

THE 1717 MEETINGHOUSE NEWSLETTER

WINTER EDITION

JANUARY 2013



1717 Meetinghouse

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- Peter R. Smith

Greetings to all our members and friends at the dawn of this New Year! And welcome to our new Trustees: William Mullin and Robert Wastrom.

The trustees have adopted a new name for our long standing West Parish Memorial Foundation. It will soon be known as the "1717 Meetinghouse Foundation" to differentiate this historic preservation corporation from a religious organization. Such a change in title will better describe the purpose of the Foundation and make our mission clear to contributors outside of West Parish.

As you will read in the following pages, there has been great deal of activity in the Foundation since our last newsletter. You will read about the first stages of our long sought "Long Range Plan" developed by the trustees under the

capable direction of Georgia Lonkhart. And you will see a long list of projects undertaken by the Building and Grounds team under the leadership of Donna Grohe.

While a great deal has been accomplished, there is still much work to be done and a great deal of money to be raised. While it appears that we have the support of a grant from the Community Preservation

Committee as the request goes to Barnstable Town Council for approval, the funds available from that grant will only begin to cover the extensive costs of "rehab" needed to make the Meetinghouse "pristine in 2017" for the 300th anniversary of this historic structure.

Will we be able to present a Meetinghouse in pristine condition for the 300th anniversary celebrations in 2017?

While the beloved Miss Jenkins left a generous portion of her estate to the Foundation and there have been other generous contributions over the years, our permanent endowment funds stand at only a bit more than \$220,000. While this generates some much needed income, it does not meet the needs of today's maintenance costs, much less the cost of making significant improvements in the safety of the building such as a fire suppression system.

And so, dear friends, your continuing support in dues, gifts and bequests are still very much needed. In these trying economic times, we hope you will keep in mind the needs of this beloved Meetinghouse and respond as generously as you are able.

West Parish Memorial Foundation proudly presents

The Arabella Ensemble of Boston in *The 12 Days of Bach!*

Sunday, January 13, 2013 at 4:00 p.m.

West Parish Meetinghouse
Route 149, West Barnstable

A contribution of \$10 [seniors and students] and \$15 [adults] is requested at the door.

Program highlights:

A holiday concert featuring the oratorio and cantata works of Johann Sebastian Bach from Advent to Epiphany!

The theme of the program will focus on the journey through the twelve days of Christmas with Johann Sebastian Bach's mastery of Baroque composition.



ACTIVITY FROM THE LONG RANGE PLANNING TEAM

—*Georgia Lonkart*

Our preservation planning for the 1717 Meetinghouse has been very active this year as we have been reminded by the old 1717 Meetinghouse itself that over 60 years have passed since the original restoration. There are many of its features that are showing the wear and tear of time.

Look upward and you will see that the old roof is beginning to fail. Those shingles are getting mighty thin, and in a good nor'easter the shingles rain down around the old Meetinghouse. It seems the roof on the beautiful 1717 Meetinghouse has reached the end of its natural life and with the shingles thinning and coming off, leaks are starting to sprout in rain storms. It has become apparent that we absolutely must replace the roof as soon as possible.

As we deal with the roof replacement we must also deal with the deterioration of the Bell Tower, the Revere Bell housing and bell stand. We have been advised that the current bell stand is not adequate and that some prior repairs are causing some damage to the historic bell. A new structure is needed. Expert consultants have advised us to ring the bell carefully and not put undue stress on the bell and bell housing until it can be secured properly.

While we are looking up at the top of the 1717 Meetinghouse, we are faced with making decisions regarding fire suppression systems. The time to implement the roofing portion of this system needs to be concurrent with the roof replacement in order to adequately conceal the piping for this system. Unfortunately, the imperative of this initiative became clear to us at the end of November when a Brewster Church burned to the ground. We are reminded that many West Barnstable historic structures are no longer here due to the ravages of fire.

As you can image the price tag for these major initiatives is very high, and there are yet other initiatives which we will have to tackle in the coming years. As the West Parish Memorial Foundation endowment is small and not adequate to meet these requirements, your Long Range Planning Committee, a sub-committee of the West Parish Memorial Foundation Trustees, has been busily seeking funding for such major preservation efforts and applying for grant funding to help with these costs.

To that end, the West Parish Memorial Foundation applied for a grant from the Town of Barnstable and submitted our application to the Town of Barnstable Community Preservation Committee this year. We are pleased to report that In November of 2012, the Town of Barnstable Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to support our funding request for \$275,000 to fund a portion of the major initiatives required to preserve our beloved 1717 Meetinghouse. We are awaiting the Town Council review and public hearing on our application. We are extremely hopeful that this application will be viewed favorably at that time. Your Long Range Planning Committee will be present at the Town Council meeting to present our case for historic preservation of the 1717 Meetinghouse.

While this is great news, and a major step in funding the preservation, we must continue to seek other sources of preservation funding. The Long Range Planning Committee is looking for other opportunities for historic grant funding, but grant opportunities are limited and often require matching funding. As you think about opportunities to make a difference, think about contributing to the endowment of the 1717 Meetinghouse and the Long Range Planning initiatives. The history of the 1717 Meetinghouse is long and significant to the founding of this community and this nation. Let's preserve it for all future generations. It is our legacy to the generations that will come after us.

Remember: *The 1717 Meetinghouse is open for self-guided tours each summer, everyday from 9am to 4pm, Memorial Day thru Columbus Day.*

THE BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

—*The B&G Team*

It all started with the security light way up, right under the roof on the northeast corner. Why did it keep malfunctioning? Well, we found out after a little investigation. It was because there was a leak, it was filling up with water and shorting out. But as it turns out, that was the least of our problems and our "heads-up" to a roof that didn't have the five to seven years left to serve us that we expected.

If you were present for the Foundation's annual meeting in November, you were probably shocked to receive "a souvenir" of a thin, shriveled and dried up piece of the roof that we collected after the two storms we experienced earlier in the month. Also, at that meeting, a new trustee (and now on the Building & Grounds Team) Bill Mullin told us that he had put that roof on 29 years ago! No joke! Just after that news is when we had our first leak.

The Building & Grounds team realized that time was upon our roof and heading into the winter made us all pretty nervous. Therefore, the Meetinghouse has been "tarped" until arrangements can be made to reroof as early as weather will permit in the Spring. Don't be surprised as you drive by or drive in to find a colorful addition to the Grand Old Place. Fortunately, the Long Range Planning Team has done an outstanding job and we should have funds to pay for the reroofing from the Community Preservation Committee as soon as the Barnstable Town Council approves the preservation award. Without these funds, the Foundation would be very hard put to pay the some \$50,000 the new roof will cost.

Just when it seemed that we were catching up with the constant needs of our marvelous old Meetinghouse, something comes along that requires immediate attention and another drain on our very limited endowment. We are fortunate to have received the Community Preservation funds, but we are not sure of future funding to cover the some \$250,000 needed to ensure the Meetinghouse is in pristine shape for it's 300th birthday in 2017.

This year saw Coleman Electric completed work (\$7,548.09) to update the most urgent electrical problems necessary for fire safety. There will be more work, including surge protection for the electrical system to include the Mander organ (\$3,700 required.) Atlantic Lightning Protection upgraded the lightning system by installing (burying) ten-foot copper rods some sixteen feet out from the building in three locations (\$2,700.) Vektorino's Landscaping removed brush from north of the Meetinghouse to reduce the fire threat to the Meetinghouse (\$250.)

We determined why the north side won't hold paint and are working on another perplexing challenge—fire protection. Will it be detection, suppression or a combination of the two that's most effective? What the cost will be to implement this very important system is yet to be determined. We have called in the experts to help solve this situation. You can see that while 2012 was a busy year, 2013 promises to be no less of a challenge.

A special thank you to Fred who has accumulated all the Trustee's Meeting minutes since the Foundation was established and is researching them for information to help us with the situations we face today. Thank you also to the Long Range Planning Team for the money we so urgently need now.

And thank you, fellow members of the West Parish Memorial Foundation for your continued support.

Your Building & Grounds Team,
Phil Merritt (Emeritus), Donna Grohe, Doug Hayward,
Fred Clausen, Wolfgang Fattler, Bill Mullin & Bob Wastrom

Annual and Life memberships, renewals and supplementary donations are gratefully accepted at any time throughout the year as you are able.



Your gifts can also be made *in honor of* or *in memory of* a loved one.



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NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

- Roger Henson

With the goal of exposing more people to their historic 1717 gem, the Foundation has sponsored two programs in the Meetinghouse this past season for the enjoyment of the larger Cape Cod community. In June, the young men's a cappella group, Hyannis Sound, entertained an enthralled crowd with many wonderful vocal renditions.

Then in August, author and historian Jim Ellis lectured a well-focused audience on the War of 1812 and its effects on Cape Cod. Afterwards, he led discussion and signed copies of his book, "A Ruinous and Unhappy War: New England and the War of 1812." Jim, a member of the Foundation, was also a trustee some years ago, and his words were well received on the 200th anniversary of the war whose first shots were fired in naval barrage just off the Cape.

As we go forward, please stay tuned for other Foundation supported community events in the Meetinghouse. Our next will feature the ARABELLA ENSEMBLE on Sunday, January 13, at 4 pm. The Arabella Ensemble is an all women's vocal and instrumental chamber group based in Boston. It has concertized across the USA with creative songs and instrumentals old and new, and this year will feature, "The 12 Days of Bach".

MEMBERSHIP FORM — Enclose check payable to:
West Parish Memorial Foundation, Inc.

The Foundation is an historic preservation group, a 501(c)3 organization separate and apart from West Parish of Barnstable, and maintains the historic 1717 Meetinghouse. You do not need to be a member of the West Parish Church to be involved (although many are.) The only requirement is an appreciation of the valuable history of this building and want to see it preserved for future generations.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

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|---|----------|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Annual Membership | \$ 25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member (Includes Spouse) | \$ 750.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Annual Membership | \$ 50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution (Life Member) | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matching Funds (Company) _____ | | | \$ _____ |

All Gifts are tax deductible. Life Membership may be budgeted over three years.



Elizabeth Crocker Jenkins
(ca. 1922)

"The Woman Who Saved Our
Meetinghouse" [1874-1956]