

## Heritage Commission – November 2015

### New Hampshire History Month: Recognizing Special People & Places



Community Heritage Award recipients were honored October 19th by the Select Board with Heritage Commission members for the fifth year. Cited were *Jennifer Shaw, Educator and Cultural Ambassador, Wallace Rhodes, Town Historian Emeritus* and *Earl Sweeney for Exemplary Leadership* – pictured with Chairman Ruth Mooney. (Photo credit: Donna Rhodes, Winnisquam Echo)



NH Officials Helped Launch the Week including State Senator Jeanie Forrester, a Legislative representative to the *Land and Community Heritage Investment Program* and Jennifer Goodman, executive director of the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance with a site visit to the award-winning 1908 Bandstand restoration, which received major funding from LCHIP. From left are painter *John Thompson* and contractor *JR Graton, Senator Forrester*, and HC members *Linda Frawley, Vicki Donovan, Priscilla Annis* and *Wallace Rhodes*, and Jennifer Goodman. (Photo credit: Donna Rhodes, Winnisquam Echo)



Belmont Public Library was a key community partner for NH History Week, and the starting point for a Village Walking Tour led by Belmont Historical Society charter member and current President, *Wallace Rhodes*. He also told the "Belmont Story" to a class of 4<sup>th</sup> graders and will return to talk with others during the year. (Photo credit: Linda Frawley)

## Appreciation

**"Partnerships made the ambitious week possible." ~ Alyce Jewell of the Heritage Commission...**

Programs and activities throughout the week had well over 400 residents directly learning, celebrating and helping to preserve Belmont history. Beginning with Vicki Donovan's Fourth Grade students sharing "Historic Moments" schoolwide for Belmont Elementary School community announcements, activities involved all-aged participants. The Belmont Historical Society annual meeting attracted several new members and increased attendance at the Mill, while volunteers from the *Belknap County Restorative Justice/Court Diversion Program* and the *Belknap County Conservation District*, among others, worked together at the Province Road Meeting House, and visibly improved landscaping at the 1792 property.

## Community Heritage Awards 2015

Belmont Select Board and Heritage Commission Honored Jen Shaw, Earl Sweeney and Wallace Rhodes during NH History Week on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

### Jennifer Shaw - Educator & Cultural Ambassador

Earlier today Belmont's Bandstand was honored with special tributes for its restoration. Jennifer Shaw was part of the inspiration for saving that 1908 structure – and part of its success. For the past 13 of her nearly 30 years teaching, Mrs. Shaw has introduced Belmont's children to music. As Belmont Elementary School chorus teacher, those fundamentals from her classroom have paid community dividends. Those young smiling faces and beautiful voices performing at the Bandstand when we "Decked the Village" made some Christmases to remember on Main Street. Jen is personally passionate about music and has been active in a number of Lakes Region performing groups. Her care and talents are shared in church activities as a parishioner at St. Joseph's, and as an Old Home Day volunteer. She has followed several of her student's careers as they continued with a love of culture, as performers at Belmont High School, where she has helped with the BHS musicals for the past three years. Her Belmont Elementary students number over 450 — and there are over 150 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders in that school's performance groups. Those BES students have "hit the road" since 2003 in 40+ free community performances. The Senior Center, Belknap Mall and Bandstand are just a few of the venues.

### Earl Sweeney - Exemplary Leadership

A former U.S. President once said "...The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things..." President Ronald Reagan could have been describing Belmont native Earl Sweeney. His distinguished five decade career spans safety, training, motor vehicles, homeland security, fire safety and 911 communications. He walked his first beat as a law enforcement officer for Belmont in 1957, was promoted to Sergeant in 1960 and named Chief of Police in 1961. As a Deputy Commissioner, Acting Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner he has been appointed or reappointed by at least four New Hampshire Governors. As Director of the NH Police Standards and Training Council he set the highest standards in communications education and ethics – for police and corrections, probation-parole trainees and even part time law enforcement officials. His reputation and management effectiveness, brought calls for further NH service as Acting Commissioner of the NH State Liquor Commission and a non-salaried role as Chairman of the state's Board of Parole. As an author and editor, Commissioner-Chief Sweeney has contributed to magazines, journals, training guides and articles – from the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin to treatises on "Law Enforcement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" and "Standards for Police Training Organizations." The NH Congressional Delegation, Laconia Lodge of Elks, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Belmont NH Police Dept. and the International Association of Chiefs of Police have all tipped their hats to this gentleman.

### Wallace P. Rhodes – Town Historian Emeritus

Wallace is a passionate self-taught researcher who prides his accuracy and detail for historical projects, with the same professionalism in his other career in New York with the FDIC and for the State of New Hampshire, some 32 years in the Banking department as senior examiner and manager. His care and knowledge is continually shared for written and telephone inquiries nationwide on genealogical searches, regional historians and authors, new residents and Scout troops – among others. This Belmont native has generously contributed both time and financial contributions including major support to the Belmont Mill as both "Save the Mill" organizer and benefactor, the Belmont Library, Province Road Meeting House and the Belmont Historical Society. Over recent years, he built a home close by the Village on Church Hill, across the road from his maternal grandparents (the Fred Piper family) – and next to the Highland Cemetery and Belmont Baptist Church. Some years ago the Church asked to purchase the land to build a school and day care facility for children. Wallace obliged, and as is his custom, quietly, without any public awareness, donated the land they needed. His inordinate and cheerful patience – quietly persistent all these years, has attracted respect and admiration locally and throughout the state. "Reminiscences..." his 1969 Centennial history remains the "go to" authority for accuracy about Belmont historical facts. Preservation challenges in Belmont are not unique from other communities, and support varies through eras, administrations and local transition. The 2001 Master Plan, for which he contributed lifelong research, once again embraced local heritage and village revitalization as a prominent priority of community vision.