

W I N T E R 2 0 1 2

From the

Friends of Northwest Park

Happy New Year!!



2011 was packed full of fun and activities at Northwest Park.

The New Year will bring that and more.

Plenty of events for all ages for children, teens, adults and Senior Citizens!

- Nature Walks and Self-Guided Nature Trails
- Programs on owls, bluebirds, pond study, reptiles and amphibians, mammals, endangered species and tracking
- Summer Nature Camp
- Live Animal Exhibits and Demonstrations
- Picnic Facilities
- Playground
- Cross-Country Ski and Snowshoeing Trails
- Rentals Community Gardens
- Tobacco Cultural Museum and
- A full, operational maple sugar house

Please join us in this newsletter to find out more about current activities and what's in store for the Winter Season!



NORTHWest PARK & Nature Center

Northwest Park is a 473-acre Municipal Park owned and operated by the Town of Windsor, CT. The Park also showcases a nature center with hands-on exhibits, 10 different walking trails that wind through the park, a living animal farm with agricultural exhibits, a tobacco cultural museum with exhibits, a tobacco archive with historical information, a maple sugar house, and a playground.

Web site: www.northwestpark.org

eMail address friendsofnwp@gmail.com.



Save the Date!

Concert

2/4/2012

The
International
String Trio
7:30 pm - \$18

Cabin Fever

2/4/2012

Contests, games,
prizes, educational
activities and a large
bonfire.

Concert

2/18/2012

The
Guggenheim
Grotto
7:30 pm - \$18



Events & Activities

February 1: Registration opens today for **Northwest Park's Summer Nature Camp**, a great way for grades Pre K – 8 students to actively experience nature, outdoor living skills, science and agriculture while engaging in a wide variety of fun learning and great traditional camp activities.

February 1: Registration opens today for the **Northwest Park Junior Counselor Certification Program**. All Junior Counselors interested in the 2012 Summer Nature Camp must attend one workshop. The workshop dates for 2012 are: Thursday, February 23, or Thursday April 19, 2012 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. The certification requires attendance to one workshop. Counselors' ages 14-17 are accepted. A \$25.00 (Windsor Resident), and a \$35.00 (Non-Windsor Resident) fee covers the cost of the workshop, Junior Counselor T-shirt, materials and certification.

February 4: Visit Northwest Park from 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM for Northwest Park's annual **Cabin Fever Festival**. This event will include contests, games and prizes, such as, a snowball throwing contest, a moose relay race, and adult/child sled pull race, and many more. It will also include exhibitors and educational activities, such as, a professional ice carver, live bird of prey program, and a family concert. Cross country skis and snowshoes will be available for rent at \$5.00/each. The event will kick off with a large bonfire to warm everyone up. This is a wonderful winter event for the whole family. Hamburgers, chili and other refreshments will be for sale. Tell your friends and family. Children 2 and under are Free. Registration is required. \$3.00 per person (Windsor resident), \$5.00 per person (non-Windsor resident).

February 4 *: Come out to the **Northwest Park Coffeehouse** from 7:30 PM to 10:00 PM tonight and join **The International String Trio**. They are a group of exceptionally talented musicians'. The group prides itself on its' stylistic diversity, delivering Gypsy jazz, Appalachian folk, acoustic world music, (Irish, Klezmer, Russian, Italian, French, Bluegrass, etc.) Cost: \$18.00.

February 11: Beginning today, visit **Northwest Park** on Saturdays and Sundays between 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM through March 24 for **Open Sugarhouse** to learn the art and skill of maple sugaring from our sugarhouse expert, Chuck Drake. Free.

February 18 *: Come out to the **Northwest Park Coffeehouse** from 7:30 PM to 10:00 PM tonight and join **The Guggenheim Grotto**. When they first appeared on the U.S. scene in 2006, comparisons to Simon and Garfunkel dominated the critical landscape. With their two-part harmonies, folk acoustic styling and earned pop song writing, it seemed no one could resist them. Cost: \$18.00.

February 20: Today through February 24 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM begins **Northwest Park's February School Break Camp**. Children in grades 1 through 6 can experience a new adventure and have fun at Northwest Park's School Break Winter Trackers Camp. This camp will focus on wildlife tracking, feeding, observation and art. Children will learn about their environment through hands-on games, crafts, hikes, experiments, and fun \$145.00 (Windsor residents), \$155.00 (Non-Windsor Residents).

February 20: Extended Camp is available for **February Break Camp** this week from 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM each day. Extended morning or afternoon care for the week is \$25.00 per session (Windsor residents), \$35.00 (Non-res).

March 3 *: Come out to the **Northwest Park Coffeehouse** from 7:30 PM to 10:00 PM tonight and join **Guy Davis**. An authentic and spellbinding bluesman, with an incredible voice and a great sense of humor. He has dedicated himself to reviving the traditions of acoustic blues through the material of the great blues masters, African American stories, and his own original song. Cost: \$20.00

March 24: Wake up and head to Northwest Park this morning for the annual **Friends of Northwest Park Pancake Breakfast** from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM in the Warming Shed. Bring an appetite for a full breakfast of pancakes and sausage smothered in 100% pure maple syrup made right at Windsor's very own Northwest Park. Refreshment choices include orange juice, coffee, tea and hot chocolate. \$5.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children. Please call 860-285-1886 to register. There will also be a CHIPS (child identification program) sponsored by the Masons from Windsor's Washington Lodge #70. Bring your children from ages birth to 18 to the Nature Center from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

April 7: Today from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM join **Northwest Park's** staff for a **Whose Egg Is It?** Egg Hunt. Take a short hike and search for brightly colored eggs filled with treats as well as decorated and camouflaged eggs that resemble wild bird eggs that are all carefully hidden along the trails. With the help of our egg chart, identify the bird eggs you find and place them in the appropriate nest (artificial). Learn about the birds that are returning to Connecticut after a cold winter. \$3.00 per person. 860-285-1886 Activity 2252.121.



April 9: Community Garden plots are available at **Northwest Park**. These plots are 36' x 36', are pre-harrowed and marked for those wishing to use their "green thumb." \$35 Windsor residents, \$45.00 Non-Windsor residents. 860-285-1886.

April 14 *: Come out to the **Northwest Park Coffeehouse** from 7:30 PM to 10:00 PM tonight and join the **Ana Egge Band**. Saskatchewan-born, Brooklyn-based folk troubadour, Ana isn't your run of the mill alternative country singer. Using unique production and rock-based chord progressions, Ana has made a name for herself as a Gillian Welch figure with a rocker attitude. \$16.00.

April 16: Today through April 20 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, kids in grades 1 through 6 can experience a new adventure and have fun at **Northwest Park's Spring School Break Spring Trackers Camp**. This exciting camp will focus on science, farm and nature. Children will learn about their environment with hands-on learning through games, crafts, hikes, experiments and fun. What a great way to keep your child busy during spring break. \$145.00 (Windsor residents), \$155.00 (Non-residents). 860-285-1886. Activity number 2252.122.

April 16: Extended Camp is available for **April Break camp** this week from 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM each day. Extended morning or afternoon camp for the week is \$25.00 per session (Windsor residents), \$35.00 (Non-residents). 860-285-1886. Activity Number 2252.123, AM Camp, Activity Number 2252.124, PM Camp.

April 21: Join the staff and volunteers of Northwest Park for the annual **Earth Day Celebration** from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Enjoy a signs of spring family nature walk, environmental children's games, musical entertainment, Earth Day crafts, Earth care demonstrations and exhibits, a wildlife show, and much more. Wholesome snacks will be available for purchase. Free. 860-285-1886.

April 28 *: Come Out to the **Northwest Park Coffeehouse** from 7:30 PM to 10:00 PM tonight and join **The Gypsy Moth Trio with Daisy Castro**. Daisy has a musical and a daring style of playing that belies her young years. Daisy plays with a beautiful tone and superb feeling. \$18.00.

* Sponsored by the Friends of Northwest Park. You may purchase tickets on-line by going to www.northwestpark.org.

Summer Nature Day Camp Signup

Well, it is that time of year again. **February 1st 2012** is the day that our registration begins for our Summer Nature Day Camp and our Junior Counselor Certification Program!

Nature Camp provides pre-school through grade 8 youth with the opportunity to learn about nature while enjoying a variety of fun activities within a camp community. We offer 8 weeks of camp for campers each week has a different theme. So whether the camper in your life would enjoy Dinosaur Discoveries, Farm Frenzy, Mammal Maniacs, or Wilderness Adventure, we have something for everyone.

Northwest Park offers excellent week-long nature programs for younger campers (Pre K- Grade 3) that concentrate on science, farm, and nature learning while enjoying the outdoors. Campers are engaged in hands-on experiences, activities, games, hikes, observations, projects, stories and experiments.

Crafts are incorporated into the camp experience. Northwest Park also offers exciting weeks filled with adventure for our older campers (Grade 4-8). They will enjoy hikes, games, survival techniques, team building activities, ropes course challenges, letterboxing, archery, Outdoor Living Skills and camping, all while exploring Northwest Park. You can sign your camper up for one or all 8 weeks of camp. We also offer before and after camp for an additional fee.



Picture by Jen Filer

With our camp offered for Pre-K to grade 8 students, we want to make sure we foster our older youth as well during the summer. Our Junior Counselor Certification program is now available to 14-17 year olds that are interested in working with youth, while developing leadership skills, understanding age appropriate activities and also have an opportunity to show the skills learned through leading our campers through an activity of their choice. This program is focusing on providing fun and educational activities for all of our campers. So come out and have a FUN summer at Northwest Park. Remember, come out and play with Windsor Recreation and Leisure Services, the benefits are endless!!



Storm Alfred: Trick or Treat!

The snowstorm that delivered up to 18" on Halloween was certainly a surprise. Power to Windsor and the park was out for 8+ days. The Park was not spared from a lot of tree damage.

To The Rescue ...

Two Saturday workdays were held and many were there to help with the cleanup that was very much appreciated.

A special **thank you** goes out to those volunteers, Robby Cvejanovich, Scott Elkins & Boy Scout Troop #56, Stuart Johnson, Andrea Frez, Robert Schwartz, Bill Hilbert, Peter Souza, John Kelling, Paul Bugl, Sam Hinckley, Peter Haines, Lindsay Hawes, Jay Melley, Phil Poulet and Jeff McCarthy.



Pictures by Ford Parker

Nature's Corner

By Ford Parker

Barred Owl



On a cold December morning, Tom DeShais, environmental educator, spotted a Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) perched above Wetland Forest Trail. The bird was just preparing to swallow a field mouse and took no alarm at his presence. This was the beginning of many hikes to observe and enjoy this resident of Northwest Park.

The Barred Owl is a year around resident of the Park. It is a large bird that lacks the ear tufts. Standing at 16-24 inches in height, this owl sports a white belly that is horizontally streaked in brown and white – hence the name Barred Owl. Its eyes are dark brown, while most other owls have yellow eyes.

Just like many other owls, the Barred Owl is primarily nocturnal but will hunt during daylight. The diet of the Barred Owl consists mostly of mice, but also includes squirrels, rabbits, smaller birds, crayfish, amphibians, reptiles and insects. Owls have both eyes in the front. This gives them good depth perception, which helps them to judge how far away something is. It also means they can't see sideways or backwards. To deal with this, owls can turn their head almost all the way around. Owl ears are just holes on the sides of their head covered with feathers.

These holes are higher on one side than the other. This helps the owl tell if a sound is coming from above or below. This bird is also a silent flyer due to specially designed feathers that allow air to pass over silently, which is ideal for a sneak attack.

The sound of the Barred Owl gives voice to the forest at dusk, night and dawn. The most common sound of the Barred Owl is "hoo HOO hoo hoo, hoo HOO hoo hooaaahhhhh." This is often interpreted as "Who-cooks-for-you-- who-cooks-for-you-all?" Barred Owls have many other vocalizations, however.

Take a walk along Wetland forest Trail and look among the hemlock bows and you may be surprised to find one fast asleep or watching you closely. Practice its call and you may have an enjoyable conversation with one of Northwest Park's favorite owls.



Owl pictures by Tom DeShais (top) and Ford Parker (bottom)



Nature Photography Tips & Techniques

By Steve Ryan



The photography tips for this edition of the newsletter will help you to be prepared for taking great pictures at a moments notice.

Have you ever been out on the trail with your camera and found yourself with a great photo opportunity like Tom did with the barred owl?

It's one of those shots that you had to catch right away or it was gone forever. Perhaps you've missed a great bird-in-flight shot, or an 8-point buck as it strides across the trail just 30 feet in front of you. Or maybe even the local Sasquatch, or his cousin Yeti, at Northwest Park. He was spotted at last year's Cabin Fever event. We were prepared and were able to get a fleeting picture of him with one our visitors. Not too abominable is he??

It's not a shot you want to miss. So what can you do to make sure you're ready? BE PREPARED!

- Charge your camera & flash batteries – bring extras. In cold weather, keep them close to your body.
- Check camera settings BEFORE you go out to ensure they are set up properly for what you are anticipating.
 - *ISO Settings:* Bright sunny day: 100 to 200 for stationary or slow moving subjects. 200 or greater for Birds-in-Flight (BIF or other wildlife in motion) or for wildlife in the shaded woods.
 - *Shutter Speed:* Start at 1/400 sec for a static subject. Birds in flight or animal in motion: Minimum of 1/500. The faster the better!! Remember, your ISO settings need to be high enough to use the fast shutter speeds especially at dawn or dusk when birding activity will be at its most active levels.
 - *Aperture setting:* Consider a wide-open setting of f2.8, or the fastest f-stop your lens is designed for, to maximize shutter speed and to isolate the subject with minimal depth of field. Don't be afraid to use your flash unit to brighten your subject on overcast days, for adding catch-lights in the subject's eyes or for fill flash to lighten up shadows caused by bright, direct sunlight.

HAPPY HUNTING WITH YOUR CAMERA

Find the Birds

G	R	E	A	T	B	L	U	E	H	E	R	O	N	Q	L	A	R	K	W
R	P	H	I	E	S	N	O	W	Y	O	W	L	S	U	P	T	L	O	I
E	L	O	D	A	P	T	H	R	U	S	H	L	B	A	R	N	O	W	L
B	F	V	U	L	T	U	R	E	S	W	A	N	V	I	R	E	O	A	D
E	A	G	L	E	S	A	R	N	S	E	A	G	U	L	S	N	X	T	
S	C	R	E	E	C	H	O	W	L	P	I	G	E	O	N	T	S	W	U
F	R	I	S	P	A	R	R	O	W	A	R	B	L	E	R	E	F	I	R
M	O	C	K	I	N	G	B	I	R	D	O	V	E	S	E	R	P	N	K
K	W	P	A	R	T	R	I	D	G	E	F	I	N	C	H	N	R	G	E
I	B	I	S	A	T	O	R	I	O	L	E	D	U	C	K	S	J	A	Y
F	A	L	C	O	N	S	S	O	N	G	B	I	R	D	S	E	E	C	P
H	A	W	K	G	R	E	A	T	H	O	R	N	E	D	O	W	L	R	A
C	H	I	C	K	A	D	E	E	B	L	A	C	K	B	I	R	D	A	R
C	A	N	A	D	A	G	O	S	E	M	A	L	L	A	R	D	N	R	
P	L	E	C	A	R	D	I	N	A	L	O	S	P	R	E	Y	S	E	O
W	G	R	O	U	S	E	H	U	M	M	I	N	G	B	I	R	D	S	T
K	I	N	G	F	I	S	H	E	R	S	T	A	R	L	I	N	G	A	S

Loons, Grebes, Swan, Teal, Ibis, Cranes, Seagulls, Terns, Mallard, Vultures, Snowy Owl, Screech Owl, Barn Owl, Eagles, Osprey, Falcons, Wild Turkey, Grouse, Quail, Partridge, Pigeon, Doves, Parrots, Kingfishers, Lark, Sparrow, Jay, Crow, Chickadee, Wren, Hawk, Thrush, Waxwing, Warbler, Starling, Vireo, Blackbird, Oriole, Cardinal, Finch, Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Hummingbirds, Great Horned Owl, Mockingbird

Nature Word Search



Pictures by Steve Ryan



From the President

Happy Leap Year



People smarter than me have tracked the earth's movement around the sun and determined that every four years; we need an extra day to get our time table back into sync. That way the solstice and the equinox can fall on the anointed days. The fine tuning goes so far to add a second or two every couple of years, but that is way beyond my comprehension. The point is that this year, for the 8th time since the Friends of Northwest Park came into existence, we have an extra day to catch up.

And it is a good time to reassess the Friends and what we do. We have our big events, such as the Pancake Breakfast, the Country Fair and the Concert Series. To some, there is a perception that they run on autopilot, and to an extent that is true. But, at the same time, it also requires a large amount of effort and people to do the jobs. We have got to a point where the majority of the original group are not around (which is understandable since it is over a thirty year period), and we have a core group that continue to hold things together**. It is clear we need new blood that will allow the big events to flourish but more importantly take us to a new level of action.

This year, we have taken a step to revitalize at least one of the big events. Last September, we had the Country Fair on a rain threatening / hurricane warning day. Although the weather did hold out for us, attendance was down, exhibitors canceled or didn't show up and we lost money. The event is not designed to be a big money winner, but the monies raised do go to the scholarship fund. So we need to examine what we are doing.

Since the fall, we have already had several meetings in preparation for the "30th New Old Country Fair" to be held on September 22, 2012. Thirty years is a long time. We are fortunate to have Bob Gresham in the role of the coordinator.

We are focusing on getting more income early by starting the booklet advertising earlier (last year the ads did not pay for the booklet for a variety of reasons that will be avoided this year.) The three thousand booklets do go a long way to describe the events. We plan to get business involvement in a scarecrow contest. We plan to have events that showcase the educational and recreational assets of the park and its mission, as well as get more people involved in activities on the trails. We will have more demonstrations of crafts and talents. And there will be contests. There will be entertainment. The idea is to get families out for a cheap day of fun. We are focusing on food, which remains a big draw for people, doing something different and more than the hot dogs and hamburgers. We will also have the lunch basket auction, with the actual method being assessed.

The point is: we will revitalize this event and make it a place to go, as it has in the past. We are excited. We need more volunteers and people with ideas to share the excitement. So this is a plea to get involved. The Fair is one event. We should do more in the Park. There is so much potential. The time commitment is not great, the rewards are huge. Thanks.

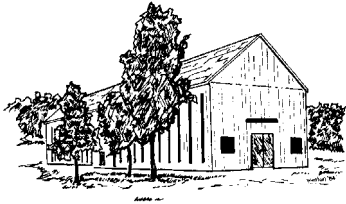
Jay

Editor's Note: Donations were made in memory of three members of the Friends of Northwest Park community who passed away last year. Over \$1500 was given in memory of Everett B. Dowe, Jr. (the founder of the Friends of Northwest Park), Robert Wade, and Lucinda (Alves) Nunes.



The Friends of Northwest Park
P.O. Box 773
Windsor, CT 06095
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hartford, CT
Permit No. 5067



The newsletter is a journal of Northwest Park and the Friends of Northwest Park. Change of address notices should be sent to The Friends of Northwest Park, PO Box 773, Windsor, CT 06095.

Issue Editor: Steve Ryan
eMail: SMRYAN54@gmail.com

Next Issue: Spring, 2012
Deadline for Entries: 3/15/2012



NORTHWest
PARK & *Nature Center*

See more on our web site:
www.NorthWestPark.org