



Maine's First Ship

Newsletter



Spring 2018

Special points of interest:

- 2nd Annual lecture series
- Become a docent!
- Rigging on the ropes
- President's Message
- Annual Gala dinner
- Freight Shed upgrades
- Donate to the Farmers Market SNAP program
- Name a cannon!
- Marsha Conover retires

Newsletter produced
courtesy of the
Publicity
Committee:
Roger Barry, Lori Benson,
Allison Hepler



Second MFS lecture series highlights sailing, rigging, navigation, and indigenous place names

MFS's second annual lecture series on 17th century maritime and colonial history gets underway on March 22. The four presentations focus on shipbuilding, tides, Native American place names, and traditional rigging.

On Thursday, March 22 at 7pm, Rob Stevens, talks about one of his favorite projects, "Building a Viking Ship in Maine and Sailing in the Wake of Leif Ericsson." In 1996, Stevens and a crew of what he calls "joyful shipwrights" built a Viking knar at his boatyard on Hermit Island in Phippsburg. He and a group of men with varying levels of sailing knowledge sailed her from Greenland to Newfoundland to commemorate the 1000th

World. Stevens is *Virginia's* shipwright and has been building and repairing wooden boats for over thirty years. He's worked on ships as far afield as Los Angeles and Galveston, and as local as Bath.

Second in the se-



ries is MFS rigger, Jim Nelson, on Sunday April 8 at 2 pm, with a discussion of traditional rigging

tools. In "The System is Rugged!: The Art of Rigging in the Age of Sail," Nelson describes tools such as serving mallets and palms and fids and marlin spikes, which he says "are little known to the modern observer." In contrast, most would recognize tools employed in reconstructing *Virginia*. Saws, hammers, chisels, and planes may have become electrified in the past 400 years, but they are still essentially the same tool. Nelson also discusses how sails and rigging worked in a 17th century vessel and also provide hands-on demonstrations of some of the ancient techniques being used on *Virginia* today.

The third presentation will be Thursday, April 26 at 7 pm. Joe Hall, who teaches colonial, American Indian, and environmental history at Bates College, is currently researching the history
(continued on page 2)

President's Notes



We are working closely with the Coast Guard inspector to ensure *Virginia* will be certified to

carry passengers. Our volunteers have cut the sheer planks for the bow and have been faring the inside of the frames so that we can install the sheer clamps. Once the sheer clamps are installed we will start work on the hackmatack knee installations for the deck framing. Our goal for this year is to get started on acquiring an engine and sails. If you are interested in volunteering to work on the sails with Nat Wilson, rigging with Jim Nelson give, or being a docent give us a ring at the office, drop us an email, or just come to the Boat Shed on a Wednesday or Saturday

between 9AM and 3PM. You can also volunteer to work on the boat, of course.

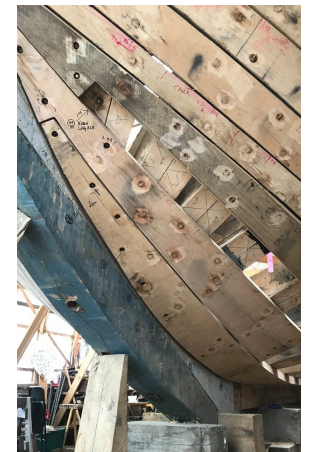
Bruce Plourde and crew have begun the restoration of the west wall soffits on the Freight Shed; and Dr. Dan, Jim Bunce and Tim Emerson have replaced some of the clapboards of the façade and added pressure treated base to cover the bottom of the façade on the west wall. When the weather improves we will start painting the west wall.

With many thanks to our development committee, our many friends, and supporters of Maine's First

Ship, we have exceeded our capital campaign goal of raising \$90,000 last year.

Even with a multitude of tasks to complete before we launch *Virginia*, we are still looking at a 2020 date.

Fair winds and full sails,
Orman



MFS spring lecture series offers a variety of topics . . . (from page 1)

of Wabanakis, Maine's indigenous peoples, and is particularly interested in the ways that Wabanakis continued to cultivate ties to their homeland even as colonial peoples sought to dispossess them of it. In his presentation, "What does Winnegance Mean? Wabanaki Place Names in Context," Hall speaks about the ways that Wabanaki place names offer some clues not only to how Wabanakis inhabited their homelands before colonists' arrival but also how they continued to inhabit those lands in the midst of colonization.

Last in the series is a talk on tides on Sunday May 6, at 2 pm. In "Tidal Predictions, Tidal Patterns, and Tidal Power: How the Ebbs and Flows Affect Your Life," MFS volunteer Jim Parmentier will review the fundamental principles of tidal generation and prediction, describe some of the effects of tidal patterns on biologi-

cal diversity, and discuss efforts currently underway to harness tidal power for electrical generation. Ocean tides are primarily caused by gravitational attractions between the earth and the moon. But the observed tide levels and current flows at any particular location depends on the interactions of ocean tides with local geographies, weather-related events, and celestial positioning.

Trained as a biologist and experienced as a coastal sailor from the Carolinas to Cobscook Bay, Parmentier describes how to recognize, predict and exploit tidal movements to best advantage.

Annual Gala Dinner speaker recounts re-enactment of 1775 Benedict Arnold expedition through Maine and Quebec

Join us for MFS's annual gala dinner and Silent Auction on Tuesday May 8 at J.R. Maxwell's in Bath, beginning at 5:30 pm. Featured speaker this year is writer and adventurer Hodding Carter,



site of where the original bateaux were constructed. Six weeks and several portages and carries later, the group crossed the St. Lawrence River and climbed the

Plains of Abraham to "capture" Quebec.

Tickets are available from the MFS office on Front Street (above Maxwell's), by telephone 443-4242, or by email mfs1@myfairpoint.net. Tickets are \$40 each or two for \$75. Ticket seekers might also purchase tickets by stopping by Virginia on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9 am to 3 pm.



who recently completed a six-week trip through Maine and Quebec that re-enacted Benedict Arnold's Revolutionary War 1775 expedition to attack Quebec City.

In September, Carter, his friend and MFS shipwright Rob Stevens, and other volunteers used the MFS dooryard to build a 24' bateau similar to what Arnold would have used. The small group of adventurers, including Carter and Stevens, left from the Pittston



Calendar of events

Thursday, March 22 at 7 pm
Lecture series:
"Building a Viking Ship in Maine"
Winter Street Center, Bath

Saturday, March 24 at 3 pm
MFS Annual Meeting
Freight Shed

Sunday, April 8 at 2 pm
Lecture series:
"The System is Rugged!"
Winter Street Center, Bath

Thursday, April 26 at 7 pm
Lecture series:
"What does Winnegance Mean?"
Winter Street Center, Bath

Wed., May 2 and Sat., May 5
Clean-up at the Freight Shed
Freight Shed

Sunday May 6 at 2 pm
Lecture series:
"Tidal Predictions, Tidal Patterns,
and Tidal Power"
Winter Street Center, Bath

Tuesday, May 8 at 6 pm
MFS Annual Gala Dinner
JR Maxwell's, Bath

Saturday, May 12 1-3 pm
Docent Training
Freight Shed

Monday, May 28, Memorial Day
Expanded Visitor Center hours
Freight Shed

News around the Freight Shed & Visitor Center

MFS holds Annual Meeting Mar. 24

Maine's First Ship's Annual Business Meeting is scheduled for Saturday March 24 at 3 pm in the Bath Freight Shed, followed by a look at *Virginia's* progress. She is nearly planked, and deck construction awaits. In addition to voting on the

officers — Orman Hines, President; Jeremy Blaiklock, Vice President; Dan Burchstead, Treasurer; and Allison Hepler, Secretary — members can expect to hear updates from the various MFS Committees. All are welcome. Only members can vote. Light refreshments will be served.



"New Year's" Party rescheduled

MFS is hosting its midsummer "New Year's Eve" party on Saturday, June 23 at the Freight Shed. Friends and invitees may remember that the



event on December 31 was cancelled due to frigid temperatures. We are hoping that June 23 will bring more suitable temperatures. Musical group the "Rites of Swing" will be back. 6-10 pm. Light hors d'oeuvres, cash bar, bonfire Admission \$20.

Docents needed to staff Visitor Center

Join other volunteers interested in talking to visitors about *Virginia* and Maine's First Ship. Docents are critical to the success of MFS. Greeting visitors from close by and from all over the world is exciting and fulfilling. Don't worry if you feel you don't know enough about the history and archeology, or the ship *Virginia*. There are plenty of materi-

als to answer any question. Come for a training, or for some a refresher, on Saturday May 12 at 1 pm at the Bath Freight Shed. You'll see additions to the exhibit and an update on progress of the ship *Virginia*. All are welcome! Spend part of your summer amidst the smell of freshly fashioned planks and the aura of the past all around you.

Spring clean up at the Freight Shed

Spring clean up — MFS is looking for volunteers to help get the Freight Shed back into its summer "attire." The Farmers Market will be moving outside after April 28. There's some shifting around to turn it back into MFS's rigging shed, meeting space, and Visitor Center. Come by if you can spare some time on Wednesday May 2 and Saturday May 5 to help us get ready for spring and summer at the Freight Shed.



Artwork by Anthony Muench

... and still more news

Farmers Market extends SNAP tokens

The Bath Farmers Market is extending its support of the SNAP market token program for a 4th year — and seeking community support to boost its efforts. Staffed by volunteers year-round, the program encourages customers who swipe credit or debit cards to donate to support the SNAP program. They could agree to donate funds by having their card swiped for \$1 (or any amount they choose) more than the token total, knowing that the extra dollars will support the program. They could also get a market tote bag by donating \$12. SNAP customers don't typically donate to the program, although some do.

Customers get their card (credit, debit, or SNAP) swiped by a volunteer and get tokens in return. They spend the tokens at the market. SNAP tokens are funded by the SNAP program. Credit or debit card swipes are charged to the customer's credit card account.

The program needs financial support because the Market has to pay

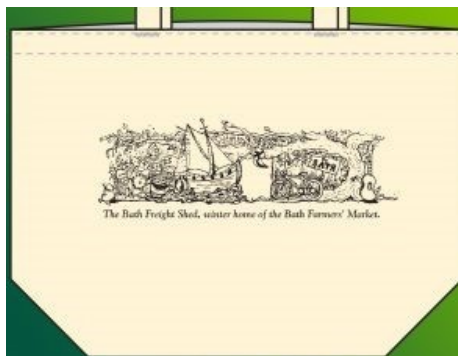
bank service charges and, explains Dan Sortwell, "because we give incentive tokens to SNAP customers in order to level the playing field with Walmart." If a SNAP customer swipes his or her card for \$30 worth of tokens (paid for by the SNAP program), he or she gets an extra \$15 worth of tokens. These extra tokens are paid for by the Farmers Market.



Last year, customers donated \$1,276 (\$320 from the farmers market and \$956 from shoppers). The Market also received

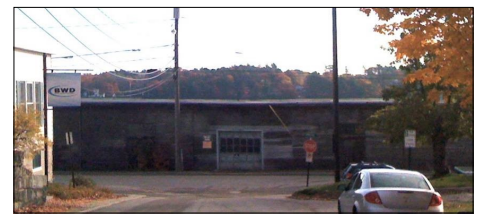
\$502 from donations for tote bags. According to Sortwell, "Bank service charges last year were \$1,395 and we gave \$959 worth of SNAP incentive tokens to SNAP customers."

Sortwell reports that as a result of positive publicity about the program, the Market has given away over 100 canvas bags, although they are still available.



Freight Shed gets a facelift

Visitors to the Freight Shed and Maine's First Ship have been following the reconstruction of not only the ship *Virginia*, but also its "sister" in rebuilding, as MFS volunteers take on upgrades to the historic Bath Freight Shed. As seen in the "before and after" photos below, the south side of the building has been re-clapboarded and painted, and the west side is a work in progress. Many thanks to Bruce Plourde and his crew, and all the volunteers making it happen.



Rigging for *Virginia* is on the ropes now! (and that's a good thing)

MFS Rigger Jim Nelson reports: At long last the blocks are done! For the past year or so, we've been working on the more than two hundred blocks (pulleys, for you landlubbers) that will provide the mechanical advantage when setting and trimming *Virginia's* sails. With that chore done, we are finally able to move onto the actual rigging of the ship. For now that means preparing the various gear to attach to the main yard, the largest and lowest

horizontal spar on the mainmast. This task involves preparing the "strops" or rope harnesses that will attach the blocks to the yard, and then fixing them in place. We hope to outfit each of the spars as they are made, so that each is ready to be hoisted into place soon after the ship hits the water. So far, we're making a good start.



ABOVE: Weaving a sword mat to serve as a cushion between the mainmast and the main yard. A number of such mats will be needed to keep things from smashing up other things.



LEFT: An eye splice is "wormed" and "parceled" and ready for a tight wrapping of twine called "service."

Find out more about *Virginia's* rigging — the tools and terms used — and also try them out yourself at Nelson's talk, "The System is Riggered!: The Art of Rigging in the Age of Sail," at the Winter Street Center on Sunday April 8 at 2 pm.

BELOW: Behind Nelson, see the rope up on my stretch ready for treatment.



BELOW: The rope is wormed, being parceled, and ready for service. (For a translation, stop by or come to the talk on April 8!).



Virginia - Armed and dangerous and ready to be named by you

Like virtually every sea-going vessel of the 17th Century, Virginia will be armed. In her case, those arms will be two "swivel guns" - small cannons that function like very big shot-guns - mounted on the rail. The two bronze guns were purchased through a generous grant from the Salem Van Every Foundation and Tomm Tomlinson. They are currently being cast by Campbell Cannon and Carriage Works of Florida, one of the country's premier cannon makers.

Now here's the part where you, dear reader, come in.

Historically guns such as these would have a name or inscription cast into the barrel. Tomm Tomlinson has named the first gun "Barbari Odio", Latin for "Hated by Barbarians." The name of the second gun is up for grabs. At this year's annual Maine's First Ship Dinner on May 8, we'll be auctioning off naming rights to the second gun. The winning bidder will have the honor of having his or her



name, motto or saying* permanently cast into one of the guns aboard Maine's First Ship, to be enjoyed for many decades to come.

*Because of the need to maintain historical authenticity, there are some stipulations as to the name. It must be a name or phrase that could feasibly have been engraved on a gun of 1607. We will be happy to work with the winner on this. Mottos are best rendered into Latin. If you would like Latin, but missed or skipped those classes in high school, a translation will be provided before any questioning.

Virginia nears completion of planking - ready to install beam clamp



The planking is nearly done. The planks we have left are quite green so we've cut them out oversize and letting them season before we hang them. Many of the volunteers have been fairing the inside of the frames so that we can hang the deck beam clamp.

Because of the length and time of construction some of the volunteers are going around inspecting the hull for minor shrinkage that needs to be addressed.

We also welcomed our youngest volunteer to date, 19-year old Matt Hommel from Alexandria, Virginia. Matt is in Maine to work on the *Providence* and has also joined MFS to work on *Virginia*.



Photos clockwise from upper right: Orman Hines contemplates which side of the fo'c'sle he wants his bunk, portside view of Virginia, Roger Barry working on a shim, Dana Leonard fairing the inside of the frame.





Maine's First Ship: Reconstructing the pinnacle Virginia

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Maine's First Ship
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 Ph: 207-443-4242
 Visit *Virginia* at
 27 Commercial Street
 (on the water side of the
 Bath Freight Shed)

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www.mfship.org



Special Thanks to Long-Time Business Partner, Big Barn Coffee

MFS says good-bye, thanks, and congratulations

By Marsha Conover I started as a volunteer in the office in 2006 after moving from Vermont where I had volunteered at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum on the canal boat *Lois McClure*. It seemed a natural fit. In 2007 I was hired part time as assistant under the Executive Director. In 2008 we lost our Executive Director and I became the Administrative Manager handling all office functions with an emphasis on memberships.



I've worked with 5 different Presidents and Treasurers and moved the office 5 times, beginning in a building on the Maine Maritime Museum property, to the Huse School, Bath Vocational Center, the Customs House and our current 122 Front St. location. Each of these properties offering either free office space or minimal rent to MFS.

I've been part of the Popham 400 anniversary celebration, building the shallow

Jane Stevens in a leaky freight shed, laying the keel, and what you now see a beautiful gathering space for the public, our information center and *Virginia* nearly fully planked.

All this has been accomplished by our dedicated volunteers as I was the only paid employee at MFS working a 10 hour week. I've come to know many of our supportive members and wonderful volunteers and look forward to spending many more years with these

great folks and *Virginia*.
Editor's Note: *Marsha is retiring after many years of service to MFS through some transitional times and we will miss her.*

Board member Eric Varney new Morse High School principal

MFS congratulates Eric Varney as the new principal for Morse High School. Board member since 2008, Eric moves to our Advisory Board.

