

Belmont bandstand gets a much needed facelift

BY DONNA RHODES
Drhodes@salmonpress.com

BELMONT — Residents may have noticed that the Belmont Bandstand has been undergoing a new facelift this summer, and the Heritage Commission is pleased to report that the structure will soon be returned to its original glory.

Work to restore the bandstand is being made possible in part through a grant from the Land and Community Heritage Investment Pro-



DONNA RHODES

John Thompson of JLT Painting applies a fresh coat of paint to the Belmont Bandstand last week that will restore it to its original color scheme, dating back to 1908.

gram (LCHIP).

Moved to its fourth

and permanent location on Belmont's Vil-

lage Green last year, the bandstand first had some structural repairs done to strengthen its wooden framework and foundation. The current painting and roof reconstruction is now Phase 2 of the project.

"This has been our signature and priority project since 2008, but it has also been just as much detective work as historical research," said commission chair Linda Frawley.

SEE **BANDSTAND**, PAGE A1

BANDSTAND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

While the bandstand was built in 1908 and has been painted white for the past several decades, that was not always the case, historians came to discover.

As part of their detective work, the commission called for the assistance of some experts, including Architectural Conservator Brian Powell. Powell is well known for his work on buildings of national and historic significance, such as Mount Vernon, as well as his particular expertise on historic paints.

Also joining the team was restoration contractor JR Graton of Northfield, and John Thomp-

son of JLT Painting in Alexandria, which specializes in historic painting projects and has worked on many buildings, including those in Canterbury Village.

Frawley said over the years, the commission and their consultants have combed through old news stories, photos and records provided by the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources to make the restoration as accurate as possible.

Architectural historian David Ruell of Ashland also provided them with information and old news stories he had uncovered about the bandstand. Photos

that have survived the years are all in black and white though, and the hunt went on.

After cautiously chipping away the layers of white lead paint that covered the bandstand for decades, the original red and green colors were finally revealed. A professional paint analysis was done and the colors were matched with paint manufactured today.

"Both David Ruell and the former New Hampshire State Architectural Historian, James Garvin, have stated that the Belmont Bandstand is one of the best preserved bandstands in the state," said

Frawley. "We believe it will now be further unique statewide, and even throughout New England, because of its original color scheme."

With Thompson's painting of the railings, lattice work and support posts completed, next up will be Graton's reconstruction of the equally unique roofline and shingles. Once that is complete, Thompson will return to paint the deck. Frawley said she expects this phase of restoration to be done by early fall.

"Because of all these efforts, Belmont's bandstand will continue to be a standout," she said.