

THE SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society Newsletter

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Annis Elected To House

Jim Annis, treasurer of the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, has been elected to the State of Maine House of Representatives District 112. This district includes the towns of Atkinson, Bradford, Dover-Foxcroft, Parkman and Sangerville. He ran successfully against Judy Merck who lives on the Dexter Road in Dover-Foxcroft.

"Jim just doesn't know when to stop getting involved," said Mary his wife. "His father always told him, 'Don't just sit around complaining about things. Get in there and do something about it!'" added Mary. "And boy is he getting in there and doing something about it!" she said. Currently, Jim is master of Valley Grange in Guilford, treasurer of the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, secretary of the Pine Crest Development Corporation, treasurer of The Meriden Colonial Militia, an 18th century reenactment group, and a Hunter Safety instructor. Jim and Mary are Deacons of the Congregational Church in Dover-Foxcroft.

"I would like to remain active in all the organizations I'm involved with," said Jim, "but we'll see how far I can stretch myself. I love every activity and would hate to give up even one of them."

Jim has many issues he'd like to persue including a solution to the high cost of prescription drugs, the lowering of taxes burdening the people of Maine and the creation of a technical high school system. Already Jim has submitted bills to the Legislature regarding the technical high school system and the elimination of taxes on clothing up to the first \$75.00 on each item of clothing.

Christmas Holidays At The Observer Museum

Another Christmas season was celebrated at the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society's Observer Museum with the lighting ceremony, caroling in front of the museum and the serving of hot mulled cider and cookies inside the museum after the caroling.

The air was brisk, but the townwide celebration of the lighting of the downtown buildings went forward as scheduled. For many years, the Dover-Foxcroft Fire Department has been instrumental in seeing that the big Christmas tree in the triangle in front of the Observer Museum was erected and lighted.

"It's been a tradition," said Mary Annis, president of the Historical Society. "It's a beautiful time of the year with the lighting of the tree and the downtown buildings," she added. "The caroling by church members of many faiths and the sharing of cookies and mulled cider afterwards lends to the atmosphere and the joy of the season," she said.

The cookies were baked by Helen Kelly and Diane Villane. The cider was mulled by Jim and Mary Annis. Members of the Society were on hand for the preparation and hosting of the Museum after the caroling.

Know Your Officers

By Jim Annis

In the last issue of the *Conserver*, we learned about two of our five directors and their backgrounds. This time we will learn about two more directors. It's interesting to learn about the people who make our Society work and their reasons for being officers.

Jim Brown, a director for the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, was brought up in Dover-Foxcroft, attended local schools and graduated from Foxcroft Academy. Jim was born on October 6, 1951 in Dexter at the Plummer Memorial Hospital where his Grandfather, Edward Whalan, was a doctor.

Jim married Barbara O'Brien from Portland on July 13, 1974 and they have 2 children, Scott aged 22 and Eric aged 19. Scott is a Graphic Designer for Wright Express in Portland and Eric is a student at Saint Joseph's College in Standish, Maine.

After high school, Jim went off to college in 1970 and graduated in 1974 with a degree in English. His minor was in History. Immediately after college, Jim started teaching at Foxcroft Academy and has been employed there ever since. Involved in sports, Jim has been an assistant coach in football and softball. His favorite activity with sports is running the clock, or timer, in basketball, football and soccer.

Jim has always been a history buff. When the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society began its resurgence in 1995, he offered to help in getting it running at full speed. And with his help, it has been running at full speed. Jim's always at every meeting and "house sat" the museum last summer. Jim is also on the board of directors for the Pine Crest Development Commission. Pine Crest is a fully complimented business park on the Dexter road in Dover-Foxcroft. It's usually very difficult to find people to volunteer for town projects. But Jim is a willing volunteer for whatever needs to be done to keep "his town" vibrant.

Gilman Glover, one of the Society's directors, was born in Mayo Memorial Hospital on November 26, 1952. Gil is proud of the fact that the doctor bringing him into life was Dr. Stitham. Gilman and his wife, Peggy, live at 246 Pine Street in Dover-Foxcroft. They were married on August 17, 1975. Peggy is from Sangerville and spends her time as a housewife and is a home decorator. They have two children, Kevin Arnold, 21, and Leslie Ann, 17 years of age. Kevin is at Plymouth State College in New Hampshire and Leslie is a senior at Foxcroft Academy.

Gilman graduated from Foxcroft Academy in 1971 and attended Eastern Maine Technical College. He worked at Prouty Ford for a couple years and then went to work for Central Maine Power Company where he's been for 25 years.

Gilman explains that his name comes from a combination of names. His grandfather, Elmer Glover, married Julia Gilman, the daughter of A.W. Gilman who owned a farm on Outer Park Street many years ago. Today the farm is known as the Anderson Farm and Outer Park Street is now Anderson Road. A.W. Gilman created the first potato house for storing and keeping potatoes. The building can still be seen from the road.

Gilman says his interest in the Historical Society stems from the fact that his dad, Joe Gilman, was one of the original founders of the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society. Gilman works for the Society mainly in the background. He is constantly looking for new ways to promote the Society and keep it on a forward moving track. "I keep forgetting meeting dates," he says. Don't worry about it, Gil, you're always there when we need you.

Central Hall
by Louis Stevens From His Book
"Booming! Dover and Foxcroft from 1881-1892"
Written By Jim Annis

Central Hall was constructed during the winter of 1881-82. The formal dedication ceremonies and fair to celebrate the opening of the hall were held in March of 1882. During its more than a century of service to the community, it has been the site of such a variety of shows, dances, games, meetings, and so many other events, that it would be impossible to list them all. But some of them would be minstrels, touring stage theatricals, Kiwanis shows, graduations of Dover High and Foxcroft Academy, roller skating, basketball played by the Academy and various town teams such as the Rockets, dances and grand balls, hundreds of stage shows presented by FA students and other groups, an oyster stew supper honoring the FA football team after holding Bangor to a 0-0 tie back in 1908 and the special town meeting of 1922 when the voters of Dover finally approved the uniting of the two towns. Not bad for a building that only cost \$10,000 to construct!

Time wears on an old building and Cenral Hall is no exception. The unused auditorium on a winter's day is cold, forgotten, silent, and deperately in need of a new coat of fresco. Steps worn by the tread of thousands upon thousands creak loudly; the curtain with the Mediterranean scene is gone and the old basketball bleachers are no more.

Still, if you stand in one corner of the balcony and let your mind drift back in time, you can hear the roar of the basketball fans wedged like sadines into this hall, hear the three "Hurrahs" given Dr. Thompson when he gave the deed to the library to the town, hear the laughter and applause given the hundreds of actors, and hear the names of hundreds of graduates as they are presented their diplomas. This is only a minute fraction this superb old building has witnessed and heard in its century-plus of service.

If there is a date on your address label in red, it means your dues are ready and payable. If not, please wait until April 1, 2001 to pay your dues. The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society's annual dues are still \$3.00 per person per year. We are holding the line despite a U.S. Postal increase in Third Class Non-Profit mail rates. Every membership household will receive a copy of the *The Shiretown Conserver*, mailed four times each year. Any amount tendered above the \$3.00 membership is considered a donation and is federally tax deductible. Please accept our thanks!

Annual dues are \$3.00 payable April 1 of the current year to April 1 of the following year.

Dues \$ _____ Donation \$ _____ Total \$ _____

Please make checks payable to **Dover- Foxcroft Historical Society.**

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Please mail to: **Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, Inc.**
c/o Madelyn Betts
11 Harrison Avenue
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426

Big House, Little House, Backhouse, Barn

by Thomas C. Hubka

written by Jim Annis

I've been reading a fascinating book by Thomas C. Hubka about the building of various farms throughout the State of Maine. The construction of these farms and the reason for their style is very interesting. It goes to show that the Maine farmer probably had it all over farmers from other states in that the construction of his farm was far more practical than his contemporaries.

All the buildings were connected. Sometimes in a row and at other times in an ell shape. The concept was to provide cover by sheltering the farmer or farm worker from the elements known to be very adverse in the State of Maine as he or she traveled from the main house to the barn.

One might think that with the barn being very close to the house, the smells from the barn might be a problem. The direction of the wind was, indeed, a determining factor in the construction of the farmstead. The back of the buildings usually faced north with the front of the buildings facing the warm southern exposure. This kept the "dooryard" protected from the north winds and snow and the warm spring sun hastened the drying of the travel or work area.

The "big house" contained the living quarters of the farm family. The "little house" contained the kitchen and quarters for the help. The "back house" contained the shop and wood storage area and, you guessed it, the privy. And, last but not least, came the barn.

Mainers have long been known for their ingenuity and practicality when devising items for living. The Maine farmhouse is no exception. The next time you're out and about, take a long look at the local farm houses you pass by and say to yourself, "Big house, little house, back house, barn" and it'll all be there.

WARM, WINTER COVERLETS

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These handsome coverlets feature historic portraits in fiber of the Shiretown's most notable architecture including
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Woven in Foxcroft Academy colors red/maroon and cream

A coverlet in your home will boast of your hometown in a keepsake that will provide years of service and will become a family heirloom.

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Mayo Regional Hospital

By Jim Annis

Mayo Regional Hospital will be undergoing a major expansion starting next summer. The current hospital, or main building, was constructed in 1978. Basically, the emergency room will see individual rooms for the trauma area instead of the curtained off areas they now have. The pharmacy will be moved from the basement to the second floor in order to be close to the patient's rooms. Obstetrics will be enlarged to accommodate the mother's rooms, birthing rooms and a nurse's station.

Some eighty-four years ago, Dover-Foxcroft was struggling to provide care for those who were sick and injured. A hospital was desperately needed, but funding came very slowly. The following are excerpts from Lou Stevens book, *Dover-Foxcroft: A History*.

There was mention in the *Piscataquis Observer* that a public spirited citizen of Dover had offered a building on Hinds Hill to be used for the new county hospital. There was never any mention in later news reports on whether or not the hospital ever came to be. However, in the June 6, 1918 *Observer*, a short news item said, "**Private Hospital** - Mrs. Louise Clark has opened a private hospital in the Warren Eldridge house at the corner of Winter and Main Street in Foxcroft." The rates were announced in an ad on June 27: "CHARGES, Ward \$3/day, Private \$4/day, including board, care, with sterile dressing extra. Patients choose own doctor." But there was no further mention of this hospital either. Then on October 23, 1919, there appeared this notice: "New Hospital - Miss Helen Ham RN, will operate a private hospital at her parents on Spring Street, and will be used until a larger place is acquired." Whether the space was acquired or not we were not told.

Finally, in October of 1921, the Cary-Young hospital was quartered in the Fred Barrows home on the corner of Main and Green Streets in Foxcroft (note: later the home of Dr. L.J. Stitham). The "Misses Cary and Young (no first names given) made a six-month report of May of 1922 part of which said, "There had been 60 surgical patients of which 42 operations had been done by local physicians." Although many improvements were made to the Cary-Young hospital, a Mrs. T.I. Donnelly and a Mrs. Helen Croff felt there was a need for more services and so opened a small hospital on Pleasant Street in August of 1922. They are not mentioned again. The Cary-Young hospital, which became the Cary hospital in 1924, closed in 1928 after six years of business.

All the confusion, uncertainty, and open-and-close past of the various hospitals in the town was completely settled in the summer of 1935 thanks to the generosity of Col. Edward J. Mayo. The Col. died on February 22, 1935, at his home on West Main Street. In his will he not only left his fine home for a hospital for the town, but he also left funds totalling \$10,000 for free bed, or beds, and free surgical or medical treatment for worthy and needy patients living in town. The conversion of the home into a hospital proceeded so well that it was ready for an open house on January 26, 1936. The first patient at the hospital on January 27, 1936, was John Wiles, aged three, who had a throat operation. The first baby born in the hospital was Barry Esler on April 30, 1936.

A maternity wing was added December 9, 1949. In December of 1946, the Miosac Club of Dover-Foxcroft and the Junior Women's Club of Guilford started a campaign to raise \$30,000 to build a new maternity wing for the hospital. It would contain a delivery room, labor room, formula room, nursery, two four-bed wards, and several private rooms. It's interesting to note that the wing to "Old Mayo," as we employees call it, now houses the business offices of hospital.

Conceptualizing Old Mayo as the town's only hospital is easy as you walk the hallways admiring the woodwork and picturing the function of each room as you pass by. What a beautiful old building. What memories for those who were patients there and those who worked there.

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MESSAGE FROM MARY

Dear Members,

As we move into Winter, we are pleased to celebrate another year at the Historical Society. This year we have been graced by many fine programs alive with great entertainment. Next year promises to be as successful.

This year the Observer Museum was open on Saturdays from 1 - 4PM and staffed by many dedicated volunteers. Some took double duty. Lou Stevens hosted July 1st, Madelyn Betts hosted July 8th and 22nd, Eunice Mitchell and Dorothy Greenlaw hosted July 15th, Edie Hussey hosted July 29th and August 26th, Dorothy Greenlaw and Sue Annis hosted August 5th, Jim Brown hosted August 12th, Helen Kelly hosted August 19th and September 16th, and Norma Harris hosted September 9th. Perhaps next year we can find more volunteers to help keep our Museum open every scheduled weekend throughout the Summer.

I hope this edition of the *Conserver* finds you all in the best of spirits following the holidays. I'd like to take this time to wish you all the best for the upcoming millenium and to thank you for your help making the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society Museum one of which we can all be truely proud.

Mary