



WINDSOR

NOW and THEN

**DEADLINE for
MAY issue:
Thursday,
April 27**
Send news to:
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com
(mark subject
line: WN&T)

Windsor, Massachusetts

Volume XXXIX, No. 4

www.friendsofwindSOR.com

APRIL 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

fowindsor@gmail.com.

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Friends of Windsor



With the snowbank finally receding outside my deck door, I'm going to take a chance and wish you all **HAPPY SPRING!** It's such an amazing time of year to live in Windsor, surrounded by nature. As I was cooking breakfast this morning, a flash of red illuminated by the morning sun caught my attention—a pileated woodpecker chipping away at a dead tree just outside my window. I had to turn off the stove and stop to watch this magnificent bird, tilting its head as it strategically aimed its beak to gouge an ever-deeper hole in the tree trunk. What are you spotting in your neck of the woods?

Many thanks to our donors this month—and to all of our readers! We've enclosed one of our handy envelopes in this issue if you'd like to add your support. --Deb Balmuth

You Never Know How Town Meeting Will Go!—Looking Back

Town Administrator Madeline Scully sent along this newspaper clipping about our 1946 Annual Town Meeting.

Windsor Town Hall Blazes Shortly After Town Meeting

WINDSOR – The town meeting here yesterday was not particularly hot but there was both heat and smoke in the Town Hall after the voters went home.

Fire was discovered sweeping through the kitchen of the venerable old building around 5 by a passing motorist who gave warning at the Estes General Store. Town officials who had gathered at the store for a post-meeting jawing hurried to the building and formed a bucket brigade extinguishing the blaze in short order. Though filled with smoke the main part of the hall was not damaged but the kitchen was practically ruined. Some mighty good church suppers have come out of that kitchen and it is hoped it will soon be repaired. Voters had approved the appointment of a committee to arrange for the purchase of fire fighting equipment at the meeting.

In the only contest for office William C. Estes was re-elected selectman for three years over Ralph Peck. Estes received 42 votes and Peck 34. William Drew and J. Frank Leslie, who at 85 is the oldest selectman in the state, are the other two members of the board.

The appropriations: Town officers, \$1250; schools, \$12,000; public welfare, \$2000; aid to dependent children, \$50; old age assistance, \$1500; soldiers relief, \$300; bridges, \$200; Chapter 90 roads, \$1600, \$500 to be used on the main road; Chapter 81 roads, \$1000; health department, \$400; library, \$40; cemeteries, \$100; interest on notes, \$25; reerve fund, \$700; snow removal, \$4000; incidentals, \$500; maintenance of Town Hall, \$250; insurance, \$550; gypsy moth control, \$211.48; total, \$26,575.48.

From the Town Clerk

I appreciate the opportunity I've had to serve as Interim Town Clerk this past year. I will be stepping down and am not running for election this term. I have enjoyed meeting and getting to know so many of you! This July will mark our 20th year anniversary as Windsor residents and we intend to stay for at least another 20. I will be looking to fill another role and look forward to serving our community in that capacity. Thank you for making my time at the Town Offices such a joy! --Nancy Salvatore, Town Clerk

Windsor Library News

The Library is sponsoring a virtual SAT strategy session on Tuesday, May 2 at 7Pm. To signup, email Carlos at carlos.aguilera@review.com.

We are working on our 2023 Community Summer Reading Program. Watch for details next month. --Katherine Richter, Librarian

Paper Copies of the Master Plan Available in Library

Have you read the Windsor Master Plan yet? If you're someone who gets blurry-eyed reading long documents on the screen, we have just placed several hard copies in the library that you can check out and read the "old-fashioned way"! (Or go to this link: <https://www.windsormass.com/requests-1/master-plan-for-windsor>.)

When you get to the end of the document, you'll see an extensive list of recommendations based on the conclusions drawn by the Master Plan Steering Committee. You'll see that many of these recommendations involve doing further research and investigation to determine the best course of action.

If any of the issues discussed are of particular interest to you—or in which you have particular expertise—please step forward and let it be known that you'd like to be involved! Feel free to contact me or our Town Administrator Madeline Scully who will get you tucked into the appropriate committee or workgroup.

Holly Higinbotham, Chair, Master Plan Steering Committee

Happenings at Tamarack Hollow Nature & Cultural Center, Windsor

To register email: full_circle_o@yahoo.com; visit www.tamarackhollow.com for more information.

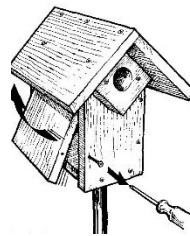
Every Monday: West African & Caribbean drum and song classes with Aimee Gelinis MEd at the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts in Pittsfield. 5:30pm beginner/6:30pm advanced. Registration required for all new students.

Sunday April 23rd 9am-1pm. Spring Boreal Forest Volunteer Trail Work Day at Tamarack Hollow. Join in clearing trails and prepping the site of the future nature center – come for some of time or the whole time and bring a friend! Snacks, water, and cider provided. Please bring your own gloves.

BIRD TIP * When you clean out your hairbrush or your pet's brush, you can put the hair or fur outside—maybe hang it on a branch or twig. Throughout the spring and early summer, birds will collect pieces to line their nests. Also, pieces of string, yarn, thread, and even those blue strands from old tarps will show up in some nests!

SPRING CLEANING FOR THE BIRDS

If you haven't already done so, clean out your bluebird houses so that the birds have clean, uncontaminated spaces in which to build their nests for this season. (Unless, of course, you've already noticed activity in the house—in which case they went ahead and started using it before you did the spring cleaning!) As you've probably observed, these nest boxes are attractive not only to Eastern Bluebirds but also Tree Sparrows, Black-capped Chickadees, House Wrens, and mice.



From the Green Committee

Last month, we asked you to consider sending a letter to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) requesting expedited action that would allow Windsor to seek municipal aggregation—which most likely will decrease your electric bill. Thanks to all who sent letters!

We have a couple of updates:

1. The news we have received from our consultant, Colonial Power, is that applications continue to move at a snail speed through the DPU and there's no indication that Windsor's status has been prioritized.
2. The potential good news is that Gov. Maura Healey has appointed three new commissioners to the DPU and they are all people with deep experience in energy issues and strong commitments to environmental justice. We on the Green Committee are hopeful that these new commissioners will take note of the ways in which municipal aggregation applications are getting stalled at DPU, and remove those obstacles.

So, we are asking you to send copies of the letter you already sent, or send letters now, to these three new commissioners. We have put a new template for this letter up on the town website, <https://www.windsormass.com/>, and will post it on Facebook as well, with the new commissioners' addresses and other relevant information. --Holly Higinbotham

Energy-Saving Tip

Opening your windows on the spring days when it's warmer out than in not only will save on heating costs, but it will allow your home to air out any built-up pollutants or humidity.

Reflections from Mame Whelihan

Heather Hill Farm, Shaw Road

Moving Up. My 5th grade teacher, Lillian Forsyth, was the most opinionated person I have ever known. She was anti-everything and adhered to every healthful way of living, in her opinion. Makeup was absolutely taboo, as was nail polish. I believed everything she said and did. She was germ-free and worked hard to stay that way. Back to nature was her unspoken mantra.

For Music class we sang very acceptable songs--never the wild, popular ones, only hymns or inspirational ones. Egad we were boring!

Then came 6th grade. Kate Moriarty was a swinger of a teacher, Boom! We converted. We sang, we polished our nails, there was lipstick on many faces. 6th grade! 5th was forgotten. 7th, Miss Curtis was yet to come and we were ready.



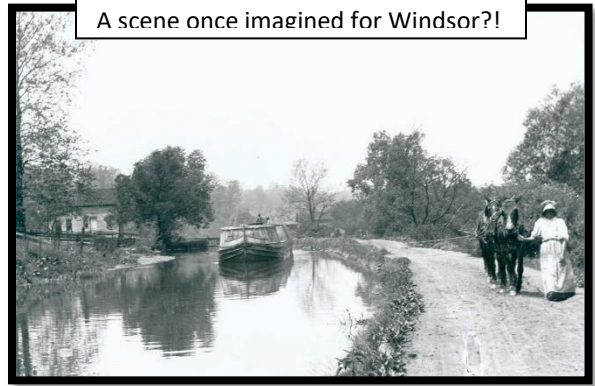
Scouting in the Hilltowns

Scouts have fun while learning and achieving. Our activities include hiking, camping, swimming, sleeping at the museum, racing model cars and rockets, science experiments, games, and many other high-energy projects.

Previously Cub Scout Pack 93 and BSA Troop 93, the current group includes scouts from Windsor, Cummington, and five other towns. New members (girls and boys, age 5 through 18) can start any time, including this spring. Parents of four-year-olds are encouraged to inquire and plan ahead. It works well to start when entering kindergarten, or sooner. A week at summer camp is available for kids who have completed fifth grade, and beyond.

For details contact: Stu Besnoff, 413-684-3950; stu.besnoff@gmail.com.

A scene once imagined for Windsor?!



A Windsor Idea That Didn't Fly – or Float

Windsor and neighboring hill towns were bypassed by several transportation opportunities over the years. Remoteness along with less-than-stellar waterpower opportunities limited the community to largely agrarian pursuits in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Not that ideas weren't broached.

A Massachusetts Canal Commission in 1826 made an extensive study of the potential for establishing a canal from Boston Harbor to the Connecticut River and from there to the Hudson River, thereby creating a link to the Erie Canal, which at only a year old was already becoming a major trade route from Albany to Buffalo at Lake Erie.

For the second leg of the scheme, one option considered was to use the North Branch of the Westfield River (rising in Savoy and Windsor) to connect with the Hoosac River in Adams and go from there to Troy.

“All of these branches ran in deep valleys over rocky beds and numerous cataracts to their confluence, when the lofty hills recede from the main river,” according to the report. “The summit level on the North Branch is in Savoy....” The engineers doubted “a sufficient quantity of water could be brought on to its summit level, to meet the consumption of a canal.”

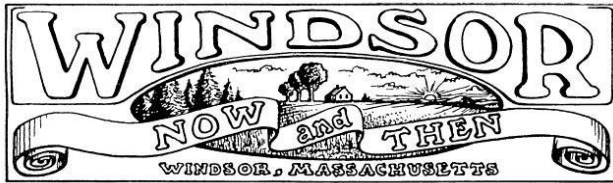
Thus, a Deerfield and Hoosac Rivers route was deemed preferable. But even this carried a prohibitive cost, so in the end, no canal was built. — *Bernard A. Drew*

Historical Commission Update

The Windsor Historical Commission is eager to have new volunteers and members join us. Please reach out to Deb Balmuth at 413-684-4535 if you're interested. Our next meeting will be **Wednesday, April 26 at 6PM** at the Town Hall. All residents are invited!

We're continuing work on restoration of the museum building. We're requesting additional support from the town to continue the exterior repairs and painting. We hope you'll attend the Annual Meeting and support this request for the FY 24 town budget. Other plans include restoring the windows throughout the building and holding open house days this summer. Help us document and preserve our town's history!

APRIL 2023



1890 Route 9, Suite 8

Windsor, MA 01270

Enclosed: * Transfer Station Permit Application
*** Donation Envelope**

Water Runs Downhill...Mostly

By Jim Caffrey

Nowadays, if you build a house in Windsor, you can drill a well, drop in an electric pump, and presto – running water. Of course that hasn't always been the case. So, how did they manage, back in the day?

Hillside spring system, as at the Estes home

This was the way to go, if you had the right situation: find a spring on the hillside above your house, construct a containment box (frequently out of concrete), and then run the water down to your house with a pipe. The box was needed to create a volume of water large enough to accommodate the mouth of the pipe – in the Estes' case, just about two feet square.

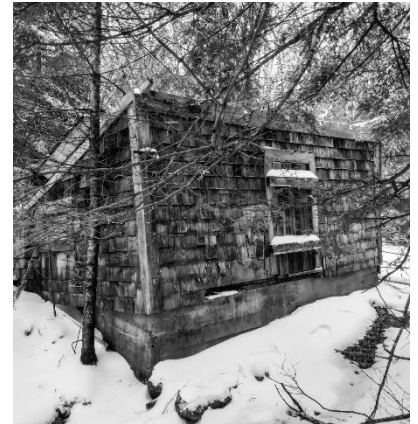
In the early days, the pipes were made from logs with the center bored out. Later they were metal (lead, iron, or copper) and finally plastic. The Estes' system starts at a spring below Quill Tree trail at Notchview. This pipe goes a distance under old route 9, beneath a field, then under new route 9 and finally to the house where it is stored in a large tank in the basement. The Estes had fresh water even when there was no power.

When I first started at Notchview I got the tractor stuck in a mud hole in the field above Route 9. I couldn't figure out why this was so wet until Raymond knocked on the door and told me he had to fix a leak in his line. After that, no problems.

Above Windsor Trail on the ridge that runs east from the top of Judges Hill, you can find two stone-lined shallow wells next to each other. My guess is these were built to provide water to the Butter Bates farm, which was on Bates Road downslope and to the north of the wells.

Spring house and pump

The Hume Farm had the most elaborate spring house, solidly built on a concrete foundation at least 8 feet by 10 feet. The building, which had walls, a door and a roof, only recently collapsed into the foundation. You'll have to search hard to find the remains, which are northwest of the old Hume farm location on Hume Road, quite a ways through the woods. Because the spring is not much higher than the house, it's most likely the family used a pump – hand-operated and later electric.



Thanks to Jim Caffrey, the long-time resident expert on the sprawling Notchview property, for sharing his stories and insights into how earlier residents managed their environment...in this case, bringing the water they needed into their homes and barns. Look for more over the next few issues! Caffrey thanks local historian Bernie Drew, who himself lived at Notchview as a youngster, for his extensive legwork researching the property.