the tower and belfry, including reinstallation of the fully restored clock and new dials, and re-installation of the bell.

"Phase 2" is the construction and erection of a replica of the original 30-foot spire, with weathervane and lightning protection. (The original spire was taken out by a winter storm in 1916.) We are aiming to have work under contract by this September, for 2022 construction. We will continue to monitor costs against income, as material costs have been going through the roof. At this point, Phase 1 looks like a go; Phase 2 looks to be a stretch.

So we're going all out for this, as there are big savings if both phases can be funded together. Together, we can do it! Please help us "Push To The Top".



*"Skeleton" view of the tower and belfry, with the new spire.*

**Tower Clock Restoration Progressing**



*Mr. Graf lowers one of the clock frames out of the tower.*

The Tower Clock is ticking again! After decades of sitting idle, all of its parts have been removed from the tower (35 feet above ground level) and transported to our professional restorer's workshop in Kittery Point, Maine. David Graf has restored dozens of similar clocks over several decades, and our E. Howard & Co. "round top" clock is his latest project. Now that the clock has been proven to work, Mr. Graf will completely disassemble it so that each part can be thoroughly cleaned, polished, and repainted to factory-original appearance. A few damaged or missing parts will be reproduced to original specifications. Then everything will be re-assembled, retested and readied for shipment back to Readfield in late summer.

Mr. Graf, with the assistance of professional woodworker Gabriele Tise, is also reproducing 3 new clock dials which will be exact replicas of the originals. The new 8-ft diameter dials are now fully assembled, and will be primed, painted and gilded over the next several months. The dials, when complete, along with the restored clock, will all be safely stored until repair and restoration of the tower is completed in 2022.

All work on the clock and dials is made possible by more than fifty sponsorships of clock and dial parts. A grant awarded by Maine Historic Preservation Commission is also funding a portion of the \$38,500 cost of restoration. There are a number of items still available for sponsorship; see our Facebook or web pages for a list. By the way, sponsorships are now 25% off original pricing, and make wonderful birthday or holiday gifts.

## Jack & Anita Smart \$50,000 Matching Grant Received!

“This building is too good to lose.”, Jack said last summer. “Let me help you to raise some money to get it restored!” he continued. After working through a few details, the Jack and Anita Smart \$50,000 Matching Grant was launched in August, 2020.

Word of the grant spread through the community, and by early January we had received over \$60,000 in donations toward RUMHCo.’s restoration work. Jack was quick to keep his promise of a match, and in February his check enriched our restoration “war chest” by \$50,000!

Jack and Anita Smart have been very generous to RUMHCo. for many decades. The Smarts have previously donated toward installation of a new metal roof, and made a similar matching grant toward floor support renewal work in 2017. In addition to their financial support, Jack has been a past Board member and president. We are indebted and very grateful to Jack and Anita for their strong support of our wonderful buildings.



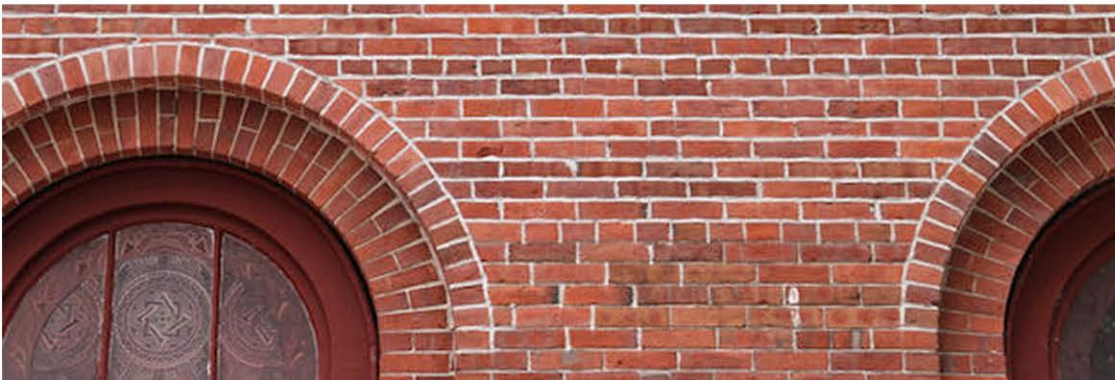
*Jim Tukey (left) receives the Jack and Anita Smart \$50,000 Matching Grant from Mr. Smart*

## “Standing Tall: A History of the Union Meeting House”

How did one of the best Meeting Houses in Maine emerge in a town of 1,500 residents, most of whom were eking out a living from the wilderness? How does its nationally-renowned artwork survive fully intact today? Board member and Historian, Marius Péladeau delves into these and many other questions with his independent research. His writing and historical illustrations, much previously undocumented, are being assembled into a book to be jointly published by the author and the Readfield Union Meeting House Co. A small group of people, each with publication experience, is developing the layout of the book to determine printing cost. We hope to have the book published by the end of the year.

And, Péladeau’s research is ongoing. The more he delves, the more detail he is finding. Notable other historians throughout the area are involved: Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Maine State Historian, will write the Preface. Murals conservator Tony Castro, author Jane Bianco, and others are verifying various aspects of the building’s history and structure. He is tapping the memories of local people who have stories and records to share. Readfield Historian Dale Potter-Clark is helping to align the Meeting House’s beginnings with the Readfield’s early history.

It is not too late to make a contribution. If you have photographs, old files or recollections of yourself, your family or friends that relate to the Meeting House, please contact Péladeau at [mpeladeau@roadrunner.com](mailto:mpeladeau@roadrunner.com) Some financial backing has already been obtained, but more will help ensure the book’s progress.



*In this photo of the south side of the Meeting House, note the differences in the brickwork from bottom to top-- mortar is lighter and thicker above than below. This illustrates some of the building changes that happened in 1867. In this case, the upper bricks had to be removed and then replaced when the original windows were replaced with taller, narrower arched-top windows. There are lots of other clues that reveal the history of the building.*

**Membership News**

The Readfield Union Meeting House Co. wants to thank last year's 2020 members for their generous support. It was a year that many of us want to forget. There were so many events and programs that we were not able to offer. We were not able to hold our Member Appreciation Event. As a small thank you, we plan to present Union Meeting House covered cups to 2020 members during April.

Membership is a show of support. It's an investment in our community's historic and cultural landmark. Membership dollars go a long way when it comes to meeting basic expenses to keep the Meeting House open and available to the community.

There are several membership levels for individuals and for businesses. Please consider a renewal, becoming a new member, or giving a gift membership.

We hope you will share your email address with us, which will save the cost of several mailings during the year. As members you will be informed of upcoming events and news though emails. A return membership envelope is included or you may go to our website [www.unionmeetinghouse.org](http://www.unionmeetinghouse.org) to join.

**Last Year's Financial Results**

At the beginning of 2020, we had planned to kick off a major fundraising program to build a cash reserve for upcoming major restoration work in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic forced those plans to change, although many of our loyal donors continued their support throughout the year.

After all was said and done, we did accomplish some needed maintenance work, started the clock and dials restoration project, and added nearly \$30,000 to our bank account.

See the summary of 2020 financials at the right. Please call John Perry at 685-3531 with any questions.

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cash on hand 12/31/2019	\$70,628	\$43,647	\$114,275
<b>Income 1/1-12/31/2020</b>			
Memberships	\$2,549	\$0	\$2,549
Donations	\$71,127	\$0	\$71,127
Events & promotions	\$4,950	\$0	\$4,950
Grants	\$16,479	\$0	\$16,479
Interest	\$771	\$417	\$1,189
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$95,876</b>	<b>\$417</b>	<b>\$96,294</b>
<b>Expenses 1/1-12/31/2020</b>			
Administrative expense	\$4,713	\$0	\$4,713
Operation & Maintenance	\$8,431	\$0	\$8,431
Meeting House restoration	\$47,926	\$0	\$47,926
Vestry restoration	\$596	\$0	\$596
Fundraising expense	\$4,311	\$0	\$4,311
<b>Total expense</b>	<b>\$65,978</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$65,978</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$29,899</b>	<b>\$417</b>	<b>\$30,316</b>
Cash on hand 12/31/2020	\$100,527	\$44,064	\$144,591



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