



WINDSOR

NOW and THEN

DEADLINE for MAY issue:
Thursday, MAY 3
Send news to editor:
Deborah.balmuth@storey.com
(mark subject line: WN&T)

Windsor, Massachusetts

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This paper is a publication of Friends of Windsor, Inc., a nonprofit public organization dedicated to fostering communication and supporting town organizations, activities, and projects that cultivate community. We welcome 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-length articles related to appreciation of Windsor's unique assets—our natural setting, people, and community—contact deborah.balmuth@storey.com.

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Paper Talk

It's spring and Windsor is buzzing! —Deborah

NOTE ON MAY ISSUE: Due to my schedule, the May issue won't be available until about May 15. If you have events happening in early May, please send to fowindsor@gmail.com to get on the calendar. And for an up-to-date listing of happenings in town, don't forget to check our Community Calendar, online at friendsofwindSOR.com (under Windsor Now & Then), or our print version available at both stores and the town offices.

Do you have a story to tell? Expertise to share? A new project or business to promote? Get in touch with your submission, or ask for our help telling your story. Contact Susan Phillips at Susanphillips57@gmail.com.

FOW News

The snow is still knee-high in places, but it's going fast. Before long we'll be cheering on the crocuses, hauling out our rakes, and beginning to celebrate Windsor's pollinators in earnest.

Speaking of pollinators! . . . I'm thrilled to report that we've just been awarded a generous grant from the Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee to help us see our yearlong community pollinator initiative through. What excites me most about this project—aside from all the good we'll be doing for the health of Windsor's ecosystem—is how many community groups are getting involved, and the level of energy behind their involvement. As you read through this issue, I think you'll see what I mean. I hope you'll consider participating in some way, whether joining the Community Read, the Earth Day Clean-Up Party at our town park, building a bee hotel, or borrowing a pollinator book from the Windsor Free Library.

There will be even more opportunities as summer approaches, and we'd love to hear if you have any further ideas. While grant awards help us to get projects like this off the ground, your support is what fully sustains us in all that we do. So, on behalf of Windsor's pollinators and the growing spirit of this community, I thank you. If you haven't yet given and are inspired to do so, we would be most grateful. A donation envelope is included for your convenience.

Happy Spring!

Patty



NOW PLAYING AT THE WINDSOR TOWN HALL

APRIL 6 & 7, 7:30 PM

Black Comedy by Peter Shaffer

Lovesick and desperate, sculptor Brindsley Miller has embellished his apartment with furniture and objects d'arte "borrowed" from the absent antique collector next-door, hoping to impress his fiancée's pompous father and a wealthy art dealer. The fussy neighbor, Harold Gorrige, returns just as a blown fuse plunges the apartment into darkness and Brindsley is revealed. Unexpected guests, aging spinsters, errant phone cords, and other snares impede his frantic attempts to return the purloined items before light is restored.

Tickets are \$10; available at the door on a first come, first served basis.

To purchase in advance online, go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/black-comedy-tickets-44303360544>

Potato Fest a Great Success!

Thanks to everyone who came out to feast and support the Historical Commission! Special thanks to commission members Sandie Zink, Peter Menard, Heather Zanolli, Cathy Garcia, Aimee Gelinas, and Jack Sobon—our member and memorable speaker! Dan Kohn and Colin Harrington were much-appreciated helping hands. We made over \$800 to support the museum! —D. Balmuth

Stargazing April 7

The Aruna Hill Astronomy club will be returning to Windsor on Saturday, April 7 with their high-powered telescopes to offer tours of the night sky. Sponsored by the Trustees, the event takes place outside the Notchview visitors' center on Route 9, beginning at dusk and continuing until 9:30PM and is open to the public; free for Trustees members. The event is cancelled in the case of rain or cloud cover. --Colin Harrington, 684-4535

Senior/Community Luncheon

Wednesday April 11, 11:30-2 PM. Menu is stuffed baked potato with sugar free apple tart for dessert. All are invited. There is a \$5 charge at the door. Select Board candidates, Janet Sadlo and Marcel Mazeau, will speak and be available to answer any questions. *Come one, come all!*

Want to Join the Hilltown Harvest Food Cooperative?

The cooperative consists of a group of local families who place a monthly order with United Natural Foods (UNFI). Why? because we get better pricing as a group, can purchase the quality foods items we want in bulk, enjoy the ease of ordering on line...and love not having to drive further than the town hall! There is no minimum order and no commitment of time. Those of us in it never want to see it come to an end-- and it's been going strong for over 25 years!

If you are interested in joining, please consider coming to an introductory meeting, to be held at the Windsor Town Hall. Date and time will be set based on the availability of those who express interest. Please contact Jan Bradley if you would like to attend (see Windsor phone book). Also, please share this with local friends who might be interested.

Fuel Assistance Available

Fuel assistance help is available until April 30. Income qualification: 1 person \$35,000; 2 people \$54,000. To apply, visit: BCAC, 1531 East Street Pittsfield, Ma or Becket Senior Center (Becket Town Hall) April 10-10-11 am no appointment necessary; Hinsdale Senior Center (next to Police Station), April 12, 11am to 1 pm. For more information, call Windsor Outreach Barb at 684-3315 or BCAC.

REFLECTIONS FROM MAME WHELihan

Heather Hill Farm, Shaw Road

SAFE HAVEN. We have a resident bunny in our barn. He arrived with the onset of the first horrific storm of the season and took over a nice warm spot behind a bale of hay. He didn't mind when barn chores invaded his privacy, and there he stayed, toasty warm, safe and secure, happy as could be. He and the barn manager developed an instant rapport and got along nicely. Seems like she should have mentioned her new little boarder to her sometimes-barn helper, but she didn't.

Resident bunny did not like or even tolerate other people in his barn. On a dark and snowy night, a welcome helper arrived in time to assist with the barn chores. Unaware of the new resident, barn helper bent down behind bunny's bale and scooped up a large armful of hay to feed a waiting hungry horse—and scared Mr. Bunny half to death.

He leapt up right through the barn helper's arms, making her scream bloody murder, completely freaked out. As she screamed, she threw up her arms, loaded with hay, up over her head. Gravity persisted and a very full armful of hay cascaded straight down over her head. Bunny went one way, helper the other. Hungry horse was now impatiently calling loudly for his dinner.

Bunny did return to his warm spot when the barn lights were turned off, hungry horse got his dinner, the loose hay was swept up, and peace was restored. I guess all was forgiven, maybe, maybe not. Barn helper left, never to return . . .rather faint of heart I'd say.

Library Dedicates Children's Corner

Come one, come all! The Windsor Free Library is having an event to dedicate our new children's section.

The Mary Ann Baker Memorial Children's Corner will be celebrated with an ice cream social at the library on Sunday, April 29 at 2PM, hosted by Margaret Birchfield, Town Librarian.

Mary Ann Baker was a beloved teacher, writer, and Windsor resident for many years.

Ice cream with toppings! Special childrens' activities, too!

Celebrate Earth Day in Windsor April 22!

Show your love to Mother Earth on Earth Day, April 22 at the Windsor Town Park on Peru Road. Join the Parks and Rec Committee to help prepare for the pollinator garden we will plant later this spring. We are looking for a few more volunteers who can rake, prune trees, and prepare garden beds in the morning. It will be a fun day building community! Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Barbara at 860-965-6594.

To add to this great day, we are offering the bee hotel workshop again between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Kids of all ages are welcome to this free event. All supplies are included to build your very own bee hotel to take home. -- Barbara Connors

Community Read Focuses on Pollinators

What a great way to create common ground with your neighbors—with a book reading and discussion! Windsor is kicking off its first community read, sponsored by the Windsor Free Library, on April 20 and everyone is invited to participate.

Coordinating with our community's 2018 initiative to protect and promote pollinators, we will be reading *The Forgotten Pollinators* by Stephen Buchman and Gary Nabhan. This fascinating book explore the vital but little-appreciated relationship between plants and the animals they depend on for reproduction -- bees, beetles, butterflies, hummingbirds, moths, bats, and countless other animals, some widely recognized and other almost unknown.

Books will be available for borrowing at the Windsor Public Library starting April 20. The event will run until May 20. Please join us in reading this fascinating book with great conversations to follow! --Beth Webb

Sense of Community

"Where wise actions are the fruit of life, wise discourse is the pollination."—BRYANT H. MCGILL

FOCUS on Windsor's Pollinators

APRIL: Harbingers of Spring

The delicate blossoms of spring wildflowers are often the first splashes of color after a long winter. Some even push their blooms up through the snow. Spring wildflowers are a welcome sight for tickle bees and other early-emerging pollinators at a time when nectar and pollen sources can be scarce.

Tickle bees (*Andrena* spp.) and cellophane bees (*Colletes* spp.) have dark bodies with whitish hairs on their thorax and pale stripes on their abdomen. Male bees patrol flower patches, flying in zigzag patterns over the flowers and waiting for the arrival of females in order to pounce upon them to mate. Tickle bees and cellophane bees have one generation per growing season. Some are pollen specialists on certain plant species or groups of plants. Other bees that fly in the spring, such as mason bees (*Osmia* spp.) and some sweat bees (from several genera in the family Halictidae), collect pollen from a wide variety of spring wildflowers and other plants.

Spring wildflowers are also an important source of food for hungry queen bumble bees as they emerge after a long hibernation through the winter. After locating a suitable nest site, a bumble bee queen depends upon spring flowers for pollen and nectar to provision her nest and begin her colony's growth. Bluebells (*Mertensia* spp.), Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium* spp.), columbine (*Aquilegia* spp.), and wild geranium (*Geranium* spp.) are all highly attractive to bumble bees.

Bees aren't the only visitors to spring wildflowers. Flies, solitary wasps, beetles, and butterflies also frequent the flowers to sip nectar. The vegetation of some spring wildflowers can also be a food source for larval butterflies. Why not welcome spring to your garden by incorporating some of these beautiful wildflower varieties?

This excerpt was reprinted with permission from an article entitled Wildflowers Harbingers of Spring, found at the Xerces Society website.

ORCHARD OR MASON BEES by Heather Cupo

As Winter slowly turns to Spring many of us with small orchards and gardens start to think of the fruit we hope they will produce. We know flower pollination equals fruit production. While some of us tend to honeybees or live close enough to someone who does so; the weather here in the higher hills does not always favor honeybee participation when the flowers are open. But there are other bees that will help out.

By now, many gardeners have heard of Orchard or Mason bees. These small non-aggressive solitary bees are particularly adept at pollinating our food crops, especially in the early Spring when they will fly to gather pollen and nectar in cooler temperatures and on darker days. We can assist them in this work by offering them nesting sites, food and water as well as access to clay mud they need to build their nests.

The Windsor pollinator initiative is offering a workshop to make bee nest boxes on Earth Day during the Town Park Earth Day Clean-Up Party (at left). The Library will soon have a new section of books on loan about pollinators, and there will soon be some new landscape enhancements at the town park and around the Town Hall war memorial, all designed with pollinators in mind. If you're interested in taking part in this initiative, please contact Friends of Windsor. --*Heather Cupo, an avid gardener and landscape designer, is owner of Plant Euphoria in Windsor.*

HOST PLANTS, CATERPILLARS & BIRDS by Amy Pulley

Plants that are eaten by insects for food are referred to as their host plants. Butterflies and moths feed on the nectar of plants but in their caterpillar stage, they will eat leaves or stems or occasionally the flowers themselves. Caterpillars can't eat just any plant that they happen upon. The vast majority of plant-eating insects are plant specialists, meaning that they can feed only on a particular genus or family of plants. Monarchs eat Milkweeds, Pearl Crescents eat Asters, Fritillaries eat Violets, and the colorful caterpillars of the Brown-Hooded Owllet moth feed on Goldenrods. There are some generalist feeders too, but even they are limited in the types of plants they eat. The caterpillars of the beautiful Cecropia moth feed on a dozen woody plants including ash, cherry, sassafras, and willow.

Butterflies and moths lay their eggs on or near the plant that will feed their hungry larvae when they emerge from the eggs. If they don't succeed in finding their host plant, they will die. If we plant a diversity of host plant species in our gardens and yards, we will attract and support a diversity of butterflies and moths. Landscapes that feed a wide variety of caterpillars will provide food for more species of birds. Ninety five percent of our terrestrial bird species feed insects to their young, even if as adults they are seed eaters. For many bird species, most of those insects are caterpillars. It takes thousands of caterpillars to raise just one nest of baby birds. The host plants we add to our gardens attract birds and help feed their young.

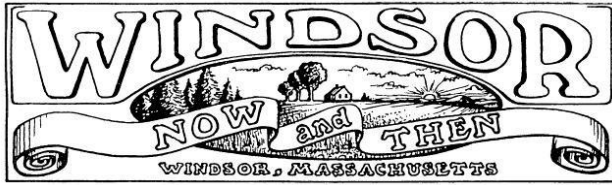
I get excited about host plants because they are such a clear illustration of how the choices we make about what we plant in our landscapes can support the richness of life around us.

--*Amy Pulley is a gardener and grower of pesticide-free native plants for Wing and a Prayer Pollinator Plant Nursery in Cummington, as well as a founding member of Western Mass Pollinator Networks.*

FIRST SIGHTINGS: Coltsfoot

Take a close look at the leaves and you'll see how this plant got its name. But the flowers are where all the action takes place, and long before the leaves emerge. Among the earliest wildflowers to appear, coltsfoot can most often be found pushing its bright yellow heads through the leafy duff along roadsides. They're usually mistaken for dandelions—and are closely related—but differ in important ways. Unlike a dandelion's smooth stem, coltsfoot's rugged stem is covered in hairy, red-tinged scales thought to both insulate and absorb solar heat, helping the plant survive harsh spring weather. Whereas dandelions have uniformly flat petals, coltsfoot has both flat and tubular ones to attract a wider variety of insects. The pollen and nectar in tubular flowers can only be accessed by insects with long tongues (for flat petals, shorter tongues). And the more tongues, the merrier!

As coltsfoot blooms, the down-turned flower heads lift like shining beacons to advertise their supply of nectar and pollen, which are hard to come by in April. Once pollinated, the flower head turns back toward the ground to protect the developing seeds. Coltsfoot leaves have long been used as a remedy for throat irritation and coughs, among other ailments. Its lovely fuzzy seed-heads—a little whiter and less silvery-ghostly than a dandelion's—are used by goldfinches to line their nests, and apparently by some folks in Scotland, who favor it as a filler for their pillows and mattresses. --*Patty Crane*



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DONATION ENVELOPE ENCLOSED

GROWING UP IN WINDSOR IN THE 1950'S *was a hazardous undertaking, at least if you did it in style like Peter Utz! What follows is a sampling of Peter's memories. More to come in future issues and online...--Susan Phillips*

Icicapades: The year was 1954 and my mother and step-father, Olive and George Volsky, had recently built a house at the top of Windsor Hill next to John Boyle's bar. I was about 9 years old, and Jimmy Boyle became my next-door playmate.

The hill between the cemetery and Route 9 had an open steep place that bottomed in a swampy area at the corner of Routes 8A and 9. Although Jimmy and I didn't play much with Ken Estes and Johnny Boyle very much, we did join together for the smash-your-fingers sled run. Ken had a home-built sled that sat up high on four runners, the two front ones steerable. We would sit four in a row, hang on for dear life, and start down the hill. It felt like we hit 40 mph racing downhill and when we reached the bottom, we hit the icy surface of the frozen swamp and had to turn lest we careened onto Route 9. That's where we invariably tipped over and squashed our fingers between the ice and the sled we so tightly gripped.

Look, I Can Fly: Further down the road was a large tree with a long, low horizontal limb, maybe 20 feet long. One of us would crawl out to where it split into two smaller branches, making a seat. Two others would pull the branch down to the ground and then let go, firing the passenger into the air. That was great fun; we could do it for hours.

Proof that Peter survived to 8th grade – back row Reed Fuller, Peter Utz, John Hersey; front row Marilyn Mattis, Louise Fuller, Marilyn Peck, Joanna Mattis.

Windsor Science Fair: One Christmas I had gotten a chemistry set so I had saltpeter (potassium nitrate), and sulfur. I had read that all we needed to add to make gunpowder was carbon, so we made some from burned paper. We mixed everything together, but it wouldn't explode. It didn't even burn.

So we got some shotgun shells, cut them open, and removed the gunpowder. Call it "gunpowder helper" if you will...We found a glass tube and started filling it with gunpowder. We put in some match heads and some toy pistol caps and a few whole 22-caliber shells.

We went outside and stuck the tube in a snowbank. Jimmy set fire to the end -- a jet of fire came out of the tube. No explosion. So Jimmy ran over and fit his mittened hand over the tube. Naturally it burned a hole in his mitten. Just then the three 22-caliber shells we had put into the tube for good measure fired off and blew a tiny hole in his pants. No harm done but we learned a lesson: Wear armor when you mess with explosives.

