

Art commission wants say in mariners' memorial

The Provincetown Art Commission, an advisory town board, officially asked the selectmen last week to be included in the historical commission's plans to construct a memorial to the town's mariners.

The selectmen recently endorsed unanimously the historic commission's decision to install large stained glass panels in the arched window in the front of Town Hall. The commission is now soliciting designs for the stained glass window.

The stained glass idea was selected over proposals for various other kinds of memorials. Town Meeting voted to erect a memorial to the town's seafarers after the scalloper Patricia Marie sank a year ago. Local historians estimate that 1000 Provincetown mariners have died at sea over the last 350 years.

Five members of the art commission signed the letter, which asserted the legal authority of the art commission to advise the town on "any plans for a municipal structure before it shall be erected."

"Since no other committee is given jurisdiction in matters of aesthetics, it seems important that we fulfill our proper function and be consulted when matters of this kind arise," the letter said.

The January Special Town Meeting article authorized the historic commission sponsored by Selectman George Bryant to conduct a feasibility, site selection and cost study for a permanent memorial. The article made no mention of the art commission, although other bylaws provide for its participation in such matters.

Some objections have surfaced to the concept of installing stained glass windows. Critics worry that the windows will not conform with the building's architectural style or that stained glass windows imply too many religious connotations for a public building.

But the commission members' anxieties center on the question of jurisdiction more than on the actual design of the memorial. Sal Del Deo, art commission chairman, said Tuesday he attended one historical commission meeting long ago, but was never notified of ensuing meetings.

"We can work within their framework," he said, emphasizing he just wants to provide some guidance based on the committee's expertise.

Larry Richmond of the historic commission said Tuesday his board intends to consult with the art commission after narrowing the field to about a half-dozen designs. The historic commission, however, will reserve the right to make the final choice, Richmond said.

The historic commission is still soliciting local artists' designs for the stained glass memorial. Sketches can be submitted to Fred Klein, chairman, Provincetown Historical Commission.

The final selection will be made on Feb. 1. The committee will return only entries accompanied by a mailing packet and postage.



Advocate photo by Steven Schwadron
Arched window may be new stained glass memorial.

Roof half done

According to Acting Town Manager Ann Phelps, the Town Hall roof project is 50 percent completed, and the town clerk-of-the-works estimates that another month of good working days are needed to complete the project.

More than half of the slate work is completed. Phelps said that the dual role of Norman Tierney, who is representing the town as clerk-of-the-works and also acting as agent for the engineer, is working out successfully. She said that despite initial fears, it appears the job will be completed within the Town Meeting appropriation.

Seal comes out of the closet

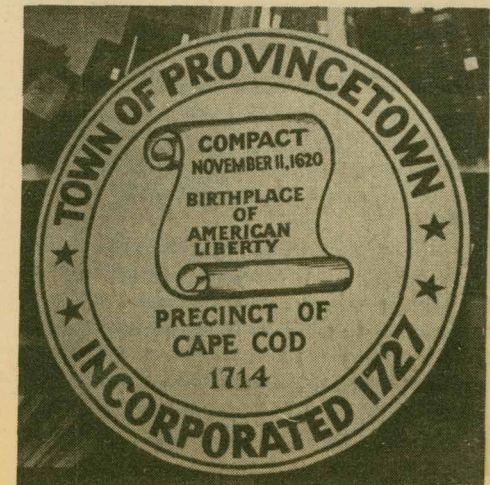
By Steven Schwadron

The official seal of Provincetown, nearly discarded two years ago and left to gather dust in a Town Hall closet for yet another year, has been reconditioned and will be returned to prominence again.

Once roof repairs to Town Hall are completed, the seal will again hang from beneath Town Hall's arched windows facing Commercial Street. Fred Klein, chairman of the historical commission, last week informally unveiled the seal, renovated by Diane Bodington, a local retired commercial artist who worked often with signs.

"It was pretty ragged and chipped, just generally shabby," she said.

Crews painting the Town Hall building two years ago took down the seal when



Official town seal

they found it in disrepair. "They were tempted to throw it out," Klein said.

The interest in the seal faded until Selectman Mary-Jo Avellar asked casually about it last summer. Presumably, it was still stored somewhere in the building. So Klein and others began scouring Town Hall from attic to basement for clues.

The seal was finally discovered in a closet in the town inspectors' office. "It was in deplorable shape," Klein said.

With the selectmen's endorsement, the historical commission then directed Bodington to recondition the seal for \$200. She removed three layers of old paint from the plywood seal, which is about three feet in diameter. The seal was originally black and white. It was then lettered in "imitation gold," later covered with "metallic gold."

Bodington mixed paints to reach a more neutral gold as a backdrop to black letters. Around the seal's perimeter is etched, "Town of Provincetown Incorporated 1727." At the center of the seal is depicted an opened scroll reading, "Compact, Nov. 11, 1620, Birthplace of American Liberty," referring to the Mayflower Compact signed in Provincetown Harbor. Finally, the seal says, "Precinct of Cape Cod, 1714."

Bodington took a tracing of the seal's design before sanding it to remove paint and rough edges.

Town officials and local historians do not know the age of either the design or the seal. Bodington guessed the wooden seal's age at 40 years. It is likely the design goes back 70 to 80 years, when the town's annual reports first displayed the seal design on the frontispieces.