



The Weathervane

Winter

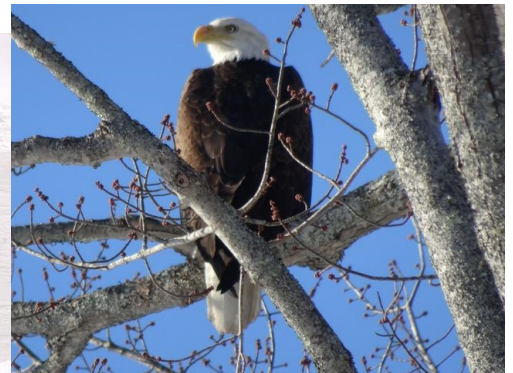
A Quarterly for and from West Gardiner

2021

Outdoors in West Gardiner by S.E. Costell

It's a great time to free yourself from the confines of your all-too-cozy home and experience nature in ways that may be nostalgic or totally and completely new. Here are 5 outdoor activities that one can participate in right here on our town ~ free of charge!

1. Skate on Fuller's Pond. Fuller's Pond is small, but well-lit for day or night skating. Situated on the Hallowell-Litchfield Road, just east of the Collins Mills Intersection.
2. Tracking right outside your door, one can find trails from many a critter. Step into their shoes and follow their walk!
3. Sledding on Weston Hill, located on the north side of Collins Mills Road just beyond the public boat launch. Look for the star on the hill, and the barn with the name Weston on it.
4. Eagle Watching all along the Cobbossee Stream or Lake. One can find many a bald eagle perched high in the shoreline pines or standing on the ice waiting for a fish to swim by. Sometimes they get spooked and will fly away when you approach, but just sit there 15-20 minutes in quiet and they usually return.
5. Wood stacking. Not all wood piles are the same. It's all how you look at it. Although a chore, wood stacking can be a productive way to let out a bit of inter artistry, and get a workout that doesn't require driving to the gym.



Announcements & Happenings by Kim Greenleaf

March 9th, 2021 Special Election for State Senate District 14– William Guerrette (R) Craig V. Hickman (D) Polls open 8:00 am–8:00 pm, ballots available at town office.

Town Meeting has been postponed, it will be rescheduled for a later date. Selectman Greg Couture (unopposed) Road Commissioner, Gary Hickey (unopposed) School Board 3 year term, Patrick Saucier (unopposed) School Board 2 year term open for write in.

Transfer Station– Recycling is open– glass, metal, news/mixed paper, cardboard, #2 plastics, and clean tin cans.

The Weathervane will be publishing the annual business directory in the next edition. Please send your **NEW** business information to PhillipJDavis@tds.net

The Weathervane is looking for new or occasional writers. Historical West Gardiner, places of interest around town, nature or funny stories. Old pictures are welcome as well. If this interests you, please email coleneoneill1@gmail.com.

Anthony Thompson - US Navy Veteran by Debra Couture

Anthony Thompson graduated from Gardiner Area High School in 2013. He left for Recruit Training Command (RTC) - Great Lakes, Illinois and started Boot Camp on September 13, 2013. Anthony graduated from RTC on November 14, 2013 and was transferred directly to the Naval Education and Training Center, Pensacola, Florida to attend Aviation Machinist Mate (AD) School. On April 30, 2014, he graduated from AD School and received his orders to Naval Air Station, Oceana, Virginia. ADs are aircraft engine mechanics and inspect, adjust, test, repair, and overhaul aircraft engines. They perform maintenance and prepare aircraft for flight. Anthony worked in Division 400 – Power Plants (Aircraft Engines) at Oceana for over 2 years.

Anthony really enjoyed his work, especially working on the many aircraft. His main responsibility was for F-18s, but he also worked with the F22, C5, and C130 aircraft. He was discharged at the end of May, 2016 and returned to Maine. Anthony is glad that he joined the US Navy and still keeps in contact with many friends who he met and worked with while serving in the US Navy. Anthony, thank you for your service.



Wreaths Across America – Thank You by Debra Couture

West Gardiner residents and veterans participated in a special ceremony for the Wreaths Across America wreath laying on December 19, 2020 in West Gardiner, Maine. Bryce Smith sang the Star Spangled Banner and Greg Couture played Taps. Wreaths were placed at the West Gardiner Veteran's Memorial and 200 wreaths were placed on veteran's graves at the Town's 7 cemeteries. All veteran's graves in the Town received a wreath this year thanks to the many residents and businesses who purchased wreaths for the cemeteries. West Gardiner veterans who participated in the wreath laying included Ron Dixon, Glenn Bowman, Anthony Morgan, Nancy Derocher, Debra Couture, Anthony Thompson, Don Goggin, Terry Marks, and Mike Collins; and Boy Scout leader Jeff DeHart. A **Special Thank You** goes to the many residents and businesses who purchased wreaths and to those who helped to lay the wreaths. This is the 4th year that there has been a Wreaths Across America ceremony to decorate the cemeteries and the 1st year that there were enough wreaths purchased to decorate all the veteran's graves.

West Gardiner Historical Society by Debra Couture

The Town of West Gardiner completed the purchase of the Chapman property that is adjacent to the Auxiliary Hall on February 18, 2021. The next steps will be to remove the main building and small out buildings on the property, clean up the yard, and secure the garage for future use. Discussion will begin on the building of a new Historical Society Building on the property in 2021. The next meeting of the Historical Society will be on March 31, 2021 at 7 PM at the Auxiliary Hall.



West Gardiner Garden Club News

In the spring of 2021 Garden Club plans to honor one of their former members, Margaret Peacock, by building a memorial garden in her honor. The Memorial Garden will be built near the town fire station. Margaret Peacock was an important Garden Club member and well known in the West Gardiner community. The Garden Club is accepting donations: monetary, manual labor, building supplies are all welcome. Garden Club members will be donating their plants for the garden. C&N Custom Woodwork has donated \$50 and challenges local businesses to match the donation. Contact Charlene McFarland 582-7239 for more information and/or donations. What started with a few friends gathering to share their love for gardening, eventually led to a Garden Club. Through the years the Garden Club members have hosted garden tours, plant sales, fairy garden workshops and art displays by local artists. Starting in 2012, proceeds help support scholarships for graduating West Gardiner Seniors. The hope is to continue to be able to fund yearly scholarships. If there is any monetary donations remaining after the project is completed, it will be used for future scholarships.

Update from MSAD#11 Superintendent of Schools—Pat Hopkins

To help schools remain open throughout the pandemic, school districts around the state and the country received Federal COVID Relief money. As of this writing, MSAD 11 has received approximately \$3.7 million in COVID funds, of which \$3.3 million had to be spent in just four months. Due to the fast turnaround, the funds paid for items such as: upgrading our ventilation systems, purchasing technology hardware and software, installing wiring for remote and livestream instruction, hiring additional health care staff and substitutes, upgrading communication tools to allow for remote work when necessary, professional development for staff, and much more.

The use of those funds now allows us to focus our attention to increasing student in-person days. On February 1, 2021 Pre-K students successfully returned to the classroom four days per week. On March 1, 2021, students in Grades K-2 will also return to in-person learning four days per week, followed by students in Grades 3-5 on March 15. A date for students in Grades 6-12 to return more fully to the classroom has not yet been determined, though we are focused on April. The District will continue to support Cohort C fully remote learning, K-12, while we shift to our 'green' learning model. It is important to keep in mind that this plan is fluid. Should circumstances change, including an uptick in positive cases in our schools or a shortage of staff, the scheduled date for students to return may require adjustment.

On Thursday, January 14, 2021 ground was broken at the Gardiner Area High School for the new Hoch Turf Field with an expected completion in advance of the 2021-2022 high school sports season. This \$1.1 million project is a reality thanks to the generosity of many donors including four local businesses, McGee Construction, MainEx, EJP, and Black Diamond Engineering that are donating approximately \$650,000 collectively in labor and materials to make this project possible. Individuals wishing to contribute toward the project can purchase a brick by going to the district website @ <https://www.msad11.org/o/gahs/page/hoch-turf-field>. Purchased bricks will be used to create a recognition wall at the entrance to the turf field.

From the Porch

“Eager Beaver”

by Mike Wing

West Gardiner is a study in rural growth, and rightfully so. Taxes are reasonable, property is affordable, and most people are friendly. No wonder new home construction and older home sales are doing so well, but with growth comes difficulty for the environment. We live near West Gardiner’s streams and brooks and enjoy waterside hikes to track and watch the wildlife. One species more prominent this year has been the beaver. Like the new homes in new developments, the beaver dams and lodges show increase in population that will be both beneficial and harmful.

In the 1800’s when thousands of pelts were shipped to Europe to make hats, the beaver population diminished, almost ended. You don’t see any stovepipe hats these days, but you do see flooded roads and fields, gnawed trees, and plugged culverts. A colony of the rodents, North America’s largest, will transform a stream into swamps in several years. Beavers mate for life and produce 2-4 kits in 100 days. In a year or so, the adults will kick out the kits to another part of the stream, to build another dam, to drop more trees. To land owners and road workers, the impact is tough to take. To environmentalists, the new bog is a haven for birds, fish, and aquatic flora. What a contrast.

This spring I helped a landowner pull apart a dam that flooded his property. We made sluices and watched the water drop up stream, temporarily. After heavy rain, beavers waddled up onto the lawns to strip apple trees and drag alders back for lunch at the lodge. Trapping was in order. You can legally shoot them with a special permit, but a trapping license was available and pelts were taken to be cured. Killing any wild animal means a commitment has been made to using what is harvested. Beaver meat is edible, even the tail. It smells like turkey when boiled and is tougher than bear. Beaver also spread giardia in the water, so don’t swim with them.

In contrast, the created pond is a well-established habitat for more wildlife than you can imagine, like turtles, otters, and fish. Even with the builders reduced, the free-flowing stream has a new personality. Like a 100-acre tract that has been developed to housing, the change is permanent but functional. I guess one could co-exist with the beaver, but that’s a stretch. I know new settlers in town usually bring rather than take. They move into our provincial community with open eyes, new ideas, and a need to find peace. I hope they do well here. Just promise not to build a dam.



Photo by McGill Library on Upsplash



Photo by Heather Zabriskie on Upsplash

“The Unsayable G Word” by Valerie Kenney

Graduation. A word scary enough to send shivers down every high school student’s spine. A word that will happen to my friends and me in (roughly) 4 months, 6 days, 10 hours, 54 minutes, and 55 seconds. But who’s counting? That’s a joke. I really had to look up those numbers, and even then I’m not sure if that’s the right date. I believe that our graduation day is June 18, but don’t quote me on it.

You would think that I would remember the date, but children’s minds work in many strange ways. My friends have a pretty good grasp of what they want to do after graduation. My cousin is going to go with the flow, run with whatever is thrown her way and go from there. She doesn’t have any specific plans, and like most of us, feels rushed into quickly deciding what career path we want because we’re graduating so soon. The past two years have flown by and suddenly we’re seniors and need to make serious choices about our future. In any normal class, this would seem typical, but our class is different.

One of my best friends changed career paths entirely. She wanted to either be an English teacher or librarian but then, over the past year, she found what she assumed to be a creative outlet to help with her anxiety: baking. She made cookies, cakes, gingerbread, cupcakes, and anything else that she could create with the ingredients she had. For her, it was an internal battle: fighting over the stable option or picking something that would make her proud. I’m happy to report that she will be pursuing her dreams of opening her own bakery, after going to her dream college.

My other best friend decided to also change her path. She applied to three schools, giving her a degree to become an art teacher or freelance artist. I asked why she had changed her mind, and she said that she was scared that if she didn’t go this year, the desire for college training would disappear. I don’t believe that for a second. All of my friends are so headstrong and passionate about what they want to do with their lives after graduation, I have no doubt that whatever happens in the upcoming year will be wonderful for them.

I was supposed to brag about myself too...whoops! My plans have also changed (who’s surprised?) and it was never a route I anticipated. I planned to go straight off to college after high school. I’d get a degree, get a job, own a house, get a dog, all that good adult stuff. I realized that I’m the youngest in my class, and there are so many things that I haven’t done yet that I should do before going off to college. I will be taking a year off. I’m going to get a driver’s license, find a part-time job to build work experience, and focus on what I can do to really help my future. For instance, I’d actually finish the book I’m writing and get it published on Amazon. Even more important, I’m going to be a kid (instructions given by the school counselor), enjoy not having a huge workload, and revel in what’s left of my high school career. After all, I only have 126 days, 12 hours, 52 minutes, and 20 seconds until I graduate. My oh my! How time flies!

Hanging With The Boys by Mert Hickey

Years ago, an older local woman, prim and proper, named Irma, knew more than most people and let them know she knew. Kinda bossy. Saw her come steaming in the driveway when Gary, Steve and Ron were little. I had nails tacked on the wall for coats. I hung the boys up by their shirts. Irma huffed and puffed in, exclaimed I was hurting the boys and left. The kids thought it was pretty darn funny. Irma didn’t come back for a while.

Time And The Pocket Monkey– by Susan Emmet

Time. Timely. Timeless. Timeworn.

Time: NOUN: Season. Term. Decade. Century. Phase. Tempo. Rhythm. Beat. Age. Stage. Cycle. Epoch.

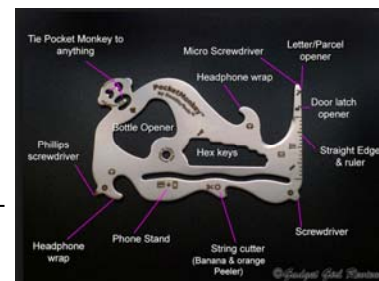
Timely/less/worn: ADJECTIVE: Spare. Free. Convenient. Seasonable. Prompt. Punctual/ Providential. Endless. Durable. Persistent. Unchangeable. Immortal/ Aged. Ancient. Venerable. Battered. Dog-eared. Weathered.

Time: VERB: To measure or clock. Synchronize. Adjust. Match. Set the rhythm.

I don't know about anyone else, but my sense of time has been altered, maybe permanently, by a year of COVID. I'm old enough to have gratefully received a first COVID vaccine and look forward to the second. But sometimes I don't know what day it is and can't remember what I've done during the day unless I glance at my daily log of chores and outings. Plus, I tend to read (too much?) and nap a lot in between chores and outings. That's partly due to the fact that it's winter. And that my nose drips if I'm masked too long. And that I spend time observing birds and comings and goings on our road. Lots of construction happening.

Spending time, running out of time, choosing a time, losing time, gaining time – have to keep it all straight. Is time on my side? Ask the Rolling Stones, I guess.

I keep looking at my Pocket Monkey (made in ME), a gadget whose 12 functions include peeling citrus, screwdriving (flat and Phillips), bottle opening, hex wrenching, straight edge/ruling, as well as opening locked doors or letters, and wrapping ear buds. The PM fits in a wallet. I haven't really used it yet, but I love its shape and possibilities. Shape and possibilities...may we continue to seek positive changes. May we all find a durable tempo, avoid dog-eared useless arguments, and push ourselves free to think and speak and listen to each other. Synchronize your watches. It's time.



Actual and Factual by Mert Hickey

You might be glad to know some interesting facts about West Gardiner's schools over the years. The first school was located on High Street near the Gardiner line, before 1850 West Gardiner had as many as 9 schools until we built Helen Thompson School in 1948. Tried to site them close so no one had to walk more than a mile. WG had a high school for a short time.

1910 – WG spent \$1850 on schools

1934 – Male teachers earned \$30/week and janitors \$3. Females got \$17 and the teachers paid the janitor

1937 – Installed lights in schools

1958 – WG spent \$27,000 on schools

One town meeting, some wanted to allocate \$20 for an outhouse. Voted down. The Auxiliary Hall was once the Whittaker School, later called Brown's School. McKinley School (also called Franklin School) sat on High Street and Merrill's Corner School sat on 126 and Pond Road. Jacquith School on Pond Road where fire station is. Called Rick's School at Merrill's Corner. Also called Roosevelt School. Indiana Road School Lincoln School- Corner of Clark's Lane and Neck Road – The Lincoln School fell down so built a school where Marty Butler now lives. Washington School – Built John Stevens School to replace it. Corner of Benson Road and Hallowell Litchfield Road. Built Washington School to replace. Where John Stevens (Panama Canal engineer) went to school.



WEST GARDINER NEWSLETTER

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A Quarterly For and From Our Town

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The Weathervane is a non-profit quarterly informational newsletter intended to be unbiased, non-denominational, non-partisan, accurate, and enjoyable.

Schedules of town events, organizations and activities as well as local businesses will be listed in the spring issues.

The Weathervane welcomes story ideas from our readers.

Call 441-9752 or write coloneoneill1@gmail.com