

The Warren Observer

Fact and Opinion about Warren, Connecticut, Population: 1300+

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Highlights of: www.warrenct.com

The Warren Web Site and Warren Observer

On June 12th David MacKenzie, Marylyn Hendricks, Toni Richardson, Joslyn Pollock, and Richard Wanderman (me) met at my house to discuss The Warren Observer and the Warren web site.

We need volunteers to cover town meetings. Please email Toni to discuss at jtrich1@earthlink.net.

We now have 51 people who have sent cards, letters, and email requesting a paper Warren Observer. Our intention was and continues to be to provide a paper copy at no charge to those folks who do not have easy access to the web. It perplexed us that folks would send email requesting the paper copy since all of the information (and more) can be found on the web site, and, the web site will always be more timely and updated. However, if you're finding the web site hard to use that's another matter and we need to hear from you about that. Please email the address below with comments, requests, complaints or, as some have, to let us know you're finding it useful.

We appreciate the checks some of you sent but we had to return them. We have no subscription program nor are we looking to administer one, we're trying to keep things simple. David has contacted donors to The Webster Society to discuss what remains in that account and what to do with it. We also appreciate the one person who took himself off the paper list once he understood what we are trying to do.

We simply want to continue sending out a paper overview of town business and announcements to people who do not have easy access to the web. We will do this at our own expense until the number of people on the list gets too long. Then we'll discuss how to take the next step. But, we do not want to take the next step; we want you to take the next step by using the Warren web site so that we can phase out paper for all but those who really need it.

We are not trying to undermine all of the hard work David MacKenzie did in establishing a town communication vehicle; we're extending it, with his support I might add.

We are working on issues with older browsers and AOL on the web site as some folks with older systems are running into problems. If you have problems or need help email me and I'll do my best to help.

The Warren Public Library is about to install a cable modem which will give them high speed internet access. Once this is done I am going to donate a wireless access point that will allow anyone with any laptop computer with a wireless card to be online at the library at no cost. I will then hang out at the library more often (I can work from there just as easily as here once it's online) and if I run into you there I will be more than happy to help you with questions about the Warren web site.

Richard Wanderman
webmaster@warrenct.com

Warren Tax Collector

August 1, 2003 is the last day to pay Warren town taxes without interest.

Warren Public Library

The Warren Public Library presents Notes in the Woods, its summer concert to benefit the library, on July 11 at 7 pm at Warren Woods. The music this year is by the "Just Friends Bluegrass Band." Concert goers are invited to bring the family and a picnic and enjoy an evening of music under the stars. Tickets are \$10 each with a maximum of \$30 for a family and are available at the Library, from library board members, or at the gate. Cookies and cold drinks will be available.

The "Just Friends Bluegrass Band" plays traditional, gospel and contemporary bluegrass, featuring hard-driving banjo solos backed with solid guitar, fiddle, and mandolin. Vocal selections include some traditional and gospel songs as well as contemporary bluegrass numbers done in the old style. A combination of male and female voices rounds out the performance. This Northwest Connecticut band formed in 1995 and has played at local venues as well as in coffee houses in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

For further information contact Martha Winkel at the Warren Public Library at 868-2195.

Warren Volunteer Fire Company

The Warren Volunteer Fire Co, sponsored CPR Saturday on June 14th. Fourteen people attended, earning certification in Community CPR. Warren Church Childcare teachers attended, along with several Warren School teachers, and local restaurant employees, and all are now certified in adult, infant and child CPR. Airway obstruction maneuver was taught in the event of a choking incident. Thank you to all who took the time to learn how to help in an emergency.

Warren Scholarships

The recipients of the Warren Lions Club George A. Maloney Scholarships for 2003 are Emily Buckley and Laura DeJulia.

The recipients of the Warren Volunteer Fire Company Women's Auxiliary Scholarships for 2003 are Emily Buckley and Ashley McLaren.

Congratulations to these young women and the entire Wamogo Class of 2003.

Notes from Warren Selectman's Meeting, June 3rd

Reported by Marylyn Hendricks

The June 3rd. selectman's meeting was held with Jack Travers, Linda Kennedy, Marion Smith and Ken Layman in attendance.

The first order of business was the Litchfield County Dispatch contract (answers 911 calls). The contract for one year will begin July first at a fee of \$9.98 per capita and will cost \$12,084.10. A motion was passed to continue this service.

Jack Travers introduced a letter from the town of Watertown asking if we'd join in an action to amend binding arbitration laws so that towns would have the same laws as the state. This deals with contracts and unions. This will be on the legislative agenda.

The town needs to build a shed for the metal dumpster. Steel and concrete estimates are in process.

Improvements to the Warren Woods area resulted in trees taken down. fourteen stumps remain and an estimate from Housatonic Stump Grinding to grind the stumps is \$1000.00 and is being considered.

A part-time position to assist the board of selectmen is available. Hours would be flexible. Qualifications are: typing and computer skills, good communication, phone answering, and filing skills and being a self-starter. Contact Jack Travers if interested. Space for such a person was discussed as office space is already cramped.

Notes from Warren Building Committee Meeting, June 12

Reported by Toni Richardson

Mr. Travers convened the Town Buildings Committee on June 12 and explained that within the next two years the town must bring the town hall into compliance with handicapped accessibility standards and solve the more pressing problem of the leaking roof above the Town Clerk's office. One way to do this, Mr. Travers said, is to build a new office for the town clerk above the existing office and to renovate the upstairs hall into offices for town functions. Putting all offices on the top level and installing handicapped accessible bathrooms, would solve space problems now and for the future, while complying with required accessibility standards.

To accomplish this would require gutting and redoing pretty much everything in town hall: dividing the main hall into offices, installing a driveway in front at grade level with the main floor and providing handicapped access through the existing door openings. It would require removing the stage area to allow access to the new town clerk's office and lowering the ceiling in the main hall to conserve energy. A new commercial grade kitchen would be built in the lower level for use in emergency situations when town hall must provide emergency shelter. The large hall on the lower level would be expanded to reclaim space that was partitioned off for offices. The lower level vault would remain in use as an archive for old records. Renovations to the downstairs bathrooms and the old shower room would provide accessibility and allow for use in emergency situations. The outside of building would not need to be changed much.

Mr. Travers emphasized that there is probably not a better solution than using upstairs for offices. If all offices are on one floor, there is no need for an elevator to be installed. This means a savings of as much as \$300,000 on overall costs.

Building Committee members discussed alternatives for the project and other possible locations for town activities that use the hall now.

Some committee members expressed interest in a more wide-ranging capital plan for the town. They suggested looking at all potential needs such as recreation, library, fire protection, government function and all property currently owned by the town. From that examination a plan should emerge that balances needs in the most effective way

Mr. Travers indicated, that while that would be a good idea, the need to move forward on town hall plans is very immediate. The problems with leaks in the roof over the vault and the need to meet accessibility standards, as well as to prepare for emergency services must be dealt with now. He pointed out that it is a good time to consider renovations since money is available at low rates. Mr. Anderson noted that contractors are more available now as well.

The committee concurred that the next step needs to be to find an architect to do some preliminary work. Mr. Richardson and Mr. Travers noted that there are some funds in the budget for this purpose. Members suggested some specifics on what and how many offices, square footage, etc. should be provided to the architect as well as some idea of what we want to spend (\$1,000,000 was a ball park number that arose in discussion.)

Mr. Travers will talk to some architects this week and begin the process. Committee members agreed that Thursday nights are good to meet and Mr. Travers will set up next meeting when he has spoken with an architect and has some details to share.

Members noted that it is amazing how well the building has stood up for the past 50 years and expressed the hope that people 50 years from now will think this committee did as well.

For a more complete description of the discussions of the committee, go the web site at www.warrenct.com and look for Town Building Committee notes under Town Government.

Notes from Warren Planning and Zoning Meeting, June 17th

Reported by Toni Richardson

On June 17 Wayne Wilson reconvened the scheduled June 10 that had to be adjourned due to lack of a quorum. The Commission approved applications for:

Construction, modifications and site improvements to the former Warren store property;

Timber harvesting on City of Waterbury reservoir property;

Three dwellings by Mark and Anthony Zappone. Two lots are on Partridge road and one at 88 Reed Road;

A minor subdivision at 154 Above All Road for Christopher and Natalie Brodhead. The Commission noted it had received a letter from selectmen concerning drainage. Jack Travers confirmed that Breakneck Road, which is part of the project, remains a town road;

A tractor shed on property belonging to Larry O'Toole. The shed is an addition to an existing barn, subject to filing of the correct application fee.

In other business the commission discussed the job descriptions of the Zoning Enforcement Officer at length with the intention of updating the description adopted in 1991.

Notes from Warren Planning and Zoning Meeting, June 17th (Continued)

The Commission discussed how to handle a complaint received by a board member about the construction of a chicken coop on a neighbor's property and whether the owner had a permit for the building. An employee of the landowner indicated he was told he did not need a permit since the building was to be a small shed. While there was no dispute that the regulations cover such structures (and probably dog houses, bird houses and calf hutches as well), the commission has not required people to apply for insignificant structures. In the case of the chicken coop, if a permit had been requested, it would have been approved, but the Commission would have required the setback rules be honored. Jack Travers noted that the regulations need to be amended to give better guidance on which structures require permits. Wayne Wilson tabled the discussion to gather information from other towns on how they handle these kinds of structures.

To resolve the complaint, the ZEO will ask the owner of the chicken coop to move it to within the setback requirements. Chairman Wilson noted that the ZEO handles up to 100 applications a year and he has noted only 3 or 4 where there was a question.

The discussion of the complaint raised the issue of whether all complaints should be in writing. (This one was not.) The consensus of the commission was to require written complaints.

Warren Almanac
Danielle Pollock

The Old Farmer's Almanac predicts the weather patterns as follows:

The average temperature will be 71 degrees, which is about par. Precipitation will be approximately 3 1/2 inches, also average.

July 1-4 - Warm, dry
July 5-10 - Hot, thunderstorms
July 11-15 - Sunny
July 16-19 - Rain, then sunny
July 20-25 - Showers
July 26-31 - Partly sunny, thunderstorms

Warren Flora and Fauna: Lowry Day Solitude 93
Dr. Everett Vreeland

I believe the word "Lowry" is a colloquial word but its growly sound describes a day in mid May; cold, still, and with moving, dark clouds hanging not so high above. As far as I knew, I had completed all contacts required of this day and a period of supremely welcome solitude was upon me. Of course, in an instant, a wild place came to mind and I arrived at a place I knew where I can park about three yards from a river with my outline broken by shielding birches with kindergarten leaves, and watch the natural world unfold its richness.

I was attracted there because I had seen swallows wheeling only inches above the water and knew there was a hatch of aquatic insects drawing forth the birds and generating action in the Trout world. Cold rain was occasional but swallows, "tree" and "bank," swooped and dove gulping bugs and seemed in concert with Beethoven softly playing on my car tapes. At one point, along the bank beneath my window riding the current, bounced a male wood duck, solitary with astounding plumage he appeared to have a definite goal in mind. Like a male anything heading out in search of company. In truth his mate probably sat upon eggs in some hollow tree and he figured by now he would not see her again. Probably true.

I understand the word "vibes" to be a short, clear contraction of "vibrations" and when applied to assessing personality of animals, humans included, is understood, though not really describable. All animals have it and all the lower animals use it on a daily basis to survive. Horses, dogs, and cats can recognize in a blink those humans who are acceptable and unafraid. The best description I have heard of this state is that one feels the music of another organism and pays no attention to the words. It is mostly body language and maybe odor. The next time you meet someone you instantly dislike stop and evaluate the reasons why before you get to hear him. In the presence of an animal you are unsure with, sit down and ignore him. Interact with the people the animal trusts and be alert for offers of interest from the animal. If I have to explain the nature of those offers then you better give up the whole plan.

In the floral world I noticed that there are two "Hogwart" plants where I saw one last year. This is a very unwanted plant imported from Asia and deserves a dose of "ethnic cleansing." If you are "urban" and unused to seeing things not manmade, I suggest you learn this plant along with poison ivy and nettles.