

THE STATE OF THE UNION MEETING HOUSE

VOL. XI, NO. 4 READFIELD, MAINE OCTOBER 2021

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Bob Harris

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

Address mail to:
Readfield Union Meeting House Co.
P.O. Box 451
Readfield, ME 04355

See us on Facebook:
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.

Jack & Anita Smart matching grant

Jack Smart is again showing his reverence for the Union Meeting House with a \$50,000 matching grant. He will match every donation made for maintenance or restoration work, dollar for dollar. Jack and Anita Smart have supported us for many decades with their encouragement for the full restoration of the brick church. Jack now continues their work as a memorial to Anita. Their grant is designed to get the restoration of the building completed as soon as possible, and to make it a real community effort.

We hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to double the impact of your gift. Any donation, whether to our Push To The Top fundraising campaign, sponsorship of parts of the clock and dials, contributions toward the Vestry, new memberships, or any other gift will qualify for a match. Please contribute to the Meeting House, and know that your support is doubled by the generosity of the Smarts!



Completion of the windows/eaves/painting project

Mid-Maine Restoration, a Waterville company specializing in historic restoration work, was busy at the Meeting House in July and August, doing some important work on the outside of the building:

- Repairs and repainting of the eaves and cornices;
- Repainting the wooden window frames/sill/sashes on the 6 south-facing windows;
- Replacing one damaged glass pane in the 1868 stenciled glass window;
- Painting the triangular “pents” above the entry doors (note the change of color, a return to the original “Meeting House red”)
- Replacing a damaged sash in the attic window at back of the Meeting House—this required making new moldings to match the damaged woodwork, believed to be part of the original 1828 construction.

Thanks to Mid-Maine Restoration for a job well done! Their work was funded by a grant from Maine Preservation and the 1772 Foundation, and by donations from the Meeting House’s members and friends.



Andrew Moulton of Mid-Maine Restoration preps the wooden sash to receive a replacement pane of stenciled glass.

Staging allows easy access to the windows and the eaves. The workman is putting a 1st coat of red paint on one window; three windows to the right have been primed but not yet painted.



Return of the clock

Union Meeting House restoration progress continued on Sept 24 with the return of the E. Howard Co. "Round Top" tower clock. The clock had been in the shop of David Graf Tower Clock Repair & Restoration in southern New Hampshire for about 9 months, undergoing thorough cleaning, polishing, painting and sealing. The re-assembled clock was operated for several weeks at the shop, keeping perfect time. Forty friends were on hand to welcome the shiny clock back to the Meeting House, and they all marveled at the size and beauty of the 91-year-old timepiece.

The clock mechanism will remain on display in the Meeting House sanctuary, waiting for critical structural repairs to the clock tower 30 feet above. When the clock tower restoration has been completed, the clock will have to be disassembled and then carried, piece by piece, up the stairs and ladder to its proper home. It will then be reassembled, attached to the three dials on the outside of the tower, and the 7-1/2 foot pendulum will be set in motion. Next, the clock will be connected to its 75-lb hammer which will toll the 2,000-pound bell in the belfry just above the clock. The bell will then announce the time to everyone within a 3-mile radius (depending on which way the wind blows)!

Three new 8-ft diameter clock dials are being fabricated to be installed on the north, east and south faces of the clock tower. Storage space for the dials is being donated by John Cushing at his facility until they can be installed during the tower restoration project next summer.

This restoration work was funded in part by a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. This grant has been matched by donations from more than 50 persons who have sponsored work on various clock components.



David Graf stands next to the Union Meeting House Round Top clock that he has restored.

Tony Castro repairs ceilings in the Meeting House entryways

Tony Castro returned to the Meeting House in September to make needed repairs to the ceiling in each of the Meeting House entryways. The plaster ceilings had been originally installed during the 1868 renovation of the Meeting House, and now, 153 years later, they were coming apart from the wooden lath holding them in place. Tony was able to widen the cracks in the plaster, inject cement between the plaster and lath, press the plaster back against the lath while the cement cured, and then fill in the cracks with gypsum plaster. He then painted over his work with a distemper paint which he had color-matched to the original.

Mr. Castro has been tending to the interior walls, ceilings and woodwork of the Meeting House for more than 30 years.

This conservation work was funded in part by a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

Larry Dunn kept the Meeting House cool this summer

If you have visited the Meeting House this summer, you noticed that the inside is much cooler and more comfortable than in past summers. Credit Board member and volunteer Larry Dunn for coming up with solutions to the seasonal high temperature inside the building.

First, he designed and installed an attic ventilation system, using a temperature-controlled exhaust fan; his system keeps the attic at least 30 degrees cooler, which keeps the sanctuary below cooler, too.

Secondly, he made easily-removable electric fans for several of the large sanctuary windows. When they are in place, there is a lovely cross-current of air crossing the seating area.

Neither of these are complicated, just the product of Yankee ingenuity along with Larry's skills and "get-r-done" attitude. Thanks, Larry!!

Membership renewal time is coming up

Your membership in RUMHCo. shows your strong support of our mission: "...to restore and maintain the Readfield Union Meeting House for the benefit of the community...". The membership fee is aimed squarely at maintaining our facilities: keeping the lights on, paying for repairs, this year's new attic ventilation system, painting the ramp, winterizing the water system, etc., etc. A part of your membership fee is also being used to build a Maintenance Fund, to be used for unexpected emergency repairs. Your membership dollars are matched by the volunteer work of many friends of the Meeting House.

Your membership also lets our Board know that you consider restoration of the buildings as a very important goal. Bringing the Meeting House and Vestry back to their former glory requires careful planning, and much additional grant-writing and fundraising, tasks which are also done by many volunteers. They keep at it because you believe and tell us that it is important work.

Please continue to provide your membership support, and know that it is an important factor in making the Union Meeting House and the Vestry huge benefits to the community!

And as an added bonus, all new membership contributions will be matched by the grant from Jack & Anita Smart described on the 1st page of this newsletter.

Vestry improvements continue

Lots of renovation progress at the Vestry has been completed this summer! Thanks to the support of the Readfield Enterprise Committee's no-interest loan, the talents of Board member Larry Dunn, and much volunteer labor, the kitchen and bathroom are taking shape. Some of the recent work completed:

- the crawl space has been deepened and "critter-proofed";
- all new plumbing has been installed (thanks Joe Potter!);
- new sub-floor installed, and interior partitions and doorways moved;
- 2 new commercial entry doors installed;
- drainage around perimeter of the building improved (thanks BA Perry Earthworks!)

More work is to be done soon: new siding on the kitchen ell, upgraded electric service to kitchen/bath, all new wall and ceiling insulation, new drywall, install ADA compliant bathroom, install new (or good used) kitchen cabinetry and appliances, re-install building heating system.

Volunteers for upcoming work are needed—if you want to help with any of the above work, or by just lending a hand, call Larry at (207)512-0742.



Greg Durgin, Larry Dunn and Jim Tukey spread crushed stone around new perimeter drain pipe installed with help of BA Perry Earthworks.

Interior of the Vestry addition, showing new ceiling framing which will hide the furnace flue and sanitary vent pipe. Construction lumber was donated by The Board Lumber.



Update on History Book

The first-ever history of the Readfield Union Meeting House, authored by Board member and historian Marius B. Péladeau, is moving forward. The manuscript is being designed and formatted on a free-lance basis by Mrs. Alyssa (Neptune) Graffam, managing editor of Alice James Books in Farmington. A major challenge is fitting close to 75 illustrations into the text at the appropriate location. Mrs. Graffam's father, John Neptune of Readfield, is a valuable member of the RUMH Building Committee.

Once the book is completely formatted it will be submitted to various regional printers to obtain a final price quote. At that point the RUMH Board will decide whether it will accept the bids and move forward with publication. Hopefully this will occur in the coming months allowing for a possible early 2022 publication. We'll keep you posted.

Volunteers Needed!

Do you have time to help your friends and neighbors who are getting the Meeting House back in shape? An hour per week--even an hour each month? There is a chance you could help us greatly in the little tasks (and even the bigger ones) that all contribute to our successful restoration work. Along the way you will have fun, learn about the history of the Meeting House, and meet some new and interesting friends. Many tasks can be done from home. Here are a few things we need right now:

What are needed volunteer activities at Readfield Union Meeting House Co.?

1. Participate on one of our committees--Events, Membership, Fund-raising, Building Committee;
2. Join the Friends of the Vestry & Meeting House;
3. Coordinate other Volunteers (record time donated, contact info);
4. Publicity work (press releases, contact reporters, keep scrapbook, maintain web site & social media, publish quarterly newsletter, etc.);
5. Maintain donor contact information, record donations, create certificates, calligraphy for honor books;
6. We are seeking to fill several positions on our Board of Directors ;
7. Painting, carpentry, groundskeeping work;
8. Photographic record of performance events and restoration work;
9. Liason to town and state government, attend hearings that impact us;
10. Outreach to people in the community, to civic groups (Rotary, Lions, etc.), to area Lake Associations;
11. Contact for local businesses (how can we help each other?)

If you have questions about any to the activities above and how you could help, please call Jim Tukey, Board President, at (207)215-5180, or send an email message to unionmeetinghouse@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pizza with Friends of the Union Meeting House

Pizza Kit Fundraiser!!!

(Pre-Orders Only- Please Submit by Oct. 24th at noon)



Pizza Kit: \$25.00 each

Raffle Tickets: 1 for \$5 or 3 for \$12

Includes: 2 dough balls from The Good Crust, cheese, sauce, garlic, Italian seasoning, and a sweet treat!

To Pre-Order your very own pizza kit or for more info visit:
http://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScbb0A-s219LRiMNNsAoe_4HnyEgNU8Dr555EAAqK_3_S1QA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Or Contact: Cricket Blouin at (207)-441-1348 or cpb620@aol.com

Pick Up: October 28th 4PM-6PM

22 Church Rd, Readfield, ME 04355

**and
 Watch our Facebook page
 for details on**

PUMPKINS A-GLOW

Saturday, October 30



**READFIELD UNION MEETING HOUSE CO.
 22 CHURCH ROAD
 PO BOX 451
 READFIELD, MAINE 04355**



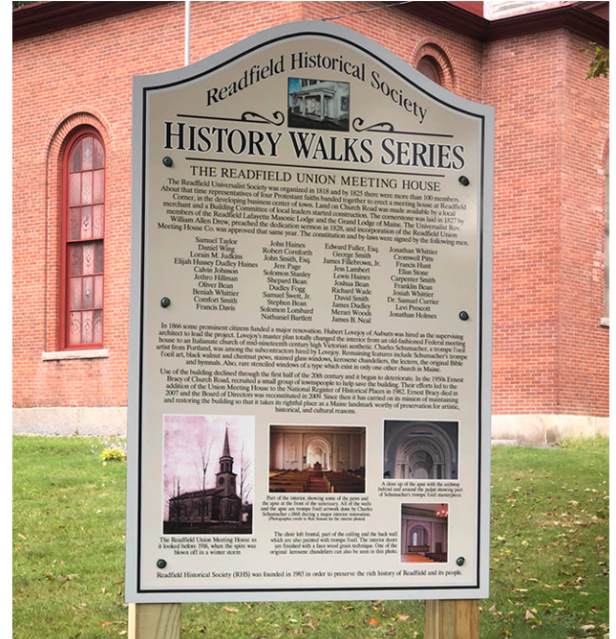
Ev Potter and Charlotte Killam drew a crowd to "A Walk Down Memory Lane" on August 14th. The entire audience participated in this "Walk" with their own remembrances of days past, eliciting laughter, tears, and every emotion in between.



That's Joe Potter under the floor of the Vestry, installing new plumbing. Joe contributed his labor and skill to this project, saving us over \$1,000. THANKS, JOE!



Board members Marius Péladeau and Jim Tukey inspect the 1859 Holman bell that was removed from the Meeting House Vestry in 2012. It is in good condition, although the wooden wheel will need to be rebuilt. The bell will be re-installed after structural repairs to the clock tower and belfry are completed next year.



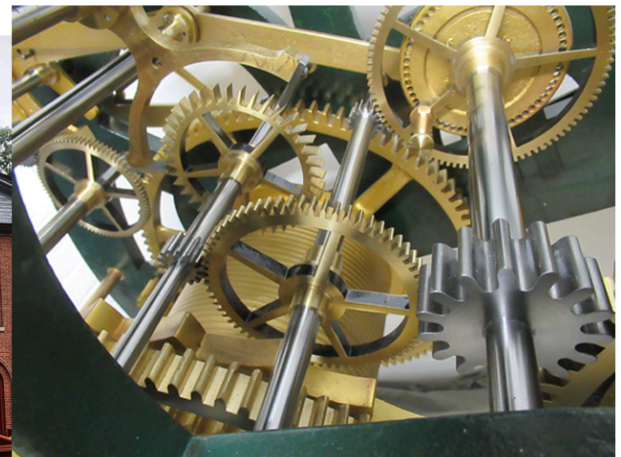
The Readfield Historical Society placed this plaque at the Union Meeting House on August 14, 2021, noting that it is an important element of Readfield's history.



Preparing Strawberry shortcakes for a very successful Strawberry Festival on July 10. Volunteers, left to right, are Jermelie Bessette, Nancy Durgin, Gail Letourneau, Lydia Adelson, Jeanne Harris, Sharon Dunn, Lynn Twitchell-- THANKS ALL FOR YOUR HELP!!!



Katie Daggett and Ed DesJardins performed at the Meeting House on July 6.



Restored arbors and gears of the E. Howard clock, which was originally installed in 1930 and was fully restored in 2021. With proper care and maintenance, these parts will operate reliably for the next 100 years. The restored clock mechanism, and 3 new 8-ft diameter clock dials, will be re-installed in the clock tower after structural repairs to the tower are completed next year.

Re-painting the trim and wooden siding at front of the Meeting House. The clapboards of the clock tower will be replaced and painted red next year as the tower is restored.