

The Phillips Area Vitalizer

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Editors: Dick Matthews, Dick Stovall

Ice Skating, Eskimo Breakfast, New Stage Curtain – Busy Season for Community Center

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Thanks to a joint effort by local organizations, the skating rink on Depot Street has been fitted with a liner and was recently filled with water by the Phillips Fire Department. PACC board member Larry Pinkham says the rink is “ready for skaters.”

The Phillips-Strong Lions, together with the Conservation Commission and the Phillips Area Community Center (PACC), shared the cost of installing a liner inside the Depot Street berm, thus upgrading that facility. Additionally, a light pole was donated by Hector Trembley and erected on the site by George and Eric Berry, all in support of creating smooth-surfaced, well-lighted ice for use this winter.

To mark the upgrading of the rink, the PACC board is currently planning two rink-related events. One is in conjunction with the Phillips Library which plans a celebration of the Chinese New Year, the Year of the Dragon, on the evening of Monday, January 23. That event – which includes a parade, a larger-than-life dragon, and the release of “fire lanterns,” – will begin at the library and end at a bonfire at the ice rink (*See related article, this issue*).

The other is an Eskimo Breakfast, timed to coincide, roughly, with the school-vacation week during mid-February. That will consist of a breakfast cooked and served outdoors adjacent to the Community Center and the rink. More information on that will be forthcoming in later issues of *The Vitalizer*.

Additionally, PACC recently was able to use grant money to purchase a curtain for the center’s stage. That curtain has arrived and awaits the assembling of staging so the old curtain track can be repaired and the curtain and valance can be installed.

The Church Bell Mystery

Some readers may recall a story in an earlier *Vitalizer* (No. 14, August 29) about the inscription Todd Olsen discovered on the bell in the old Methodist Church. In part, it reads:

“In 1886 I was given to this church by T.E. Thompson. Later broken by inconsiderate men. In 1926 remolded and returned to my sacred vocation. . . .”

Now, however, additional research has turned up two other stories related to the bell, one told by Albert Pease in his *Sketches of the History of Phillips to 1879*. According to Pease, the bell was broken on March 4, 1841 during a celebration of a national election.

He says the bell (or a bell, at least) was installed in the Union Church in the lower village (also used by Congregationalists), possibly as early as 1835. Then, in 1841, when the Whigs went to the church to celebrate winning an election they found the local Democrats had anticipated their celebration and sneaked into the church and stolen the bell's clapper. Not to be deterred,

the Whigs sent some young men into the steeple with sledge hammers and one of the blows cracked the bell. The clapper was found in a nearby shed shortly after, and the bell was mended about a year later.

But yet another (and different) account of the breaking of the bell was recently unearthed by Todd in a 17-page history of Methodism in the area, apparently written about 1967 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the building of the present church in the Lower Village. That account says:

“It was in the year 1885, that a large bell was presented to the M.E. Church, by Captain J. E. Thompson. It weighed 1,000 pounds, and was installed by J. Z. Everett. . . . For many years its peals rang forth from the belfry of the church, until it became cracked by inconsiderate people celebrating the Fourth of July.”

So, which was it? 1841? 1886? Or later? Did political revelers break it or was it cracked during a celebration of Independence Day? Did the bell that’s now in the Methodist church once hang in the Union church? Could there be more than one cracked bell? More information, anyone?

If Winter’s Here, Can a Farmer’s Market Be Far Behind?

Phillips Market expanding to internet

Despite temperatures dropping into single digits, Dick Stovall is already thinking Spring. He’s set May 19 as the Phillips market’s starting date at the American Legion Hall on Depot Street, and is not only planning the market’s trajectory for the summer, but is looking to increase its impact by making it smarter.

“The market is evolving,” Stovall says, “and this Spring will include a buyer’s exchange, web operations, card and cashless purchasing, and public Wi-Fi.”

Stovall, who chairs the Franklin County Economic Groupe (F.C. EDGe), the market’s sponsor, expects the internet connection – including Wi-Fi access and the ability to run credit and debit card transactions – to be complete by the time the market opens in May.

Stovall says these improvements are the result of suggestions and support of F.C. EDGe members Cory Ellis, owner of Mooseville, and Peter Bourgelais, currently home from the University of Massachusetts as a computer science major. The plans leverage their expertise and that of Stovall himself, a former senior Apple tech guru and business analyst.

Phillips: Officially 200 in 2012

Though the first settlers arrived along the Sandy as early as the 1790s, Phillips became incorporated as a town on February 25, 1812. Though known by other names among the area’s first inhabitants – including Curvo – the town was given the name Phillips in honor of Johnathan Phillips of Boston, the man historian Albert Pease calls “the proprietor of the township.”

The exact date of the incorporation isn’t entirely clear, but the process of making it happen began February 12 when an act of incorporation was considered by the Legislature of Massachusetts, sitting in Cambridge, and became final on February 25 when it was signed by the governor of the state.

At present *The Vitalizer* isn’t aware of any plans for celebrating Phillips’ birthday, but is willing to venture the occasion of the bicentennial as a possible theme for this year’s Old Home Days parade.

In its on-going effort to promote economic development in Phillips, and to counter the lack of reliable cellular phone service in the area, the market will become a public internet hot spot where laptops, tablets, standard cell phones, and particularly smartphones can access the web - and furthermore through Skype (and other internet phone options often called Voice Over the Internet Phone or VOIP), place and receive telephone calls. In a fashion, Stovall says, that will make the market essentially a free internet cellular phone service site and an ‘internet café’. The market will provide at least one computer for customers or visitors to use to connect to the Internet, browse the web, make free phone calls, or send and receive email. Also featured will be a “Nerd Nook” where simple computer and Internet help desk assistance will be available to the public.

Additionally, a Buyer’s Exchange – a system of taking orders by phone, e-mail, or web – will eventually become a key component of the market’s offerings, where customers will be able to pre-order locally produced products. The plan, says Stovall, is to make the market’s products (grown, baked, or hand-made) available for pick-up or even delivery on the basis of orders sent in by phone, e-mail or web, a system capable of taking orders from its customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To get things started, the Buyer’s Exchange is currently offering farm fresh eggs for \$3.50 a dozen. To arrange to get a dozen or more eggs, contact Stovall at his VOIP telephone number (207) 433-5898, or his Toll-Free telephone number: (800) 764-0587, or by e-mail: franklincountyedg@me.com

Community Center Seeks Leaders of the PACC

With a new year upon us, the Phillips Area Community Center (PACC) is launching its annual Leaders of the PACC drive. Last year’s drive raised money to support a number of activities, among them bean suppers, a Variety Show, Christmas Talent Show, Mystery Theater performance, Magic Show, Rail Fair, movie night and Halloween dance for middle schoolers, and dog obedience classes. The PAAC awarded two \$500 scholarships to local students, purchased a curtain for the stage, and obtained movable walls to form a lobby.

As residents will attest, the Community Center has a past: Not only does it represent the town’s history through its life as a car barn for the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railroad, it lives in the hearts of every student who played basketball or attended a dance there when it was the high school gym.

“This historic building needs the town’s support,” says Leaders of the PACC chair Pam Matthews. “We’re asking every area resident, every person with a connection to the old gym, to join us as a Leader of the PACC”. Dues are \$5 a year for individuals, \$10 per family or business. Members can attend monthly meetings, get notice of coming events and facility upgrades, and receive discounts on paid-attendance events. Members receive a Leader of the PACC decal to display on a window to show that they support this community asset.

Becoming a Leader of the PACC does not obligate members in any way. “Sure, the board is always looking for new members,” says Matthews. “We need volunteers, people who can pound

a nail, climb a ladder, bake some cookies, or help when we host events. But, more than that, we need your ideas and financial support. Join our community of supporters, and know you're helping sustain this piece of Phillips history."

For more information contact any board member: Dick Matthews (chair); Pam Matthews (treasurer), (639-2630); Larry Pinkham (vice-chair) (639-3411); Paula Roy Kane (secretary), (639-3213); Saskia Reinholt; or Marina Langdon. Checks may be made payable to PACC and given to any board member.

News Briefs & Updates . . .

The Phillips Library Penny Auction, to be held this year in the Library Annex (the old school cafeteria), is now accepting donations for its 15th annual auction, with the drawing set this year for Sunday, March 11. Any items people care to donate may be brought to the library or the annex. (If Winona's car is parked there, the building is open.) Some used books and audio tapes are currently for sale and can be purchased now. All proceeds from the auction benefit the Phillips Public Library.

A Chinese New Year Celebration will be held on Monday evening, January 23 (check for times at the library) with a parade beginning at the Phillips Library and ending at the Phillips Area Community Center. Organizer Marina Langdon says the celebration is an occasion to "find a little color and life in January." The celebration in this "Year of the Dragon" will involve that larger-than-life mythical creature, the release of Chinese paper fire lanterns, participation by anyone who wants to dress in colorful costumes and "come and make a little noise," and ice skating, a bonfire and hot drinks at the Community Center.

Check Out the Town's Web Site at <http://www.phillipsmaine.com/>. The site not only contains lots of information about the town and its history, it also provides on-line back issues of *The Vitalizer* and information about up-coming meetings and events.

Meetings and Event Schedule . . .

Jan 10 - Circle for the Arts, Tuesday, 7 p.m., Morning Bridge Center

Jan 12 - Phillips Revitalization Steering Committee, Thursday, 6 p.m., Town Office.

Jan 13 - High Peaks Alliance meets, Friday, January 13, 6 to 7:30 at Phillips Library

Feb 2 - Phillips Area Community Center Meeting, Thursday, 5:30 p.m., Phillips School

*To submit an event or get *The Vitalizer* by e-mail, write dickm4242@aol.com*