

# WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

Volume 1 Issue 1

July - August 2003

*Something New For Our Community ...*

## Welcome to Windham's Newsletter

The editors are delighted to introduce Windham News & Notes to all Windham home-owners and renters.

Many Vermont towns sponsor newsletters to facilitate local communication, strengthen sense of community, and publicize what the town has to offer. Tiny towns have few public meeting places, businesses and active participants. They tend to be spread out, making folks more isolated than in a village setting. Windham is such a town. Groups and friendships form around schools, churches, proximity, occupations, family ties, etc. We hope that this newsletter will serve as an additional linkage for people to *connect* and *share* — ideas, talents, resources and friendships.

Without a post office or general store to serve as meeting place, we thought it would be a good idea to reach out. Our goal is to offer something for everyone in town, including those who have been relatively uninvolved to date. This includes non-resident homeowners, a group we have had little chance to meet. We are convinced that greater participation in our community here in Windham will enrich us all.



"Welcome to Windham" ... thanks to local artist Donna Koutrakos for permission to use this sign as our logo

We plan to publish bimonthly at first, perhaps increasing to monthly once we get funding, volunteers and interest. Let us hear from you, with letters, articles and subscription requests.

- The Editors

### Look Inside for:

- Subscription Details
- Community Calendar
- Free Classified Ad Info
- Coming Attractions
- And Lots More!

## Our Mission and Means

We hope you find this newsletter informative and interesting, and that you will become part of it. Right now, we need to rely on donations, subscriptions and advertising to pay the bills. We hope to apply for a grant, but in the mean time, we need subscribers to keep this going beyond one issue. Donations are also gratefully accepted.

Our Editorial Policies are as follows: We will always clear information relating to specific people or events with the relevant people. We will publish selected Letters to the Editor, but they must be signed. We retain the right to edit material submitted to fit the space we have available. And lastly, we are and shall remain an independent, non-

partisan, objective newsletter, not aligned with any particular group or organization.

Our goal is simple: *To inform and involve every corner of the Windham Community.*

Please let us hear from you! Subscription details are inside. Next issue will be sent in August, (to subscribers only).



## From the Lister's Office — Learn About the Listing Process ... And Consider Joining Our Team

The Listers have been busy completing the update of the Town of Windham Grand List, as they do each year at this time.

Funny name — Lister. It is a carryover from the days when taxes were collected on the basis of the number of cows, sheep, horses, etc. that a person owned. Today's Listers are required by law to determine the fair market value of land and buildings. The state watches these dealings closely, and if actual selling prices exceed certain parameters, the State will order a reassessment of a town.

All properties must be valued by April 1st every year. Notification of changes in value are sent to the homeowner, who then has the opportunity to grieve the valuation. Individuals must present comparisons or other data to prove that the valuation is in error.

Following the completion of the Grand List, the availability of the municipal budget and the State School Tax assessment, the Town is able to set the Tax Rate on or about July 1. Tax bills are sent on or around August 1 for collection by November 1. After this date, a penalty of 8% is added with interest.

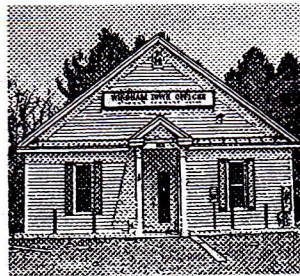
Obviously, the role of Lister is not extremely popular, but is of utmost importance to the Town and its property owners. It is critical that we continue to have a staff qualified to conduct this endeavor. One day soon, the Listers we have now will need to step down, so we need to groom the next generation for this important calling. We therefore solicit willing candidates to visit with us to entertain the possibility of becoming involved with this office. Just call the Town Office and we will get back to you.

-Ernest Friedli

## School News — Class of 2003

Bradley Dutton has graduated from Leland & Gray. Bradley will be leaving Windham to join the Navy in August. And Windham Elementary celebrated the graduation of Anton Pike and Tess Scott on June 16.

Congratulations and best wishes to all our graduates and their families! We wish them all well in their future endeavors ...



### Town Office Hours:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

10 AM – 3 PM

Carol Merritt, Town Clerk

Phone 802.874.4211

*Copies of the 2002 Town Report are still available, if you'd like one, feel free to stop by and pick one up*

## Windham Summer Day Camp

It's almost time for the Windham Day Camp! We will be doing lots of singing, playing games, cooking, building, swimming and making everything from jewelry and treasure boxes to castles and forts. Tuition is \$10 a week, but anyone should feel free to pay less, or not at all. If you can afford more, feel free to pay more; but no one should stay at home because of lack of funds or a ride. Camp will be run at the Windham Congregational Church/ Meeting House from June 30th–July 21st,

9AM to 1PM Monday–Thursday; and till 12:30 on Friday. Kids are welcome to attend for a day, a week, or the entire 15 days. To register, or to obtain more information, please call Kathy Campbell, camp director, at 802.875.3504. The next issue will include a report on how the camp did this season, plus a note on finances and ways to help keep this vital program going for years to come.

-Kathy Campbell

*It may be summer out there now, but winter 2002-2003 was a real old fashioned Vermont winter, and Windham had over 15 feet of snow. In fact, between May 2002 and April 2003, there were only four months without any snow – June, July, August and September*



## Windham: Headed for Extinction in 1960?

Windham's population peaked at over 900 residents in 1820, when farming, logging and sheep raising were the main sources of livelihood. By the mid-nineteen sixties, it had shriveled to 135 hardy souls.

Margaret Woodruff tells of how several banks refused to loan her family money to drill a badly needed well because, according to the bankers, "Windham is a dying town". The two general stores — with gas pumps — E.L. Stowell's (Windham) and Fred Smith's (South Windham) eventually closed, the two post offices were eliminated, and the eight elementary schools merged into one. The chart below, using US Census data, shows the ups and downs of Windham's population trend.

By 1960, Windham had become a skeleton of its former self. **The good news** is that, the population has more than doubled, and that is not even counting non-resident homeowners/families. As of 2002, more people were buying homes

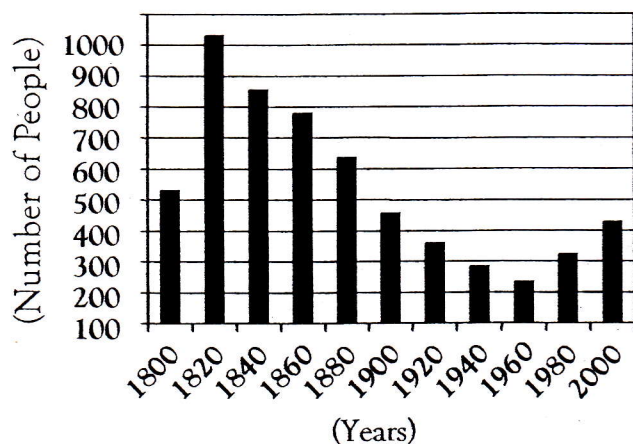
and moving to Windham. If numbers mean anything, this growth suggests the potential for increased social connections and widening friendships.

We've counted at least twenty-five small businesses in town, some of which we hope to tell you about in future issues. The Windham Meeting House, lovingly restored over the past 20 years, but still greatly underutilized, has the potential to be made more available for meetings, events and parties. (More on the Meeting House elsewhere in this issue.)

The Town and the Elementary School may develop web sites to improve access to information and networking. And the fledgling Windham News & Notes aims to be a resource by and for the extended community of Windham, many of whose residents would choose to live nowhere else!

- Margaret Newton

**WINDHAM POPULATION TREND 1800-2000**



### Did You Know ...

That Verde Antique, a rare green marble, was once quarried here, and some of it was used when Radio City Music Hall was built in New York City? If you have a story about this, or the other Windham mines, let us hear from you!



## DSL Comes To Windham ...

If your local phone service is with VTel, you may be able to get a high speed DSL internet connection. Some people in town have already signed up. Depending on the amount of time you spend online, DSL can be less expensive than dial-up service. Contact your local provider to find out what's possible at your house, and to see if DSL makes sense for you

Thanks to Bev Carmichael for letting us know that DSL is here!

## Critter Count

We all know that here in Windham, we are surrounded by an abundance of natural beauty, and more than our fair share of animal friends. Did a moose walk across your lawn lately, or stare at you through your parlor window? Did a bear raid your birdfeeders this Spring? Did you have a cardinal that visited your house in the dead of winter? We want to hear from you! Send a note to our P.O. Box so we can let everyone know about the latest, greatest nature sightings in Windham ...

## Remembering Old Windham

Despite the harsh winters and far-from-everywhere location, the hard working people of Windham made this town a busy, prosperous place in the 1800s. At one time, the town had a gristmill, seven sawmills, two stores, a tavern and a tannery. Remnants of some of these buildings, while hidden and overgrown now, can still be found along the roads and in the woods of Windham.

Statistics for the year 1840 note that there were 159 horses, 1,829 head of cattle, 7,702 sheep and 781 swine within our borders. The farms of Windham produced plenty that year – 6,083 bushels of potatoes, 5,577 of oats, 1,434 of Indian corn, 1,378 of wheat, 894 of rye, 561 of buckwheat and 518 of barley. And that wasn't all, Wind-

ham's farms and families produced 15,830 pounds of maple sugar, 11,722 pounds of wool and 2,723 tons of hay—all of this from a population of 757 men, women and children.

We found a photo of some of these farms and their barns in South Windham, and we hope to publish it and others in later editions of Windham News & Notes.

Thanks to *Margaret Woodruff* for sharing this material (and for saving this and much more over the years!) Excerpted from the Historical Gazetteer of 1891, collated by Abby Maria Hemenway ...

- Lydia Pope France

## Windham Congregational Church News

The Church is located in the Windham Meeting House – Windham Hill and Harrington Roads

Pastors: Reverend Frances Hakenson and Margaret Woodruff (802.874.4302)

Sunday Service/Sunday School: 9AM

Holy Communion: First Sunday of each month

### Special Events

August 10th: OLD HOME SUNDAY – Worship service at 11AM

Preacher: The Reverend Pamela Lucas, VT UCC Associate Conference Minister

Special Music: Harpist and singer Erik Johansson

Reception following service to greet everyone

## Valley Bible Church News

The Church is located in the Village of South Windham on Windham Hill Road

Pastor: Mark Griffin (802.874.7287)

Sundays: Sunday School Program for all ages: 10 AM

Sunday Worship Service: 11AM

Sunday Evening Bible Study: 6:30PM at the schoolhouse parsonage

Hymn Sing: Third Sunday of each month at 6:30PM – learn new hymns and hymn stories

New Children's Program begins June 26th at 7PM, coinciding with the regular

Thursday evening Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

### Special Events

Special Week of Vacation Bible School: July 21–25, 9:30 AM until 12 noon

Valley Bible Church is an independent, Bible-preaching Church, Please feel free to call pastor Griffin with questions



## Nature Notes

Anyone walking around on some of our recent cool, rainy mornings is almost sure to have encountered the red-spotted newt. The red-spotted newt is the most commonly seen type of salamander in this area. Newts vary in color and habitat, as you shall soon see; however, their most consistently identifiable feature is their distinctive red spots within black circles located along their sides.

As with all salamanders, newts are amphibians. They rely on water for breeding, as a nursery for their eggs and aquatic larvae, and to maintain the moisture of their skin. The skin of amphibians differs from that of most reptiles with whom they are sometimes confused. Amphibians have moist, smooth skins, contrasting with that of the reptiles, whose skin is drier and has scales. As long as it remains moist, amphibian's skin serves as an absorptive organ, taking up water and oxygen. That is why you almost never see amphibians sitting out on a hot, sunny day. They dry up and will die quickly when trapped under the hot sun.

Red-spotted newts have a somewhat unusual lifecycle in that they start their life in the water, then have a middle

terrestrial period on land, after which, as adults, they become aquatic once again. They also change appearance radically in these different stages. Newts start out as greenish aquatic larvae with gills. After 3-4 months in the water, they turn into what is called a red eft and live on land. At this time, they are often a brilliant orange-red, although browner shades are common as well.

After about 2-3 years as red efts, they return to the water as greenish-brown adults with broad, swimming tails and, of course, those distinctive red spots. They remain aquatic for the rest of their lives. Throughout their life, their size may vary. In the red eft phase, they can be less than an inch to about 3 inches long. Adult newts are about 4 inches long. Newts are carnivorous, feeding on worms, insects and insect larvae.

We are fortunate to have a salamander that is so visible in its different forms in our area. Those brilliant red efts are very hard to miss!

-Allison Trowbridge  
Windham Conservation Commission Chair

## FREE! SENIOR STRONG LIVING PROGRAM COMES TO TOWN

Coming this fall, seniors ages 60 and over will have the opportunity to enroll in a twelve week "Strong Living" class at Windham Meeting House. The sessions are free, sponsored by the Vermont Department of Health. Starting dates and schedule will depend on best time for enrollees.

The Strong Living Program was designed at Tufts University, specifically to prevent muscle, strength and bone loss as people age. Advance physician clearance is required. If interested, contact Maggie Newton, program leader, no later than August 8. (802.254.3484)

### In Future Issues ... Free Classified Advertising!

Have something you want to sell, swap or buy? Let us know, and we will list it in an upcoming issue of Windham News & Notes. Subscribers can list items costing under \$250 for free. If you are not a subscriber, or if the item costs \$250 or more, there will be a \$5.00 charge. Send your notice (and check, if necessary) to our PO Box or listed on the back page

**Save the Date for the Fire Company's Auction,** BBQ and Pie Auction, coming up on August 9th, rain or shine. Flea Market Tables open at 9AM, followed by a good old fashioned auction beginning at 10AM, Ron Woods of Westminster will be the auctioneer. There will be many new items, gift certificates and a 50/50 raffle.

The fire company is asking for donations of good quality, usable items, large and small. To donate, please call Rick Weitzel at 802.874.4104, Phil Talbot at 802.875.2104, or Clarence Merritt at 802.875.3740 to arrange a drop off time or to have large items picked up. They need volunteers to help with the auction. If interested and willing to help, please call the above group or Ralph and Jan Wyman at 802.875.3373.

At 5PM, an all you can eat BBQ, with chicken, hamburgers, hot dogs, salads, corn and more will begin, followed by the pie auction which is always lots of fun. Please plan to attend this fun day for a good cause that helps us all ...



## Friends of Windham Meeting House

The Friends of Windham Meeting House was founded in 1979 to raise funds so that this historic building could be maintained for the community for years to come.

To date, the Friends have raised over \$300,000 and have lovingly restored much of the building — adding indoor plumbing, a pastor's study, an enlarged kitchen and more. Maintaining this building re-

quires continued vigilance, attention and money. Whether you are a year round or part-time resident, if you'd like to help us with this important project, please consider joining the Friends.

Call Helen George, Treasurer, at 802.874.4076 (118 Abbott Rd, Windham VT 05359).

We hope to see you at our upcoming meeting on September 16th (time and location TBD).

## Invitation to a Celebration

The Friends of Windham Meeting House invite all comers to their annual 4th of July Picnic Celebration at the Windham Meeting House

(corner of Windham Hill and Harrington Roads)

4th of July beginning at 4:00 PM.

Hot dogs, buns and soft drinks will be provided by the Friends.

You are asked to bring a potluck salad or desert to share

The Friends extend an especially warm invitation to non-resident homeowners and other summer visitors — this would be a great chance to get to know you ...

Tours of this historic building will be offered at this time

## *There's Talk Around Town ... About the Meeting House ...*

And plans to increase community use of the Meeting House, for events both private and public. We'll follow this story and report any developments in future issues. If you have ideas on this subject, please send in a letter to the Editor

## The Windham Community Organization

The Windham Community Organization is dedicated to helping neighbors out when they need a hand. They conduct several fundraisers throughout the year. This year, they have scheduled their annual Chicken Barbeque for Saturday, July 26th, to be held on the grounds of the Windham Meeting House. The menu will include BBQ chicken, salads, beverages and dessert. And, John Newton has agreed to round up some country musicians to play live music during the supper hour. It should be a wonder-

ful event, and we hope that many of you will plan to attend.

For more information about the WCO or the BBQ, please contact Carolyn Chase at 802.874.4039. Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month, at 7 PM

Please plan to join us on July 26th, at 5:00PM and if you are week-end residents, please make sure that this is one of your weekends in Windham.

## Coming Attractions

This first newsletter was made possible by a small and dedicated group who decided to "just do it"! Now we want help from you. Here are some articles we would like to run in future issues, so if you have something to contribute to any of these, please let us hear from you. And if you have other ideas, we'd like to hear them, too

**Renovation Blues** – if you've been there, you know what we mean. Send us YOUR story

**Remembering Old Windham** – For those of you who have been lucky enough to spend your whole life here, tell us what you remember about the people and places of your childhood

**Fish Stories** – Whether it's the one that got away or the one that didn't, let us hear about it

**How I Spent My Summer Vacation** – Whether you live here year round or just some of the time, we'd like to hear from you. Some of these entries will be published in later issues of WN&N

**Why I Moved to Windham, or Why I Stayed in Windham, or Why I Want to Move to Windham** – Year round residents and weekend/summer visitors, tell us what attracts you to this town

## Editorial Staff

Maggie Newton

Lydia Pope France

Margaret Woodruff

Would you like to join our team? Please contact us at (see details below).

We welcome volunteers

## We Want to Know What You Think of This Newsletter, Even if You've Chosen Not To Subscribe ...

We want to know what we are doing right, what we are doing wrong, and want to hear your suggestions. So please send a note along with your subscription telling us what you thought of this first issue, and of the idea of a Community Newsletter in general. Even if you choose not to subscribe, please let us know your views.

**Contact us at PO Box 1068, Windham VT 05359, or call 802.254.3484**

## Subscription Request – Please Fill Out and Return this Form

Annual Subscriptions to the bimonthly **Windham News & Notes** are \$10.00. Please make your check or money order payable to Windham News & Notes, and mail to PO Box 1068, Windham VT 05359

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Area Code and Phone(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR – Summer 2003

June 30-July 21	Weekdays	Windham Day Camp at the Church/Meeting House grounds**
July 4	4:00PM	Friends of WMH Picnic at the Meeting House **
July 7	10AM–3PM	Cutoff date for Checklist for July High School vote (see below)
July 15	7:30PM	Special Meeting to reconsider the Leland & Gray Union High School budget for L&GUHS District voters (at L&GUHS)
July 26	5:00PM	WCO Chicken BBQ/Live Country Music at the Meeting House **
August 9	9:00AM	Fire Company's Auction and Flea Market at the Firehouse **
August 9	5:00PM	Chicken BBQ and Pie Auction at the Firehouse **
August 10	11:00AM	Old Home Day at the Windham Congregational Church **
Wednesday Evenings	7–9PM	Library open (July and August) at the Meeting House
Sept 16	7:00PM	Friends of Windham Meeting House Meeting, place to be announced **
Fall	TBD	Strong Living Program for Seniors at the Meeting House **

(Dates To Be Determined)

\*\* See Article in this issue

SOMETHING NEW FOR  
OUR COMMUNITY ...

*Windham News & Notes*  
*PO Box 1068*  
*Windham VT 05359*

Windham News & Notes welcomes  
submissions ...  
Send articles of 75 to 225 words and  
Signed Letters to the Editor to the  
address above

**GET INVOLVED  
IN WINDHAM!**