



WINDSOR

NOW and THEN

**DEADLINE for
SEPTEMBER
issue:
Friday,
August 25**

Send news to:
fowindsor@gmail.com
com

Windsor, Massachusetts

Volume XXXIX, No. 7

www.friendsofwindsor.com

JULY/AUGUST 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.

FRIENDS OF WINDSOR INC. BOARD MEMBERS

Patty Crane, president; Julia Allan, director; Deborah Balmuth, co-editor; Dominique Frink, director; Val Kohn, director; Terra Missildine, director; Susan Phillips, co-editor; Leslie Reed, treasurer.

Friends of Windsor Notes

Happy Summer! With this joint July/August issue, we're signing off for a bit of vacation and time to enjoy this amazing season of rich natural and cultural happenings in the Berkshires. Wishing you a wonderful summer. We'll be back in September and look forward to sharing more news and appreciation of life in Windsor.

To help you add your support to our volunteer community-building efforts, we've included a little white envelope in this issue. Thank you for your support! --Deb Balmuth



Summer Fun Alert! July 29 at the Town Park

Friends of Windsor and Windsor Parks and Recreation are teaming up for an afternoon of crafty, sporty, musical fun for all ages on July 29th at the Windsor Town Park, from 2 to 5 p.m. Let's gather to celebrate and experience the wonderful community gathering place the park is becoming, with space and facilities for active play, music, family picnics and barbecues, and more.

We're especially looking forward to seeing what comes from the creative minds and colorful markers at the Phone Book Art table.

Friends of Windsor will be collecting this artwork from our young residents to scan and include as a gallery in our 2024 Phone Directory. The priceless originals will be returned at a later date.

Then there's the important community task of naming the beautiful young maple tree that Friends of Windsor has planted for future years of shade and foliage near the playground. Everyone will be invited to submit their suggested names, and we'll hold a drawing towards the end of the afternoon to determine the winner. So think carefully! Maple trees live longer than we do, with luck, so it's a name that will be around for some time.



Your Name Here: We'll be collecting your suggestions for names for this lovely young maple recently planted at the Town Park.

SEE THE ENCLOSED FLYER for a more detailed schedule. We hope to see you there!

Upcoming Events with Tamarack Hollow Nature & Cultural Center, Windsor

To register for any of these events email: aimee@gaiaroots.com. Visit www.tamarackhollownatureandculturalcenter.org for more info.

Saturday, July 8: 8:30am-11am “Learn About Ferns” at Tamarack Hollow with Naturalist & Director Aimee Gelinas M.Ed. Learn tips on how to identify over 12 species of woodland ferns on this easy walk. \$20pp.

Saturday, August 12, 8:30am-11am Boreal Spruce-Fir Forest Flower, Plant, Tree & Wild Edibles Hike at Tamarack Hollow. Learn about the unique fauna and flora of high elevation forests and fields. \$20pp.

At Notchview: Tuesday August 1, 7-9pm Full “Sturgeon” Moon Hike with Naturalist Aimee Gelinas. Learn about the unique fauna and flora of high elevation forest and fields then watch the full moon rise to east over Sawmill Field. Register & fee info www.thetrustees.org

Ongoing: EVERY MONDAY West African & Caribbean drum and song classes with Aimee Gelinas M.ED at the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts, Pittsfield and in the summer on select nights, the Windsor Town Park, Windsor MA. 5:30pm beginner / 6:30pm advanced. Registration REQUIRED for all new students. Class cost: \$10 per class/per person. Drum rental fee \$5.

Energy Tip

Given the temperatures so far this summer, it seems unlikely that you’re using your air conditioning much, but it will get hot and you may very well turn it on! According to the Department of Energy, setting your thermostat at 78 degrees in the summer can save you up to 10% in energy costs each year. If 78 degrees is too warm for you, you can adjust it a bit lower to be comfortable. Just remember that for every degree you raise your thermostat above 72 degrees, you save up to 3% of your cooling expenses.

From the Green Committee

The numbers are in!

We measured the performance of the Town Office net-metered photovoltaic system (the solar panels behind the building) on its anniversary, June 18, and found that in its first full year, the array generated 95 percent of the building’s electrical load: 29,744 kilowatt-hours out of the total usage of 31,394 KWH. This includes heating the building in winter, cooling it in summer, and all other electrical uses such as lightbulbs, computers, charging devices, etc. When the solar array was designed, it was not anticipated that the Air Source Heat Pumps would be used to cool the building, since previously there was no mechanical cooling.

You may ask, “What does this mean in terms of cost?” During the spring and summer months, the PV system produced more electricity than needed in the Town Office for that time. Those monthly bills show a credit-- \$298 was credited to our account for July 2022.

During this past winter there was a large increase in the cost per KWH, meaning that the credit that was built up during the sunny months did not pay for as much electricity as it would have if the rates remained the same. The MassEnergyInsight system, used to track energy in municipal buildings, shows that we paid \$3,055 for 11 months of the fiscal year. We expect the June 2023 reading will be a credit, which would reduce our FY23 expenditure for electricity for the Town Office to about \$2850. Prior to the 20215 installation of the PV system, the annual energy cost for the Town Office was \$11,937 (\$2,398 electricity + \$9539 oil). It is important to remember that there energy costs have increased since 2015, and we began cooling with the heat pumps in 2019. Weatherization helped reduce the energy cost to \$7,688 for FY16; and \$5247 for FY17.

—Holly Higinbotham

Summer Happenings at the Windsor Library

Tuesdays: Story Time and Crafts, July 11-August 8 at 10:15AM. Contact Wendy Provencher at wprovencher@cbrsd.org to register.

Wednesdays: Make Art, July 5-August 9, 10AM – 1PM. For the first project we will be making a journal.

Thursdays: Berkshire Atheneum GSK STEM Program, July 5-August 3, 11AM-12noon.

Saturdays: Story Time with Windsor Residents, July 8-August 12, 11AM-12noon.

The library’s “Summer Reading 2023: Find Your Voice” program has begun. Stop by the library to pick up your Summer Reading Bag, Boston Bruins Poster, and Bruins’ Favorite Books List.

Attention Chess and Checkers Players

Friends of Windsor is delighted that the chess and checkers table and seats that we installed at Windsor’s Town Park last year are being used. We just gave them a little upgrade by adding playing pieces for the games. (We noticed that some players were resorting to collecting stones to play.)



You’ll find a black box under the table, secured by a cable. To access the game pieces, lift the left side of the box lid. The pieces are sorted by game and player in zip-lock bags. Enjoy your games and, when done, please return the pieces to their bags and box, and close the lid securely to keep everything dry for the next players. —Leslie Reed

Reflections from Mame Whelihan

Heather Hill Farm, Shaw Road

Resident Squatter. We have a resident Opossum who has taken up squatters rights in our nice warm basement. We named him Opie. He was quite welcome until he overstayed his welcome. A primary cause of possum deaths in captivity is obesity. He's pushing his luck. He spent most of the winter stretched out, eating the cat food, and bathing in the big water container. Then he would stretch out on the flexible heating ducts and snooze. He became a chubby fellow. So chubby that he collapsed the flexible ducts, causing a tear. Now he has a hammock and when the heat is on, it blows warm air over his recumbent body.

With summer on the way, we hope our little fat friend will be, as well. Time to replace flimsy ductwork with robust material to be ready for possum spa next winter.

Nature Note: Nesting Neighbors

We shared our deck with two nesting families this June. The chipping sparrows build a tight, delicate nest in the hanging planter right outside our kitchen door, where they laid three tiny blue eggs. They let us know that our deck was now their territory, issuing sharp, continuous strains of *chip-chip-chip* whenever we ventured out. The incubation period was successful and one fine June day the three fledglings took off, leaving us to eat our deck meals in peace!

Meanwhile, in the nearby rhododendron bush, a pair of robins constructed a much larger and more rustic nest, right at eye level for us. We watched as four beaks emerged, pecking up higher and higher each day, until it was clear that nest was getting uncomfortably crowded! The daily downpours didn't seem to stop those new robins from taking to the skies. After one particular rainy night, I went out to check on their progress, only to find myself peering into an empty nest. *-Deb Balmuth*

Bird Tips for July & August (from Holly Higinbotham)

July is a great time of year to watch "flying lessons." These are family groups of birds in which the young are "practicing" their flying while the adults fly with them and –presumably—offer pointers. Ravens are known to do this, and, I suspect, Broad-winged Hawks also do it (listen for their high-pitched cry above, and look up!). Both nest in our town and are present near your home!

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In the last two weeks of **August**, watch the skies at dusk for migrating Common Nighthawks. These birds move north after their breeding season, and we get to see them during this very brief window. They are larger than swallows but move like swallows as they "hawk" insects while flying in a zig-zaggy pattern, with the white wing patches quite visible to the observer.

Windsor Library Haiku Club News

The Writing Summer Haiku event on Saturday July 1st was a success, with Katherine, her daughter, Lilly, me, and library volunteer Kurt attending. We expected more people but our little group really enjoyed ourselves and hope that others will join us next time. We learned a lot about haiku, especially how easy and how much fun it is to write and then we used watercolor to decorate the short poems to make a "haiga."

Some people may think haiku is difficult, unfamiliar, and uninteresting, but we can attest it is just the opposite. Haiku are simple, easy, and fun. Haiku parties bring us together where the idea is to talk, laugh, and let the little poems emerge naturally, like a summer breeze. Our haiku/haiga (illustrated haiku) are on display at the Windsor Free Library. Take a look and see how great it is and stay tuned for the next date we will be meeting. ALL ARE WELCOME! This event is open to kids of all ages and adults. *-Colin Harrington, WN&T Haiku Club Correspondent*

Upcoming Events Sponsored by the Windsor Cultural Council

Saturday, August 19 at 1 PM in Windsor Town Hall:

Fabulous Tales: Awarding-winning singers and storyteller Mary Jo Maichack performs stories and folktales adapted from cultures and traditions around the world in this program especially selected for adult listeners. Folklore, myths, and urban legends!

Mondays, August 7, 14, 21 & 28 at 7PM: **Concerts at 7** series, FREE, in the Plainfield, MA Congregational Church, featuring outstanding classical musicians, including Cellist Soo Bae & pianist Mia Chung (8/7); the Neave Trio (8/14); The Borromeo String Quartet (8/21); and The Parker String Quartet (8/28). For complete program, visit plainfieldconcertsat7.org

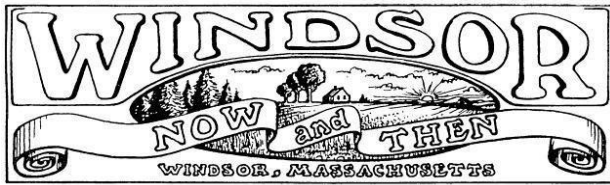
Looking Ahead (and Up Above!)

Star Gazing: Saturday, September 16 (weather permitting) join Ed Faits of Arunah Hill astronomy club at the Town Park for an evening of star gazing as well as a bonfire. Rain date is September 23. Sponsored by Friends of Windsor.



Send us your stories, nature sightings, book notes, and other news you have to share with the Windsor community. Email: fowindsor@gmail.com

JULY/AUGUST 2023



1890 Route 9, Suite 8

Windsor, MA 01270

Enclosed: Games & Crafts at the Park Schedule!
COA Newsletter
Donation Envelope

The Wasp Laboratory in Windsor Bush

An excerpt adapted from **Bernard A. Drew's** latest, "**Plowing Windsor's Lesser-Known History.**" Drew, who grew up on Notchview Reservation here in Windsor, has written a number of books about the town's history.

One of Windsor's more curious residents was Albro T. Gaul, who lived in Windsor Bush from 1952 to 1956.

Gaul, who made a lifetime study of insects, housed a test colony of wasps in his home here, "in a laboratory, near a permanently opened window, but away from direct sunlight. . . . The location of the laboratory in Windsor, Mass., is of such altitude and topography that it lies in the path of many local thunderstorms. Advantage was taken of this fact to record data involving wasp flights in relation to meteorological changes." (From "*The Flight of Vespine Wasps in Relation to Stormy Weather,*" *Journal of the New York Entomological Society*, March 1952.)

He discovered that whenever it began to rain, "the wasps crowded homeward. Outward flights stopped upon the advent of rain at the site of the nest."

Gaul's interest in insects culminated in the 1953 publication of the book *The Wonderful World of Insects*, in which he speculates that, "It will be a cockroach . . . the sullen, homely and not always

fastidious cockroach who will waggle his jaunty antennae as he steps lightly over the body of the last human."

His other books included *The Wonderful World of the Seashore*, *The Wonderful World of Space*, and *The Picture Book of Insects*. He also made an audio recording,

The Sounds of Insects, which he narrated. (You can find all 40+minutes of this on YouTube at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzdUjCGLtNA>.)



Nest of the *Dolichovespula arenaria*, the species studied by Albro Gaul in his Windsor home.

Drew's book is available for sale at Friendly Fred's or from Bernard Drew by mail (send a \$15 check to Bernard A. Drew, 24 Gilmore Ave., Great Barrington, MA 01230-1438).