

# WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 6

WINDHAM, VERMONT

MAY - JUNE 2005

## Most voters in agreement at 2005 Town Meeting

by Bev Carmichael and Mary McCoy

A thick blanket of new snow greeted town residents as they made their way to Town Meeting on Tuesday, March 1. There were 37 articles on the warning for consideration, everything from the elections of officers to appropriations for the town budget to contributions for nonprofit organizations. All 37 articles passed.

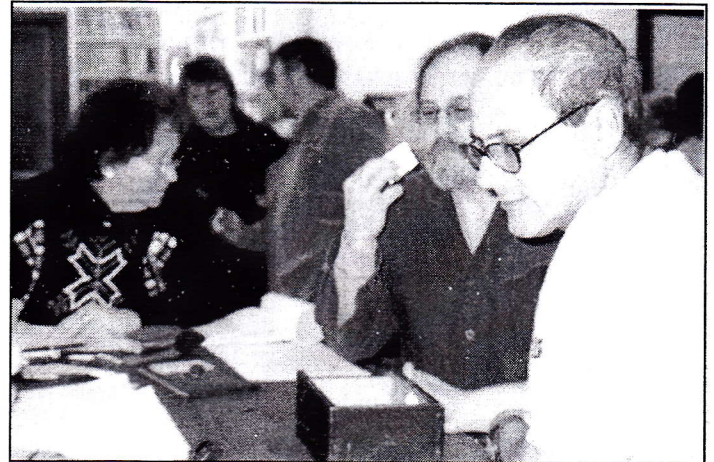
For the third year, Donna Koutrakos was chosen as our town moderator. Margaret Dwyer again won a three-year term as selectman. William Koutrakos was re-elected lister. Edith Serke stepped down as auditor, and John Lingley Jr. was chosen to replace her for a three-year term.

In two contested races, Michael Simonds was chosen over Marcia Clinton as collector of delinquent taxes, and Carolyn Partridge held onto her position as a Windham school director, despite a strong challenge of support for Antje Ruppert-Bousquet.

Others elected were cemetery commissioners: Alan Partridge for Windham Center, Cathy Clay Prouty for North Windham, and Jeff Riley for West Windham. Clarence W.H. Merritt was reelected as constable, grand juror, and town agent. Howard Ires was chosen again for the Leland & Gray Union High School board, and Carol Merritt was elected for another five-year term as library trustee.

Budget approval was given to spend \$426,843 for our school and \$226,000 for road maintenance and related expenses. Twelve nonprofit organizations that provide services for Windham residents received a total of \$4,110.

(continued page 2)



John Krisher (center) considers his ballot, while Town Clerk Carol Merritt (left) and Justice of Peace Colin Blazej (right) process voters.

## Get connected at Vermont 2-1-1

by Bev Carmichael and Mary McCoy

Vermont has a great wealth of organizations that offer a wide diversity of social services. But when you need help, how do you find and connect with those that provide what you want?

Dialing 2-1-1 is your first step.

Vermont 2-1-1, a program of the United Ways of Vermont, is an information and referral program serving all Vermonters. When you dial 2-1-1, you don't get a recording telling you to punch more numbers. A real person will listen to you and link you to the appropriate government programs, community-based organizations, support groups, and other local resources. (continued page 2)

## WN&N turns two

This is the twelfth bi-monthly issue of the *Windham News and Notes*. As we complete our second year of publication, we begin an effort to include more information about services available in our area, kicking off with an article on Vermont 2-1-1. This is part of a larger effort headed by Beverly Scott and the Windham Community Organization to inform residents about local resources.

With our July/August issue, annual subscriptions will be due, and we will include a form to contribute. Like public radio and TV, we will ask you to give whatever support you can, with a basic "membership" being \$10. We'll also ask for suggestions to improve the *News and Notes*. So give it some thought. This is *your* newsletter!



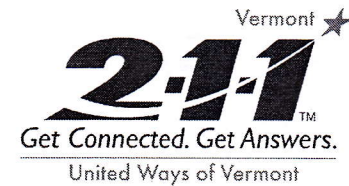
## Get connected with 2-1-1 *(continued from page 1)*

The friendly folks at 2-1-1 provide streamlined access to community resources for everyday needs and difficult times.

Your call is confidential. The help-line staff is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. You can call 2-1-1 (toll free except for a few cell phones) or 1-866-652-4636 (toll-free for all) from anywhere in Vermont or 1-802-652-4636 from outside Vermont.

You can also visit their website: [www.vermont211.org](http://www.vermont211.org), if you prefer to explore the options on your own. It lists all the services with links to many organizations' websites.

According to some figures, Vermont has more nonprofit organizations per capita than any other state. More than 3,500 services are listed in the Vermont 2-1-1 database. Why not make use of these valuable resources?



### can help you find these services:

Child Care Resource & Referral  
Clothing  
Computer Classes  
Consumer Services  
Discrimination Assistance  
Domestic and Sexual Violence Services  
Employment Services  
Food Shelves  
GED Instruction  
Health Support Services  
Housing Programs  
Independent Living Services  
Legal Services  
Mother and Baby Care  
Medical Transportation  
Mental Health Care and Counseling  
Rent Assistance  
Senior Information  
Smoking Education/Prevention  
Support Groups  
Substance Abuse Treatment  
Tenant Right Services  
Utility Assistance  
Youth and Family Services  
Veteran Benefits Advocacy

## Most agree at Town Meeting *(continued from page 1)*

Our state representatives, Carolyn Partridge and Michael Obuchowski, gave short presentations of news from our state legislature. Carolyn, now our State House majority leader, reported on the universal healthcare bill. Michael told us about activities in the House Ways and Means Committee.

Among the articles was one related to the war in Iraq. The resolution passed with 51 in favor and 8 against. It stated that the Town requests (1) that our representatives in the U.S. Congress work to limit federal control over state National Guard units, (2) that the Vermont General Assembly investigate the legality of the use of the Vermont Guard in Iraq and the impact

of that use on the Guard's mission in Vermont; (3) that Congress take steps to withdraw troops from Iraq; and (4) that our town clerk send a copy of the resolution to Vermont officials.

At twelve o'clock, we broke for lunch, set up tables, and enjoyed a fantastic potluck luncheon prepared by town residents. It was nice to spend time with our neighbors and friends. The meeting ended at 3:30.

About 60 people attended the Town Meeting, or about 20% of the 296 voters on our checklist. Town Clerk Carol Merritt explained, however, that many on the checklist no longer live in Windham; their names have not been removed due to state regulations.

## Let Verizon know DSL is wanted for internet service

by Lydia Pope France

Since the article in the last *News & Notes* about phone and DSL service in Windham, I've had a few calls from people who would like to get faster online service, wondering what they might be able to do to "help the cause". One suggestion is to access Verizon's website and register your interest in DSL via the following link: <http://www22.verizon.com/ForHomeDSL/channels/dsl/forhomedsl.asp?ID=Res>

When you logon, the first page will check to see if DSL service is available at your phone number. Simply input your phone number and wait while it performs the check. When the message comes up to say that it is not currently

available, it will ask if you would like to be notified when it is. Input your e-mail address and phone number. This does not mean that you are committed to taking the service if and when it becomes available, it only means that you are interested in it.

If enough people from our area express interest, perhaps it will jumpstart Verizon's plans for us. The Public Service Board has stated that they do not mandate services provided, so our best hope is to make Verizon aware that there is substantial interest in Windham. Right now they do not have any plans or timetable to bring us faster internet access, so making your voice heard is very important.



# Windham has big heart

by Edith Serke

When we decided to make Windham our full-time home almost five years ago, our friends and family had serious doubts about our decision. What will we do about medical care? How far is the nearest hospital? We'll be all alone in a strange community. We soon learned that all those concerns were unfounded, and in the past few weeks and months, I learned that we had, indeed, moved into a community with a big heart.

First of all, we found excellent medical care at Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend. It was quite refreshing to find that all the staff there, doctors, nurses, technicians, pharmacists, knew us not as a patient by a number but by name, and greeted us as friends. That was not our experience in our previous home state. As my husband's health deteriorated, and he required more specialized care, it was always

available. Care at Grace Cottage went way beyond medical care. The personal, caring attention by staff to my own needs went way beyond anything I could ever have expected. My husband's last few days and hours were made as comfortable and pain free as possible, and the support given to me was incredible.

And even though we were still kind of newcomers in Windham, not having been able to participate more fully in community activities, I was overwhelmed by the outpouring of caring and support of so many friends and neighbors. Despite the snowy weather, so many people attended my husband's funeral, and so many more sent their condolences. There were phone calls, visits, and offers of help. I want to thank all of you from the bottom of my heart. Moving to Windham was indeed a good decision.

## Windham Congregational Church busy with activities

by Nancy Dyke

Everyone is invited to attend the worship services, now on the summer schedule, beginning at 9:00 AM.

Special services took place for the Lenten Season, including the Tenebrae at the Maunday Thursday Service and a special program from the Iona Com-

munity in Scotland at the Good Friday Service.

The Easter Service was a joyous celebration with a special choir anthem. After the worship, everyone enjoyed a delicious Easter breakfast. Easter bonnets were an additional feature with the most creative ones appearing at the breakfast!

We are looking forward to the Yankee Male Chorus appearance at the church on August 11.

The church will celebrate its 200th anniversary during the weekend of September 9, 10 & 11 of this year.

Although the Meeting House was built in 1802 and its 200<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated in 2002, the Windham Congregational Church was organized in 1805, calling for another celebration this year.



### WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

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#### Acknowledgments

Thanks to all who provided articles – their names are noted with their submissions

Thanks also to our advertisers.  
Additional ads are welcomed.

#### Submissions

Windham News & Notes  
welcomes submissions.

Send articles and signed "letters to the editors" of 100 to 300 words to the address below.  
We prefer emailed submissions.

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**wnandn@vermontel.net**

## Artists

### invited to exhibit

The Windham Community Organization would like to sponsor an exhibit of paintings and photography by Windham artists to take place in August or September at the Meeting House. If you are such an artist or know about one, please contact Nancy Dyke at 874-4428.



# Ernie seeks balance for Windham

by Mary McCoy

If you have ever attended a Windham Town Meeting, you probably have heard Ernie Friedli speak from the floor, displaying knowledge and passion about our community. You might assume that Windham is his place of birth because of the value he places on our town's heritage. In fact, Ernie grew up in Brooklyn, NY.

After serving in the Navy in World War II and earning an engineering degree, Ernie worked for IBM for 36 years, living and traveling all over the world. Then he and his wife Sheila decided that the best place on the planet to make their permanent home was Windham, VT.

Before moving here in 1983, he had never participated in local government. But in Vermont, he saw a need to get involved, explaining, "Here we govern ourselves." For many years, he has served Windham as a lister and Planning Commission member.

As Ernie sees it, the challenge in writing Windham's new town plan is one of balance. How do we honor and preserve our town's heritage without inhibiting progress for the future? And how do we protect our sense of community while at the same time valuing individual rights?

"In the old days," he explains, "farms separated people, and they stayed out of each other's business. Now neighbors have a more direct affect on each other. Take flood lights, for example. City people move here and put up bright lights. They don't understand that we prefer the darkness of the night and revel in the beauty of the night sky."

Ernie is concerned about an influx of people into Windham. He remembers long-time Vermonters who opposed black-topping Windham Hill Road out of fear that it would bring too many people. Now he sees a lot of people buying property and the changes that may bring.

He says, "The Planning Commission recognizes that people in Vermont want to use their land as they choose. But how do we as a community live with that?"

Control of our ridgelines is a recent challenge. "We don't want our mountains to all look like Stratton," Ernie says, "or to be covered with wind towers. But how do we write a town plan to discourage certain uses of the land while also protecting individual choices? And how do we address the need for energy if oil, coal and atomic sources are not desirable."

Ernie describes the Planning Commission as neighbors who work well together. "We argue, but we listen to each other with open minds and accept our differences, knowing it can't just be one way. We all have the same challenge,

writing a plan so that people can have the town they want."

Philosophically, Ernie believes in making the best of whatever life presents him, and he carries this view to his job of planning Windham's future. So he asks, "How do we make the best of what's happening here? Do we put controls on lights at night? Do we say motion sensitive lights are okay, but lights aren't allowed when people aren't there? Do individuals get to do anything? Are junk yards okay? How about pig farms? Yes, everyone should do what they want, but what about the impact on others? That's the challenge with planning – to judge what's good and what's undesirable for Windham."

One major issue facing Windham has to do with housing. As a lister, Ernie is very aware of the way property is selling, and he says, "I'm afraid we may have been discovered." Several people have purchased large pieces of land that are being subdivided and sold, including 87 acres at Popple Dungeon and White Road and another large tract on the northeast area of Four Corners. "It may be progress, yet it doesn't preserve Windham as it was."

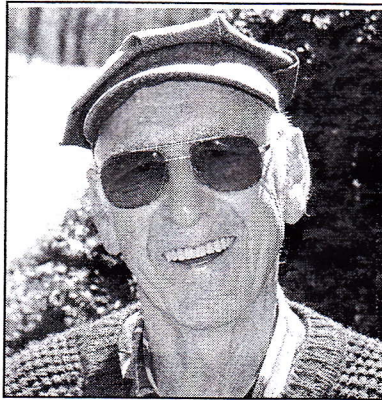
Currently, Windham's zoning regulations allow homes on lots of one acre minimum. In the past, homes with small lots were clustered in village areas. Now, however, there are houses along all the roads and on the mountainsides. There are fewer open areas, while only 40 years ago, nearly everything was open.

This concerns Ernie. "Someone could buy 100 acres and put up 100 homes. Planners sometimes consider the idea of cluster housing, allowing only 10 houses on 100 acres with 90 acres preserved as woodland."

Ernie also recognizes "the good news" – ways in which our heritage is likely to be preserved. Over 50% of our total acreage is protected in "current use" which means it remains as forest and cannot be developed without the owners paying a penalty, and Windham is not subject to major through traffic or commercial development. We also have the ability to determine, as Ernie advises, how to make the best of whatever happens in Windham.

While the town plan may seem like "big brother" telling us what we cannot do, it is *our* big brother, our own creation. Ernie urges us all to join the Planning Commission members at their bi-monthly meetings, held at the Town Office at 7:00 PM on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.

Ernie says, "Input from our neighbors during the planning process is much more efficient than trying to alter the plan after it has been totally composed. Hope to see you there!"





# Windham's history: her people are her glory

*Among the records of Windham is a preserved history of our town. It was found in Volume I of the land records when Harry Hall became town clerk in 1946 and is thought to have been written by Asahel Upham in 1902 and 1905. Below is an abstract of the history, as prepared by the Windham School Club of 1967.*

The Town of Londonderry which embraced Windham was chartered by the State of New York, February 13, 1770. It contained 84,590 acres. The first settlers came in 1774. Three of the first five settlers located in Windham territory. A small clearance was made and prepared for their family to return the following year. They returned to Londonderry to spend the winter.

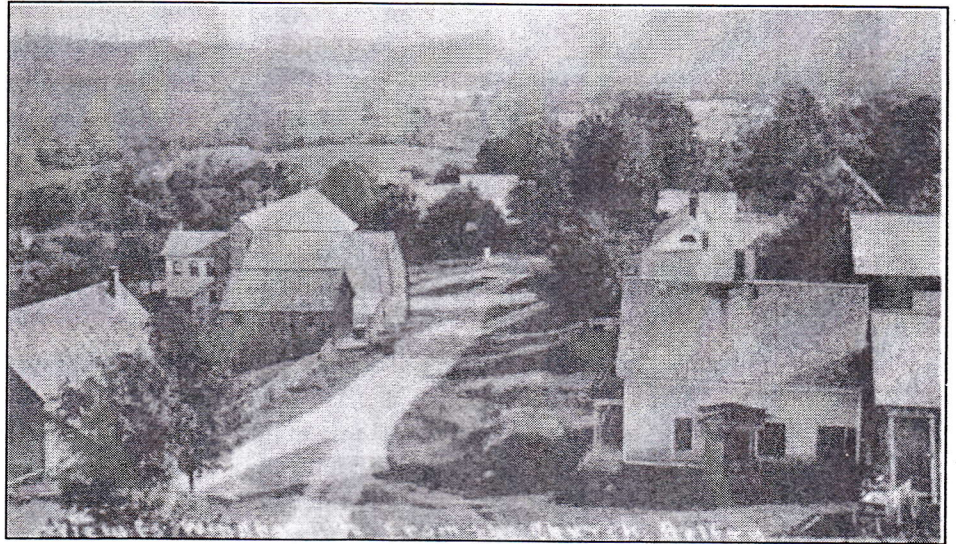
The record notes that the first log cabin was built and a saw mill located at a so-called "Derry Pond". Lumber for two houses was cut, but a fire destroyed the mill and lumber. Records of the settlements to 1793 are nearly all lost.

In the year 1795, a petition was presented to the legislature to divide the Town of Londonderry, also to make a new Town of the eastern part. On October 22, 1795, an act passed the legislature incorporating the new Town to be called Windham (16,870 acres).

The Town population in 1800 number 363. In 1810 – 783, 1820 – 931, 1830 – 847, 1840 – 757, and 1850 – 763. During this period, the Town was dependent on its local merchants, saw mills, blacksmith shop, farming, grist mills, talc and marble mining, and sheep farming.

The people built a Meeting House begun in 1802, finished in 1825, which is today a historic structure which continues to satisfy the needs of the Town. Without easy travel modes, the Town was a typical rural area in which neighbors depended on each other. Several Schools and Churches were established.

The people of Windham encouraged education. Records show that the first formal school meeting was held in 1796 in a log barn. In



This photo was taken around 1900 from the church belfry, looking south.

1801, a decision was made to build a school, 22 feet square, at a cost of \$172.50. The record says, "It cannot be said that Windham has raised no literary men." Let the record show "that 13 ministers went forth from the Town and two physicians." "Women, likewise have furnished many teachers, missionary workers, writers who have graced the columns of literary periodicals." Other school buildings followed.

A description of a "desirable town community" included these words: "A town consisting of a due mixture of hills, valleys, and streams of water, the land well fenced and cultivated, the roads and bridges in good repair, decent inns for the refreshment of travelers and for public entertainment. Manufacturers a suitable proportion of handicraft workman and two or three traders. A physician and a lawyer. A clergyman of good understanding, candid disposition and exemplary morals, not a metaphysical nor a polemic but a serious, practical preacher. A school master who should understand his business and teach his

pupils to govern themselves. A decent Musical Society; No intriguing politician, horse jockey, gambler, or sot. Such a situation may be considered as the most favorable to local happiness of any which the world can afford."

It concludes further with, "Nearly all have comfortable dwellings with property enough to procure necessities and even some luxuries. We are shielded from many of the distracting elements and destroyer influences which are working the ruin of older towns. We are surrounded by fortifications (hills and valleys) which have been raised by nature which will forever exclude the idea that our town will become the theater of railroad scenes or that she will be noted for manufacturers. Her glory depends upon the general intelligence of her town's people."

Congratulations to Nancy Dyke,  
new president of the Windham  
Community Organization!



## There's no place like home

by Margaret Woodruff

For my 81<sup>st</sup> winter in a lifetime up on this hill, this bird flew south for the winter. Well, as far south as the Connecticut shore but still "south" for me. I spent the winter months with my daughter who lives near the coast in a pretty but far more congested area than I am used to. We saw lots of shore birds, but no song birds, and since most of the neighbors have cats, no one fed the birds.

And so, upon my return, I noted with pleasure that even though I had not asked him to, my grandson had purchased seed and kept my bird feeders filled this winter. The following morning, I saw my first chickadee of the season, and what a thrill it was. I had forgotten what a treasure it was to have the birds visit your feeder every day. Besides the chickadees that first day, I saw a pair of cardinals, two species of nuthatches, several tufted titmouse, and two pairs of woodpeckers.

During the next few weeks, different birds continued to

pass by. You never knew who to expect next. One day there were quite a few gold finches in their beautiful winter coats of fine olive green. As the days go by, you can see them change, turning to bright gold. Juncos, pine finches, red-winged blackbirds, doves, pine siskins, evening grosbeaks, and many, many more.

But the most interesting thing that happened was, on several occasions during late afternoons, a very large owl sat camouflaged about thirty feet from my front windows. We think that he might have been hunting the red squirrels, as we have an abundance of them.

You do have to admit that I have an interesting life as seen from my front windows. And it's good to be back home, as much as it was fun to try something new. Over the next few weeks I plan to get back to digging through my memories and old books for more articles for the *News and Notes* about the old days in and around Windham.

## Many flowers thrive in Windham

By Elizabeth Robinson

Almost anywhere you travel in Vermont, you will find the glorious orange blossoms of daylilies, often growing on the side of the road. There are many Asiatic variations which can be purchased in garden centers or flea markets, in colors from white, yellow, peach, wine red, and dark purple.

These hardy plants do well on our windswept mountain and are easily divided after a few years to create an endless succession of plants. The type of soil does not seem to matter, but they do require full sun to flower properly. I find they do well in the flower border or can be used for a more bold landscaping statement in

front of stone walls or in large clumps. Our above ground well head is neatly disguised by such a clump.

Hostas are another plant of the lily family which survive the cold winters well. Their flowers range from purple to white, and the leaves range in color from almost white with streaks of green to yellow and even a rich blue-green. The structural foliage of these plants are fine in the border and can be used to edge or disguise stones and tree stumps or to enhance woodland paths. I like to separate them in the late summer when I can see what color foliage I am working with. A big clump can be dug up with the spade

and then the plants carefully teased apart to be replanted. I like to mix up indigenous plants with newcomers, and hostas and woodland ferns make a great combination for shade areas.

Black-eyed Susan and Queen Anne lace are other of my favorites and seem to sow themselves freely over the meadow. This year I am experimenting by putting some black-eyed Susan in pots as it has a long flowering season and can create a nice bushy effect. Goldenrod is everywhere, and many regard it as a weed, but I leave some at the back of the border just to give height and color in late summer. (continued on page 7)



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# Government recommends more time spent exercising

by Mary McCallum, Council on Aging

Anyone who keeps up with the news knows that our nation has a weight problem. A whopping 65% of us need to lose pounds that threaten our health and well-being. The government's departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services released revised exercise and dietary guidelines. Their recommendations caught many by surprise.

Experts now find that it takes at least 30 minutes of exercise nearly every day just to reduce the risk of osteoporosis, heart attacks, and type 2 diabetes. It takes 60 minutes to maintain an ideal weight already achieved, and 90 minutes to lose unwanted weight. So they recommend increasing the daily 30-minute workout to 60 - 90 minutes.

To begin, rethink the idea of exercising in one long time-period. Think instead of shorter chunks of strenuous movement throughout the day to reach your total time goal. You can do it with a brisk half-hour walk (or two 15-minute walks) combined with 20 minutes of yard work, climbing stairs throughout the day, and doing a short exercise routine or yoga. Throw in vacuuming or working on your woodpile, and you're over the top.

How about joining an exercise group or finding a walking partner? For many the idea of working out with others is a great motivator. Not only do you keep your body in shape,

you get to enjoy the company of friends.

Whatever activities you choose, do things you enjoy that fit your lifestyle. Think of activities that increase your heart rate, speed your breathing, and increase muscle tone and flexibility.

The rewards are great. Exercise results in: weight loss and maintenance, lowered blood pressure, improved stamina and balance, increased strength and flexibility, stronger bones, stress reduction and mood elevation, cardiovascular conditioning, and better sleep. The effort is surely worth it!

## Strong Living Program resumes

Beginning in September, Maggie Newton and Nancy Dyke will co-lead a Strong Living Class at the Meeting House sponsored by Tufts University. It offers exercises and weight training to facilitate flexibility and bone density in men and women over 40 years of age. An organizational meeting will take place in August, but the leaders would appreciate having the names of interested participants in advance. Watch for later announcements.

## Flowers thrive (continued from page 6)

Tansy was often planted near the kitchen to ward off the flies. We have some near our kitchen window, and it has been there for at least 50 years. I wish it was as good for discouraging mosquitoes. Stocks come in a variety of colors, and there were some bright purple ones in the garden when we moved in, which are still there. The roots can be easily divided, and spring is the best time for that.

Cone flowers can be grown in sheltered areas and create color in the border late in the season. Another favorite of mine is bee balm, of which I have both purple and red. The flowers are a bit ragged looking but worth it for the butterflies, bees and hummingbirds that hover over them on sunny days. The seed heads have a wonderful oily scent.

## Spring thaw awakens wildlife

by Bill Koutrakos

A week has gone by since the first robins saturated the little bit of ground that showed next to the pond. Finches appeared in the feeder outside our window. An otter came through the culvert from the stream into our pond only to find that the ice has yet to thaw. As the snow melts revealing more ground, redwing blackbirds are in abundance under the large feeder. As I walk through the woods that has just been cleared, I want to find a place to lie down and listen to the music orchestrated by the birds returning north. I am thrilled by the sight of the blue heron on the bridge graced by the sunlight. A beaver looks for branches to slow the rushing waters in the brook. Then I know that spring is coming when the family of geese appears to fertilize our lawn. They will lay their eggs and grace us with the sight of their young.

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## WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

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### GET INVOLVED IN WINDHAM!

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## — *Windham Community Calendar* —

Every Sunday – **Windham Congregational Church** has worship services at 9:00 AM; everyone is invited. Communion first Sunday of each month.

Every Wednesday – **Windham Town Library** at Meeting House open 3:00 to 5:00 PM. All invited for following also at that time: Reading group on first Wednesdays, knitting group on second and third Wednesdays, and writing group on fourth Wednesdays.

Last Wednesday of month – **Windham Community Organization** meets at 7:00 at Helen George's house. Call Carolyn Chase to confirm at 874-4039 or for information. All are invited to help address community concerns.

Wednesday, April 27 – **Pasta Dinner** 6:00 PM at Windham Elementary to raise funds for students to attend Camp Keewayden. \$3 per person and \$10 per family. Raffle with prizes donated by area businesses.

Monday, May 9 - Friday, May 13 – **Camp Keewayden** attended by Windham Elementary 4-6 grade students.

Friday & Saturday, May 20-21 – **Springtime Revue** at Leland & Gray High School, a collection of songs, dance, monologues, sketches, 7:30 PM, \$5 adults, \$3 students.

Wednesday, May 25 – **Teddy Bear Tea** to introduce children ages 0-5 to preschool, at Windham Elementary, 1:30 PM.

Friday, June 3 – **Student Art Exhibit & Music Dept. Pop Concert** at Leland & Gray H.S. 7:00 PM.

Thursday, June 23 – **Last day of school** for L&G.

Tuesday, July 5 - Friday, July 22 – **Windham Summer Day Camp** for 4 to 12 year-olds at Meeting House.

Saturday, July 16 – **Annual Chicken BBQ** hosted by Windham Community Organization at Meeting House.

Thursday, August 11 – **Yankee Male Chorus** performs.

Friday-Sunday, September 9-11 – **Windham Congregational Church** celebrates its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.