



WINDSOR

NOW and THEN

**DEADLINE for
APRIL issue:
Friday,
MARCH 24**
Send news to:
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Windsor, Massachusetts

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MARCH 2023

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Windsor Now & Then Guidelines

This paper is a publication of Friends of Windsor, Inc., a nonprofit public organization dedicated to fostering communication and supporting town organizations, welcomes submissions from community groups and members supporting these goals.

This is a non-sectarian publication and not a forum for promoting any particular religious or political position. The articles included do not necessarily reflect the views of FOW. We reserve the right to edit and deny publication on the basis of length or content.

To enable us to accommodate as much information as possible, we request that basic news items be limited to about 150 words. For submission of longer feature articles related to appreciation of Windsor's unique assets (natural setting, people, and community), email

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Friends of Windsor

Send us your ideas and stories! We're working hard at branching out, featuring a wider variety of stories and voices from our little town. If you have an idea or would like to write a short article, we'd love to hear from you (our contact info is at left). We don't mind editing—so don't be shy about writing something.

We never tire of thanking the generous members of the greater Windsor community who donate to keep this newsletter going. We're so grateful for your support! --*Deb Balmuth*



Historical Commission Meeting March 13—All are Welcome

Have you ever wondered what's in that Windsor History Museum on Route 9 (the building that's in the process of getting a fresh coat of red paint)? Or thought, "I'd like to know more about the people who lived in Windsor in years past?"

Come to the Town Hall on Monday, March 13 at 6PM and learn about the work of the Windsor Historical Commission. While the museum building is under renovation, we're storing our paper archives upstairs in the Town Hall. We'll be happy to give you a quick tour. Plus, you'll get to look at the old stage curtain (see below).

We're welcoming new volunteers who can help in any capacity. You could help scan and organize our archives (and uncover some fascinating facts about our town's past!); or help out at our annual Fall Festival; pick up a paint brush, broom, or putty knife and lend a hand with the museum renovations; or just attend our irregular meetings and serve as secretary/treasurer (a low-effort job).

If you're interested in knowing more, come to the Town Hall, or contact Deb Balmuth at 413-684-4535.



Almost a century ago, the Windsor Hilltop Grange commissioned this painted curtain for the stage in what is now our town hall. Time, gravity, and water damage have taken a toll over the years...Among the items on the March 13 meeting agenda will be whether it is possible to preserve and/or restore it for continued display.

From the Town Clerk

Town Census: If you have not responded, please do. Your response qualifies Windsor for the Chapter 90 funds to maintain our roads.

Open Positions: Please consider serving our community in one of the following elected positions: Select Board, Tree Warden, Moderator, Finance Committee, Constable, Town Clerk, Cemetery Commission, Library Board of Trustees, and Planning Board. See Town Clerk for nomination papers. Deadline to obtain nomination papers is March 16.

Dog Licenses are due by March 31 and are good for 3 years. Spayed/Neutered \$15, Intact \$30 Late fee of \$10 after April 30.

Election Poll workers needed: No experience necessary, just a smiling face, attention to detail, and a willingness to learn. Contact me at windsortownclerk@gmail.com or (413) 684-3811 Ext 1. I look forward to hearing from you!

--Nancy Salvatore, Town Clerk

Windsor Library News

We have a nice selection of new adult fiction and nonfiction titles, as well as young adult (YA) and juvenile fiction and graphic novels, available. Please come in to browse and check out.

Our special exhibit from the Berkshire Mobile Museum on mammal adaptation is on view at the Town Office building until March 3.

The Children's Group is going well, meeting on Tuesdays 10:15am-11:15am. If you're interested in joining, please visit the library for more information.

--Katherine Richter, Librarian

BIRD TIP ** March is a great time to listen for Ruffed Grouses drumming in the woods. This is the sound of a courtship display by the male, who perches on a stump, or rock, and flaps his wings rapidly against his body in a powerful effort that sounds sort of like a lawnmower starting up! Here's a link to a video:
https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Ruffed_Grouse/sounds

Dineh Tah' Navajo Dancers Perform April 8 in Cummington

Acclaimed performing artists and ambassadors of the great Navajo Nation will give people a deep understanding of their rich cultural traditions through a performance of traditional songs and dances on April 8, 1-3PM at the Cummington Community House on Main Street in Cummington. This event is free, supported in part by the local cultural councils of Charlemont-Hawley, Plainfield and Cummington part of the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency and the Nolumbeka Project, Inc.



You missed it! This bright blue and black kids' drum set showed up in the Swap Shed last month and quickly disappeared...You never know what treasures will appear in the shed. *photo by Leslie Reed*



From the Green Committee

We encourage Windsor residents to send a letter to the state Department of Public Utilities (DPU) asking for action on our application to seek municipal aggregation—which most likely will decrease your electric bill. As you may recall, the Town first requested permission from the DPU to pursue municipal aggregation after the Annual Town Meeting in June 2021. In November 2022 the DPU held a public hearing about our application. The hearing was without incident, and now it's all in DPU hands. When we look at the experience of other towns, it could be up to 24 months before we get an answer from DPU. (A reminder that the “answer” —permission to pursue aggregation—only allows us to explore contract options.)

Municipal aggregation would allow Windsor to join with other towns in a contract with an electricity supplier to buy electricity “in bulk,” with Eversource remaining as the delivery company. Residents buying from a third-party supplier will not be enrolled in aggregation, and others can opt out initially or at any time.

There's a suggested letter template on the town website, <https://www.windsormass.com/>, on the Windsor facebook page, or in hard copies, available at the town offices. Adapt the letter as desired, then send and copy to the addresses in the template.

We are hopeful that this will light a fire under the DPU and expedite the Town's ability to pursue cost-saving measures for your electric bill! --Holly Higinbotham

Energy-Saving Tip

As part of your spring cleaning, clean your refrigerator's condenser coils. When dust and pet hair build up on the coils, the motor works harder and uses more electricity. Keeping the coils clean ensures that air can circulate freely.

More on the Town Master Plan Findings

The recently completed Master Plan identified that the biggest priorities for Windsor residents are the rural character of this town and our low taxes. In our survey, 91% of the 151 respondents said they most like our nature, wildlife and scenic beauty. 90% also like the peace and quiet of our community, and 82% said they like the small-town atmosphere. The survey also revealed that 72% of respondents are committed to preserving the rural character and natural beauty of the town. And, 60% want our taxes to remain low.

The Master Plan Steering Committee took these priorities into consideration as we also considered a demographic pattern that includes a growing number of young families with children as well as the fact that 45% of the town's population is aged 58 years and older. Balancing the needs of these two groups of people--while also preserving the town's sense of community, wish to remain rural, and keeping taxes low--was foremost in our minds as we developed our recommendations.

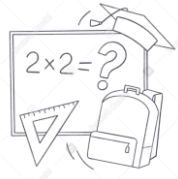
Check out the full Master Plan on the town website (<https://www.windsormass.com/requests-1/master-plan-for-windsor>) or in paper form available at the town offices.

Holly Higinbotham, Chair, Master Plan Steering Committee

Reflections from Mame Whelihan

Heather Hill Farm, Shaw Road

Still in 2nd Grade. When a note was to be sent to Miss Barrett, the third-grade teacher, I was sent to deliver it, as I was seated 1st row 1st seat, closest to the hallway. Over I went. There on the 3rd grade blackboard were the 3rd grade lessons for the day. Times Tables! I stood looking at that chalkboard and as fast as I could, backed out of that room, never to return again, or so I hoped. I decided then and there I would remain in 2nd grade forever. It was a much simpler life. Who knew 3×3 was 9...or was it 6? I would never know because I was never going to 3rd grade. I avoided that room for the rest of the year.



Want to Grow Red Peppers in Windsor?

It always feels like a race to the wire: slow-ripening peppers and tomatoes versus the march of time. Tim Crane explains how a hoop house can help.

Together, the earth and its relatively thin atmosphere act like a greenhouse. Solar radiation is converted into heat energy as it warms the earth, with most of that energy radiating back into space, maintaining a thermal equilibrium. That's why Carbon dioxide, or CO₂, is described as a greenhouse gas: the more CO₂ there is in the atmosphere, the more heat is trapped in the atmosphere. A greenhouse does the same thing with a transparent layer of glass or plastic acting as the heat trap.



Red gold from the hoop house. (Photo by Tim Crane)

If you're a Windsor gardener, or would like to be one, you might want to consider a hoop house, a low-cost form of a greenhouse using plastic as the heat-trapping layer. Our town, high in the Berkshire plateau, is colder and windier than the valley towns. Folks new to Windsor are often surprised that this modest elevation gain can thwart ambitions for a vegetable garden. This is where the greenhouse effect becomes your friend.

Before the hoop house, our hilltop garden might produce a few red tomatoes by September. A bell pepper turning red, never. Spinach in March? Laughable.

With the hoop house, we have become addicted to Sungold cherry tomatoes from mid-July to November, big fat heirlooms not far behind. In our first season, I was so excited about our bell peppers turning red in late July I was constantly sending beauty shots to friends and family.

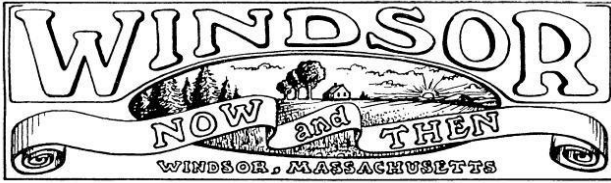
Hoop houses come as a kit and are usually installed by the homeowner. Measuring 16 by 24 feet, ours is the right size for a family and cost about \$2,500. Not a complicated job, but it does take two people. Pro tip: don't try to attach the plastic on a windy day.

The USDA office in Pittsfield can tell you if your project is eligible for a very substantial rebate.

-Tim Crane

Early spring spinach growing in the hoop house. (Photo by Tim Crane)

MARCH 2023



1890 Route 9, Suite 8 Windsor, MA 01270

COA Newsletter Enclosed

Colonel Budd's Fire Drills *by Jim Caffrey*

In the 1930's, Windsor did not have an organized fire department. So Colonel Arthur A. Budd, who over time acquired the many homesteads making up the Notchview Estate, made a plan to protect his home, Helenscourt, and property. He upgraded the original Helenscourt water system to the system that is still here today.

One of the buildings across the field from the Budd Center contains a 16-foot-deep cement cistern that captures groundwater flowing over the bedrock. The water in this cistern is then pumped up the hill to a cement tank that is reputed to hold 37,000 gallons of water. Budd hired a crew from the Albany area to pour this tank. The job required the men to work day and night mixing concrete to ensure a continuous pour to eliminate weak spots.

You can see this tank along reservoir road above the field. From there the water flowed back down a 4" cast-iron pipe to feed the mansion, the gate house and the north cottage which is now the Budd Center. It also



Pump in the Budd pump house (photo Jim Caffrey)

was connected to a series of fire hydrants and into the mansion, where there was a fire hose and reel located in the main hallway.

Warren Drew said that the Colonel would call for fire drills at random moments and expect the work crew to promptly hook up the hoses and shoot a stream of water over the buildings. He would time the effort and, if not satisfied, would make them do it again. The hoses and remaining hydrant are in a small building near the gate house. This system was used until the early 1990s until it was replaced with the current well.



Colonel Budd

There may not be anyone more familiar with Notchview than Jim Caffrey, who has overseen the reservation since 1988. We asked him to share stories of how earlier inhabitants of this sprawling property managed their environment. This is the first – watch for more over the next several issues. Caffrey thanks Bernie Drew, author of two books about Notchview ("A History of Notchview" and "The Colonel on Skis") for his extensive legwork researching the property.