

Cherish the Volunteers

Where would we be without Falmouth's volunteers? Surely much the poorer. So many organizations run on volunteer power, ranging from town committees (not to mention the extra hours put in by the selectmen) to the hospital, the public schools, and myriad nonprofits that make our lives richer.

Neighborhood Falmouth depends upon volunteers to provide the services members are promised when they join the organization, all with the object of helping seniors remain in their own homes for as long as possible. The major call is for rides to doctors' and other appointments and for grocery shopping and other errands. For some members, this is a welcome chance to get out and about and to chat with their volunteer. Help with minor household repairs, such as a clogged drain, a squeaky screen door, or getting the summer furniture out of storage, and chores that might include getting up on a ladder to change a light bulb, reaching anything else high, or flipping a mattress, is also provided, as well assistance with computers and other electronic devices. A volunteer with the right skills can usually be found for any request that comes in to the Neighborhood Falmouth office.

Other often unsung volunteers in Falmouth include the 75 or so people who contribute to the efforts of Around the Table to offer free hot meals three days a week at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church on the village green, the Falmouth pond watchers who venture out in any weather to collect samples to help insure the health of the town's salt ponds, and 300 Committee volunteers who cut brush and generally keep paths clean and clear on the organization's conservation lands. There are so many more, including those who volunteer to coach in a variety of recreational programs for kids (often parents learning about a sport along with the young players), cookie bakers and other worker bees who help to support our churches, those who organize road races and walks, and others who devote many hours to Falmouth's historical societies, libraries, music programs, theaters, and other cultural organizations.

Volunteers will tell you that the activities they choose are their own reward, but the organizations they serve do like to recognize and honor them – which then sets off another round of volunteering. Neighborhood Falmouth (NF) recently invited its volunteer corps to a dinner at the president's home (this writer is the president and was the chief cook), where staging a sit-down dinner for 50 was a formidable task, but many helping hands made it work.

The principal volunteer for this event was, of course, my husband John Waterbury – the party was an excuse to clean out the unfinished wing of our house to accommodate tables for the event, so we started with many trips to the

dump, moving things upstairs and down, and organizing wiring so the party could be lit. Then he, along with NF Vice President Lou Larrey and Co-Executive Director Ken Bohr along with NF friends Rob Goldsborough, Laurie Raymond, and Keith von der Heydt moved rented tables and borrowed folding chairs into their places. Tablecloths, serving pieces, and quilts to adorn the bare walls were loaned by NF Treasurer Jackie Webster and board member Davien Gould as well as Shirley Wozena, Anne Edwards, Margaret McCormick, Terry McKee, and my sister-in-law Susan Watson of Irvington, NY.

Jackie Webster spent the afternoon before the June 1st party peeling shrimp and setting tables, and then she brought two big bowls of fruit for the dessert table. In the hours just before the event, NF Executive Directors Ken and Karin Bohr executed a bunch of last-minute preparations, Alison Robb and Dan Webb managed parking, NF board member Bobye Anderson arrived with two large salad plates, and NF Development Chair Janet Simons Folger brought hors d'oeuvres and then spent the evening in the kitchen with me. NF Volunteer Coordinator Laura Sonnichsen took photos, and board member Crissy Pingal contributed wine and also chocolates, which were beautifully packaged by Ben & Bill's Chocolate Emporium as individual gifts for the volunteers.

As though one event for June 2013 wasn't enough for Neighborhood Falmouth, a fund-raising wine tasting is being staged at an antique farmhouse in North Falmouth from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on June 28. It will have its own similar group of stalwart volunteers, and you can still get tickets for it by contacting the Neighborhood Falmouth Office at 508-564-7543 or director@neighborhoodfalmouth.org.