

WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

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WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOUSE TOUR

Saturday, April 26, 2014 10am-4pm

By Ed Paquette

The surge of bitter cold that gripped the region will stand out in the minds of most Windsor residents when they think back upon this past winter. Central heating systems, double-paned windows, and layers of insulation could not completely quell the chill that permeated the air. And so it is that this year's Historic House Tour theme, "Hearth and Home," acknowledges the great chimneys and fireplaces that heated the homes of Windsor's earliest residents. There are 25 fireplaces in the six homes on this year's tour. These fireplaces were the figurative and literal centers of these houses and ensured the survival of residents during harsh winters when frigid temperatures posed deadly dangers. But they are also roadmaps in the study of older houses. Fireplaces tell us a lot about the design intent of the builders, the functional purpose of the original rooms, and even some interesting tales about what may have transpired within the households. Unraveling these details becomes increasingly difficult (and interesting) when one considers that all of the homes on this year's tour were expanded at some point. Through the years, many fireplaces lost their central position within the house when additions were constructed and gas and electricity took hold. And so we hope that this year's Tour will garner a greater appreciation for the richness of Windsor's historic houses, the sturdy chimneys that support them, and the fireplaces that nurtured their families.

Tickets can be purchased at the Windsor Historical Society and at various locations around town for \$20 in advance of the tour and \$25 the day of the tour. Here is a preview of the homes you'll be seeing:

336 Palisado Avenue (mid-1700s)

This stately home stands out even among the other venerable historic homes that line Palisado Avenue. Set



back from the road and framed by a large circular drive, it is easy to see how this building was a welcome site to travelers when it served as a tavern in the distant past. Recent owners have transformed it into a comfortable 21st-century home while maintaining respect for its original historic features including wide plank floorboards, massive fireplaces, Indian shutters, and wall paneling. Of great interest will be the attic upon which a widow's peak was perched at one time.

1257 Poquonock Avenue (1776) and

1227 Poquonock Avenue (1806)

These side-by-side neighbors date back more than 200 years and are located near the site of the original Poquonock Meetinghouse and cemetery. Both structures



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WINDSOR
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Our Mission

The Windsor Historical Society aims to inspire public awareness and appreciation of the diverse peoples, places, and events that contribute to Windsor's evolving history. We preserve and interpret Windsor's historical record through active collecting, research, exhibitions, programs, and communications in the belief that an understanding of history can provide individuals and communities with connections to the past, a sense of belonging in the present, and responsibility for the future.

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Director's Report

Christine Ermenc, Executive Director



House Tour Signals Spring!

At the end of a long winter, most people in this area are ready for spring. In Windsor, there are many ways to celebrate! We herald the beginnings of longer days and warmer weather with Northwest Park's wonderful all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast with syrup tapped from their own maple trees. May is reserved for Windsor's famous Shad Derby events: a ball, a crafts fair on the Broad Street Green, a town-wide parade, and a host of related activities. New England weather in the spring can be unpredictable. One year in recent memory, it snowed on Shad Derby Day. In other years, the weather has been almost summerlike. Yet after a long winter, regardless of weather, spring sports and outdoor activities make for a very full calendar!

Over twelve years ago, Windsor Historical Society staff and volunteers began planning our first-ever House Tour. Our challenge was to find a time of year that wasn't crowded with town activities -- a time of year where people would welcome the opportunity to get outside and tour historic homes around Windsor. It was Nancy Clark, our then-Board President, who chose the last weekend of April. Nancy, an avid gardener, knew that this is an absolutely beautiful time of year when leaves are just emerging in varied hues of green, when spring bulbs and ornamental fruit trees are in glorious bloom, splendidly framing historic homes.

For our first six biannual tours, historian Beverly Garvan conducted extensive research on the historic homes we picked, combing town histories, photographic files, maps, city directories, old telephone books, tax and vital records in the Society's library and land records in the Windsor Town Clerk's office.

As well as giving visitors information about home architecture, we wanted to assemble information about early homeowners and neighborhood development. This year, for our seventh House Tour, Elaine Brophy and Christina Wilson continued Beverly Garvan's efforts. Over the years, we have built up quite a substantial body of information on roughly fifty Windsor homes, now available through our library and on our website.

Attending the House Tour solo or with a group of friends is a fun way to absorb some Windsor history and open your eyes and mind to the varied beauties of historic architecture. You'll see historic homes adapted for modern life and perhaps pick up some creative interior design ideas for your own residence. As an added bonus to this year's tour, one homeowner who makes furniture has agreed to open his workshop area to tour-goers interested in craftsmanship and woodworking. So put April 26th on your calendar, and join us in celebrating the coming of spring with our 2014 "Hearth and Home" House Tour.

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are quintessential 4-over-4 room colonial homes that include a multitude of additions and updates. Nevertheless, they have retained the basic character and charm that made them showpieces in their time. Massive hearth fireplaces, beehive ovens, wall paneling, and wide plank floorboards are just some of the features to be found in both homes. Tour participants will be amazed at the seamless flow from the 18th-century original portions to 21st century additions. The gardens and outbuildings will round out a perfect spring visit.



45 Deerfield Road (1822)

This classic brick home boasts six fireplaces. It is a textbook case of an historic house that has served many purposes through the years and undergone extensive renovation while maintaining its charm and authenticity.



The elegant, modern kitchen is the result of a merging of a large wood shed into the living space of the home. The current owners are grateful for the numerous closets – a rarity in a home of this age. In the recent past, this building housed a commercial office on the first floor and an apartment on the second. Skillful remodeling has extinguished all traces of this formerly awkward layout. Be sure to look for electric sockets and fixtures. You won't find them easily in this house!

1053 Windsor Avenue (1833)

This house is situated on almost an acre of land on a long, narrow Windsor Avenue lot. The traditional red brick farmhouse is typical of many others of its time period and location. When studying the house from the outside, it becomes apparent that a brick addition built on at some point to give the house more depth. More obvious is the



incorporation of the wooden carriage house into the main house's living space. This is a building that has undergone many changes through the years, and we are still not certain we have identified all of them. A concealed exterior entrance and staircase only add to the mystery as do several changes that were made to support the boarders who once occupied this home.

846 Windsor Avenue (1900)

This 3,000-square-foot home, like many of the others on this year's tour, has been extensively renovated and updated. The goal of much of the renovation was to return the home to its original design after years of having been subdivided to accommodate a second floor apartment. This house, the newest on the Tour, reflects its youth as evidenced by its one fireplace – an acknowledgement that the advent of gas heat had taken hold by the turn of the 20th century. The perfectly positioned southern exposure provides a flood of natural sunlight throughout the house thus creating a warm and inviting feel for visitors.



Summer Programs, 2014



Thursday, May 15, 5:30PM to 6:30PM:

Connecticut's State Parks: A Tour and History. It's time for outdoor activities! Join James W. Little of the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association (CFPA) at Windsor Historical Society for a relaxing tour of some of Connecticut's most beautiful trails, parks and forests. Learn more about Connecticut's pioneering role in the conservation movement, about CFPA, and about some of the places that make Connecticut truly special. And you just might be the lucky winner of [A Shared Landscape: a Guide and History of Connecticut's State Parks and Forests](#), a \$25 value!

Friday, May 23, 5PM: **"This is Where" Facebook Photo Contest** submission deadline! This year, send us an image and tell us a one-sentence story about the place that starts with **"This is where..."** It could be anywhere in Windsor - the place where you had your first kiss, where a historic event occurred, or a scene from your daily commute. Take the photo and write a sentence beginning "This is where..." Photographers of any age and from any town can submit only one image. Email your jpeg file and one-sentence story along with your name, age, address, and phone number to Agnes Pier at ampier1969@gmail.com. Submissions will be posted on the Society's Facebook page, where all the voting will take place. Facebook users can "like" their favorite image and story to vote. Voting will continue until Thursday, May 29th at 9 PM. Winners will be announced on Friday, May 30th. The first prize winner with the most votes will receive \$100. Second prize is \$75, and third prize is \$50. Submission of an entry constitutes warranty of originality and non-infringement, as well as permission for the Windsor Historical Society, Windsor, CT, to publish the entry in print or online, including social media.

Thursday, May 29, 9PM: **"This is Where" Facebook Photo Contest** voting deadline! Facebook users can "like" their favorite image and story to vote. Make sure to "like" the actual image and not the album! Winners will be announced on Friday, May 30th.

Saturday, June 7, 9AM to 10AM: **Tour the Farmington River Power Company and Rainbow Fish Ladder.** Dams in the Rainbow area have harnessed waterpower from 1825 to this day. Take this rare opportunity to tour the Rainbow Dam and Fish Ladder and the Farmington River Power Company built by Stanley Works in 1925. You will see historic photographs and learn how the turbines and generators work with Don Zessin, Plant Manager. Then view migrating fish, observe how a fish ladder and fish traps operate, and learn more about the habits of migrating fish in Connecticut from State DEEP staff. Limited enrollment; reserve your spot for this program by June 6.

Friday, June 13, 7PM to 9PM: **"Inspired Objects: Metalworking through the Ages" Opening Reception and Sale.** Come view and purchase the work of members of the Metal Clay Artisan Guild in Connecticut who have created new works specifically in response to objects in the Windsor Historical Society's collection. Learn about metalworking through the ages, meet the artisans, and

enjoy light refreshments. The exhibit will remain on view until August 8th. Cost: FREE. .

Saturday, June 14, 11AM to 4PM: **"Inspired Objects: Metalworking through the Ages" Sale and Demonstration Day** In conjunction with CT Open House Day, Windsor Historical Society will be open for FREE on this Saturday. Come view the work of members of the Metal Clay Artisan Guild. This event will include educational demonstrations and the opportunity to speak with varied artists who have been working with this exciting new medium. Artisans will be offering their handcrafted works for sale, with a percentage of the proceeds to benefit the Windsor Historical Society. The Society will also lead historic house tours at 11 AM and 1 PM, and the Research Library will be open from 11 AM to 4 PM. Cost: FREE.

Wednesday, June 18: 5:30PM to 7PM: **An Up-Close Look at Connecticut Valley's Famous Shade Tobacco Industry** at Windsor Historical Society. Following a short annual meeting, Paul Christian of Christian Tobacco LLC in Suffield will show how Connecticut's world-renowned shade tobacco is harvested, cured, and processed. Kathi Martin from Brown's Harvest will bring samples and artifacts associated with tobacco growing, harvesting, and cigar production, and Brianna Dunlap of the Luddy/Taylor Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum will bring a collection of tobacco-based art from the museum. WHS Members: FREE.

Saturday, July 19, 8:30AM to 10:00AM: **Elm Grove Cemetery Tour** with Windsor Historical Society Director Christine Ermenc. Elm Grove Cemetery, established in 1800, is home to many generations of Poquonock residents. Learn more about them and about the gravestones that memorialize their lives and contributions. Reserve your spot by July 18. Meet at the entrance to Elm Grove Cemetery. In the event of heavy rain or thunderstorm, tour will be held July 20 at 2 PM.

Wednesday, July 23, 7PM to 8:30PM: **Metal Clay: A Radical New Way of Working with Precious Metals** at Windsor Historical Society. Make simple pure silver jewelry on your kitchen table with a unique new product. Metal clay combines microfine particles of pure silver that are mixed with a binder and water to form a clay-like material. After forming, the pieces are dried and fired in a simple kiln or with a handheld torch to burn away the binder leaving hardened metal. Beverly Gallant, metal clay jeweler and teacher, will show you how this material is used and how it differs from the traditional methods of working with silver to make jewelry.

Sunday, August 24, 2PM to 3PM: **Herbs Past and Present: Everything You Need to Know About Present Day Herb Gardens and Colonial Herbs** at Windsor Historical Society with Gordon Kenneson. Learn about colonial herbs and their uses, and how to design your own herb garden. Potted herbs from the Society's herb garden will be offered for sale, and delicious herb-infused refreshments will be served.

Correction: *"The Fyler Freeze-up,"* published in our December issue, was incorrectly attributed to Dorothy Blake. The poem was actually written by Society Curator and avid poet Helen Needham. Our apologies for the error.

Programs are held at 96 Palisado Avenue (Rte 159), Windsor, CT unless stated otherwise. For more information, contact the Society at 860-688-3813 or visit our website: windsorhistoricalsociety.org. Unless otherwise noted, program fees are: \$6/adults; \$5/seniors and students; \$4/Society members. These fees offset program costs, but we turn nobody away for lack of funds.