

# THE STATE OF THE UNION MEETING HOUSE

Vol. III, No. 1

Readfield, Maine

November 2013

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Readfield, ME 04355

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*The UMH is a non-profit §501 (c)(3) entity under I.R.S. law. Gifts are tax deductible. Secure donations may be made online via our website.*

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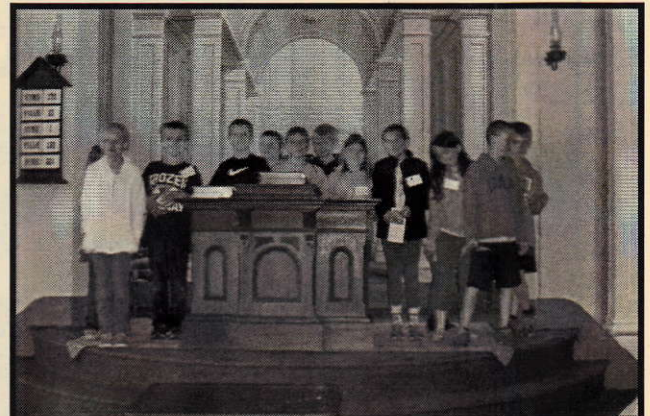
## What Happened in 2013

Progress is a good thing, and so the Board of the UMH can look back on 2013 and see that advances were made. Naturally, we hoped that our financial situation could have allowed us to do more but still major achievements were accomplished on several fronts. The five step process of ridding the crawlspace and basement of the dampness that is weakening the floor substructure got underway. Two local workmen were hired to remove all the metal ductwork that snaked underneath the floor to connect the floor registers with the furnaces.

For decades the furnaces flooded out each spring and so they were removed a few years ago. The ductwork was so intrusive it prevented future work on reinforcing the undercarriage of the floor. The removal was a difficult job since at some places clearance was only 8 to 10 inches. Fortunately the two workmen were of slender build and were able to crawl through with difficulty. The second step, to be tackled this coming year if funds permit, will be to remove scattered stones, some quite large and old lumber that has accumulated in the crawlspace. The professional engineer who is advising the Board suggests the third step will be to manually remove 6 to 8 inches of soil throughout the entire crawlspace so as to give workmen better working access to the area. This will be necessary when an impervious membrane is laid over the soil to keep dampness from rising in the future (4th step) and to allow large timbers to be brought in to reinforce the weakened supporting beams (5th step).

Clearly this will be a multi-year effort, depending on how much monies the Board can raise. It is not a conspicuous project, such as restoring windows or repairing the clock dials, but it must be done. If the floor is not properly supported, the plaster walls are not supported, which means the beautiful murals are endangered.

Talking of windows, this is where progress is most visible and most successful. More details are on the following pages. A report, with photos, of the very successful Hooked Rug Exhibit and the wonderful concert during Readfield Heritage Days also follows. For the second year in a row students from the Readfield Elementary School's third grade have visited the UMH as a part of a program designed to introduce them to the glories of the community. They are given a brief history of the church, the art of *trompe l'oeil* painting is explained and some of the unusual features of the building (the organ, stenciled windows, the sounding wires, etc.) are pointed out. They really enjoy themselves and the Board is pleased that now no students will leave the local school system without a basic introduction to the town's most famous building.



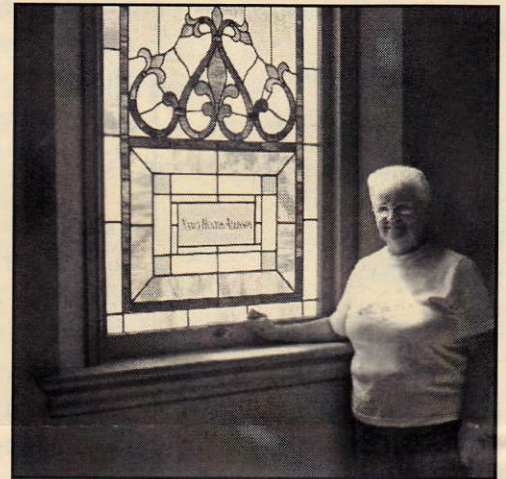
*The Elementary School students visit the UMH*

## More Progress

One area where the Board's restoration efforts are most visible is in the work accomplished in putting the seventeen windows in good order. Some of them had not been attended to in over 40 or 50 years so the new Board faced a daunting task. To their great credit, friends of the UMH stepped forward and met the challenge in a big way.

In three years all but one of the large windows have been "adopted" by donors as memorial gifts to their families. Only one large window and two small ones remain to be done. If anyone wants to adopt the Edward H. and Mary F. Gile stained glass window (at \$1,000) or the apse windows (at \$800 the pair) feel free to contact us. Donations can be made in installments. Each window is marked with a tasteful plaque, giving the name of the donor and the name of the person(s) they wish to memorialize. In 2013 the following windows were completed:

- *The Asa and Ursula Smith Gile window adopted by Jack and Anita Smart.*
- *The Rev. Carpenter Smith window adopted by Dottie J. Macomber in memory Jean C. Macomber.*
- *The Dudley W. and Clarissa A. Haines window, the Thomas and Betsey Pierce window and the stenciled glass window on the south side all conserved with gifts given in memory of Susan E. Wagner, the daughter of Alvin and June Wagner.*
- *The Nancy Hunton Atkinson window was adopted by Mrs. Donna Page (a Readfield girl descended from the Hunton family) late in 2012. The lower stained glass sash was restored by Oakes & Parkhurst and Mr. Caputo completed the project by doing the upper one this year.*
- *In addition, the Mr. and Mrs. "Tink" Rolfe window, done some years ago, was given a fresh coat of paint to extend its life.*



*Mrs. Donna Page admires the plaque on the Hunton- Atkinson window which she helped restore in 2013*

This is amazing progress and the Board thanks everyone involved for their outstanding monetary contributions. If anyone with links to Readfield want to leave a tangible, visible memorial to a family member, they might think of adopting the final large window or the two small ones at the rear.



*The sanctuary was full of historic and contemporary hooked rugs during the Heritage Days exhibit in August.*

## Heritage Days Excitement at the Meeting House

The UMH had full houses twice on the Saturday of Heritage Days. Under the leadership of chairwoman Joan Wiebe, a hooked rug show filled the sanctuary during the day. Mildred Cole Péladeau, a scholar who has authored a noted book on Maine hooked rugs, served as curator and Joseph Caputo not only loaned a number of fine old rugs from his extensive collection, but also made a big contribution by building numerous easels on which the rugs were displayed.

The exhibit was broken into two parts: the old historical rugs and those being made today by those who create contemporary rugs in the old tradition. Many rug hookers from the surrounding submitted their work for display. Attendance was overwhelming.

In the evening an impressive crowd again filled the Meeting House to hear a most pleasing concert by the Sandy River Ramblers and the Maranacook String Band. Their "Maine Bluegrass" music, made it an exciting, foot-stomping evening. Board members Marianne and John Perry organized the entire effort with great success. The impressive receipts from the daytime donation box and ticket sales in the evening went into the UMH's general fund.

## Membership Committee Formed

The principal source of UMH revenue is membership income. Therefore, the Board has formed a Membership Committee to make more people aware of the Meeting House, and to encourage further giving by friends in Readfield and persons who summer in the community.

Board member John Perry of Kents Hill volunteered to chair the committee. Already he had made considerable names in his computer so that our mailing labels can be printed on gummed labels. This newsletter is the first demonstration of Mr. Perry's hard work.

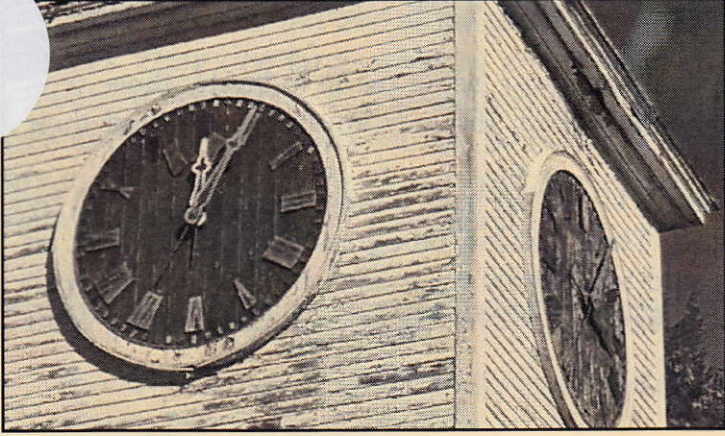
**Please look at the mailing label on this newsletter. If you have paid your membership for the current year (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014), the code "M:13-14" will appear in the top right corner. If you are a Life Member there will be an "L" and if you made a donation for some other reason (such as to restore a window) you will see a "D." If the label's right corner is blank it means your membership is not current.** Also check the membership list below. You can still take a 2013 tax deduction if you give by the end of December. However, the membership year runs under the end of next June so hopefully we will hear from you.

Also, we print below the names of those who have given since the start of the membership year on July 1. Please advise us if there is an error in your listing.

*M /M Paul Bessette, Jane Bianco & Jason Engelhart, Barbara Burgoine, Margo Boyd, M/M Robt. Broad, David Caderett, Dale Marie Clark, M/M Marlow DeMars, M/M Robt. DiBonaventure, M/M Rich. Dilly (D), Annette Donaghy, Mrs. Mary Duntley (D), M/M Greg Durgin, Jos. Edwards, Joan Frake (D), M/M Stephen Gilman, M/M Thomas Gottschalk, Cynthia Gyorgy, Marilyn Harradon, M/M Donn Harriman, Lee Hepfner, Robt. Ifill (D), M/M James Jernigan (L), Patricia Keating, Atty/Mrs. Howard Lake (D), Stephen Lerner, Capt./M H. Lee Livingston, Dottie Macomber, M/M Richard Magi, Savings Bank of Maine (D), David Meggison (D), M/M Edward Morse, Pamela Osborn, Donna Page (L), M/M Marius Peladeau, M/M John Perry (L), M/M Glenn Peterson, Audrey Pickett, Evelyn Potter, Les Priest, Saunders Mfg. (D), M/M Richard Sause, Geraldine Scott (D), M/M Jack Smart, M/M John Stanley, M/M Dan Steffan (L), M/M John Steffan (L), Arline Sweeney, M/M Dana Therrien (D), M/M Peter Thompson, M/M Andrews Tolman, Amy Trunnel, M/M Alvin Wagner (L), M/M Jonathan Wagner (D), Stuart Wagner (D), Ruth Wagtner (D), Martha Whitcomb, M/M Marshall Wiebe, M/M Parker Worthing, Milton Wright (L).*

## The Clock Dials

Everyone who drives up Church Road can see that the clock dials are weathering badly even though they were completely redone only twenty five years ago. The paint is badly eroded, the gilding is wearing off and some of the numbers are about to fall to the ground. In addition there is a problem with the flashing and rotted wood can be seen from ground level. The only solution is to take down the dials on the south and east sides of the tower.



The badly weather south clock dial, with numbers XI and XII hanging by a thread, needs restoration. The east dial has also deteriorated in 25 years.

The donor of the clock mechanism, Leon Tebbitts, left the Town of Readfield a trust fund to maintain the clock. In the 1930s it was sufficient; in today's world it is not. In 2013 the UMH asked the Town to transfer the fund to the Meeting House for administration. This was done at Town Meeting. The Board would like to add to this fund so that sufficient monies can be raised to undertake the restoration of at least one dial in 2014. This will be expensive but a final cost for the restoration of the woodwork and the re-gilding of hands and dial cannot be quoted until the dial is examined on the ground.

Does anyone want to help? The Board will put up a memorial plaque to all donors.

The bell taken out of the belfry in 2012 when the roof was replaced is now safely in storage. It was cast by the George Holbrook Bell Foundry of Medway, Massachusetts.



Address Correction Requested

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158 Thorp Shores Road  
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John & Marianne Perry  
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M:13-14  
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