

The Falmouth Historical Society  
Annual Meeting  
October 17, 2017  
Falmouth Town Hall Council Chambers

The Annual Meeting of the Falmouth Historical Society was opened by President Betsy Jo Whitcomb at 7:00 PM. There were 16 members present. Board members present were: Betsy Jo Whitcomb, President, Ann Gagnon, Vice President, David Farnham, Treasurer, and Directors Ron Scorsone, Erin Cardigan, Jeanne Madden, and Sue Farnham.

**Special Presentation: Falmouth300 Update and Legacy Projects**

Betsy Jo welcomed everyone and introduced our speakers: Erin Bishop Cardigan, Andy Jackson Darling, Theo Holtwijk, and Jeanne Madden.

Erin Bishop Cadigan, Falmouth Tercentennial Coordinator, brought us up to date with plans for the 2018 Tercentennial year-long celebration, to include:

- Kickoff Fireworks Display Dec 1, 2017, “A Very Merry Falmouth”
- May 26 201 Falmouth Fest and Old Home Days, including a Hot Air Balloon event August 8 Community Picnic and Street Dance at Village Park
- November 11 Incorporation Day and Veterans Day Observance
- The Story of Falmouth Monthly Lecture Series
- The Story of Falmouth Travelling Exhibit—Throughout Falmouth in 2018
- Publication of the History of Falmouth
- Legacy Projects: (1) the installation of two interpretive panels at Town Landing, telling the story of Falmouth’s history, and (2) a beautification project at the intersection of Route 88 and Route One, installing a Tercentennial Garden

In all, there will be 4 to 5 events during every month of 2018.

Andy Jackson Darling, Director of Falmouth Memorial Library, spoke on the history of the library and its future. In the 1800’s, there were two libraries in Falmouth that operated on subscriptions. One was on Route 88 while the other was at the intersection of Mountain and the Gray Roads. In 1943, a free library was housed at the high school. After WWII, some of Falmouth’s veterans began an effort to collect funds for a library building, leading to the purchase of the Iverson house in 1952 and the establishment of the library in the memory of all those who served and died during the war. Expansions took place in 1965 and 1995. In 2018, after a major fundraising effort, the library will grow from 10,000 square feet to 18,000.

Theo Holtwijk is the Long-Range Planning and Economic Director for the Town of Falmouth. He spoke to us about his efforts to uncover the history of the mural that was discovered in the basement of the Town Hall and now hangs on the wall in the hallway. In the 1944 Falmouth High School yearbook, it is shown hanging in the library above a bookcase. The painting is quite masterful and likely was done by a professional. Theo is developing plans to have the painting cleaned, restored, and hung in a more prominent spot for the citizens of Falmouth to enjoy. He is also recruiting 30 volunteer researchers to write a short article about each of the 30 pictures in the painting, which will be published in a 48-page booklet about the mural's story. The booklet can also serve to teach Falmouth's students about the history of their town.

Jeanne Madden is the programming and communications librarian at Falmouth Memorial Library. She spoke to us about the new Falmouth Community Volunteer Co-operative where people can learn about volunteer organizations and their activities. It is also a place where these organizations can work together to co-ordinate and complement each other's efforts. The official launch is Nov 12.

Jeanne also spoke to us about another Tercentennial Legacy Project that the library is sponsoring. This will be a comprehensive cemetery guide to all of the cemeteries in Falmouth.

### **Annual Meeting**

After a short break, during which refreshments were enjoyed and the painting was viewed by members and guests, the meeting was called to order by Society President and Secretary Betsy Jo Whitcomb. She read the minutes of the Annual Meeting of 11/15/2016.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Society Treasurer David Farnham. We began the 2016-17 fiscal year with \$3,295 in our operating accounts and \$40,172 in investments. This was our first full year in which we had to deal with the costs of running the Museum. Operating expenses of \$10,815 exceeded income of \$7,943, despite \$4,500 in generous donations from the community, leaving a deficit of \$2,872. The surge in the stock market helped our investments grow by \$4,998 but we withdrew \$14,003 to replenish the operating accounts leaving a balance of \$31,168. The Society has no debts.

The budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year calls for \$12,285 in operating expenses plus \$4,390 in capital expenses for a new desktop computer, a water heater, and a more durable sign. The new computer and water heater have already been installed. A motion was made to accept the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports including the budget. This was seconded and passed with none opposed

The President then gave her address.

When we moved into the Museum from Whipple Farm House, we were unsure if all of our research files, books, and office equipment would fit, if people would find us in our consolidated location, and if we could keep up with the bills which we did not previously have to pay due to the generosity of Mr. Wasaleski at Ocean View. Then in December, our President and Treasurer both needed to resign due to family illnesses. The board had to quickly step up and fill these positions. We have had a good working board this year, and have accomplished much to keep the organization moving forward. Hundreds of hours of volunteer time have been put in just to man the museum this year. We have been able to open the museum two days a week for extended hours. We have also participated in the Memorial Day parade and the Volunteer Fair, co-sponsored a couple of programs at the library, had a table at the election, and become a partner to the Tercentennial Committee. In the coming year we plan to sponsor at least three programs, present historical tours and a sock hop dance during the Tercentennial. We will also continue to work on the Museum building and grounds, and getting our collections digitized.

We need help with:

- Digitizing the collections
- Putting on programs and fundraisers
- Organizing each folder in the files
- Baking goods for events
- Communicating with the membership via telephone
- Staffing the museum
- Recruiting more members
- More members joining the Board

The members of the Board have worked hard to achieve this past year's accomplishments. A year ago it was a question of if we could or should continue to exist—now we believe we are on our way—with continued help from people like you who care about the importance of Falmouth history. A few hours a month from the membership can make all the difference! Many hands make light work!

Betsy Whitcomb presented the proposed slate of Society officers and directors:

Nomination for President: David Farnham

Nomination for Vice President: Rich Meserve

Nomination for Secretary: Sue Farnham

Nominations for new board members: Fred Howe, Rick Parker

*Termed out as a board member: Ann Gagnon*

*Termed out as an officer: Betsy Jo Whitcomb*

David Farnham has agreed to continue as Treasurer until a new treasurer can be found.

No additional nominations were made. A motion was made and seconded to accept on the proposed slate. "Ayes" were unanimous with none opposed. Betsy Jo Whitcomb and Ann Gagnon were recognized and thanked for their service as Society officers.

Incoming Society President David Farnham spoke briefly about the Society's plans for the coming year as we preserve Falmouth's heritage and share it with the community. Our goals include:

- Improving accessibility, safety and visibility at the Museum. This includes renovating the ramp (an Eagle Scout project), putting in a paved walkway to the ramp, improving exterior and interior lighting, and installing a more durable sign at the Museum (the old sign will be brought indoors)
- Actively engaging in the Falmouth Tercentennial by leading or hosting five events and participating in three others as well as providing artifacts and documents for other Tercentennial activities
- Expanding our outreach to the community through more effective use of the Society Web site, email, and social media
- Beginning to consolidate the Society's card files and other indices into a digital catalog to make our collections more accessible

We will also seek to expand our community of volunteers and supporters.

When the floor was opened for new business, Theo Holtwijk reported that Ford Reiche sent a note about the Tide Mill Institute Program taking place on October 27-28 at Stroudwater Baptist Church. The admission fee of \$40 will include lunch, and two days of presentations and discussions about a variety of tide mills near and far. On Friday morning a low-tide field trip explores three early mill sites in Portland, South Portland and Falmouth. The afternoon features informal presentations about local mills.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Farnham  
Secretary