



The Weld Observer

December 2025 - 8th Edition



A Lot to Love

*by the Weld Recreational
Space Committee*

Before there was a Weld General Store, a Hathaway building or a Mystic Tie Masonic building (now the Weld Town Hall) in the village, there was a house occupying the lot now covered by the tennis courts. George Lufkin built this home in 1834. It was the fourth structure in the village, fondly known as “the Lufkin Elms” for its glorious trees fronting the old Cohos Road. Years later the Lufkin family sold the property to Harvey “Jack” Woodward. When he died in 1930, all the real estate he owned in Weld was transferred to his wife, Annie Chase Woodward Van Aken. At her death in 1949, her estate gifted the former Lufkin lot to the town. This lot is listed in the Weld Tax Maps as Map 25 Lot 39.

From the 1966 “Blue Book” printed for the Weld Sesquicentennial: The

town raised \$300 in 1953 and reserved a section of land, formerly known as the Lufkin place, for the purpose of a recreation area for the young people. Playground equipment was purchased, a skating rink built and maintained by the Recreation Committee, and this has proved to be a popular playground for the young, in both winter and summer. Our small plot of land also served for a time as a mini baseball field for children in Weld.

Stan “Huck” Williams, who owned the Williams Camps on the lake, was the promoter of bringing tennis to Weld. Two tennis courts were built in 1975 by the Weld Recreation Organization, spearheaded by Meridith and Dick Minear, Eric Stinneford, Scott Blodgett and others. Many volunteers put in a great deal of time and manpower and spent to make the courts a reality. George and Ardyce Klette, Wally and Janice Goldfarb

and Bob Dionne were all volunteer Weld Rec tennis instructors. Buying the rackets and balls for participants was sponsored jointly by the Weld Rec, the Webb Lake Association and the Friends of Tennis.

According to Jean Sterry, Weld Rec President in 1990, increasing numbers of people using the courts demanded active fundraising. That summer, the six-week program served 55 people, “a record number of residents, year-round and summer.” The courts were so popular that there was an article put into the Town Warrant one year to light the two courts for night play. Irvin White, who worked diligently on constructing the two courts, scuttled this idea because the lights on the court would shine directly into his bedroom window and keep him up at night.

A Lot to Love

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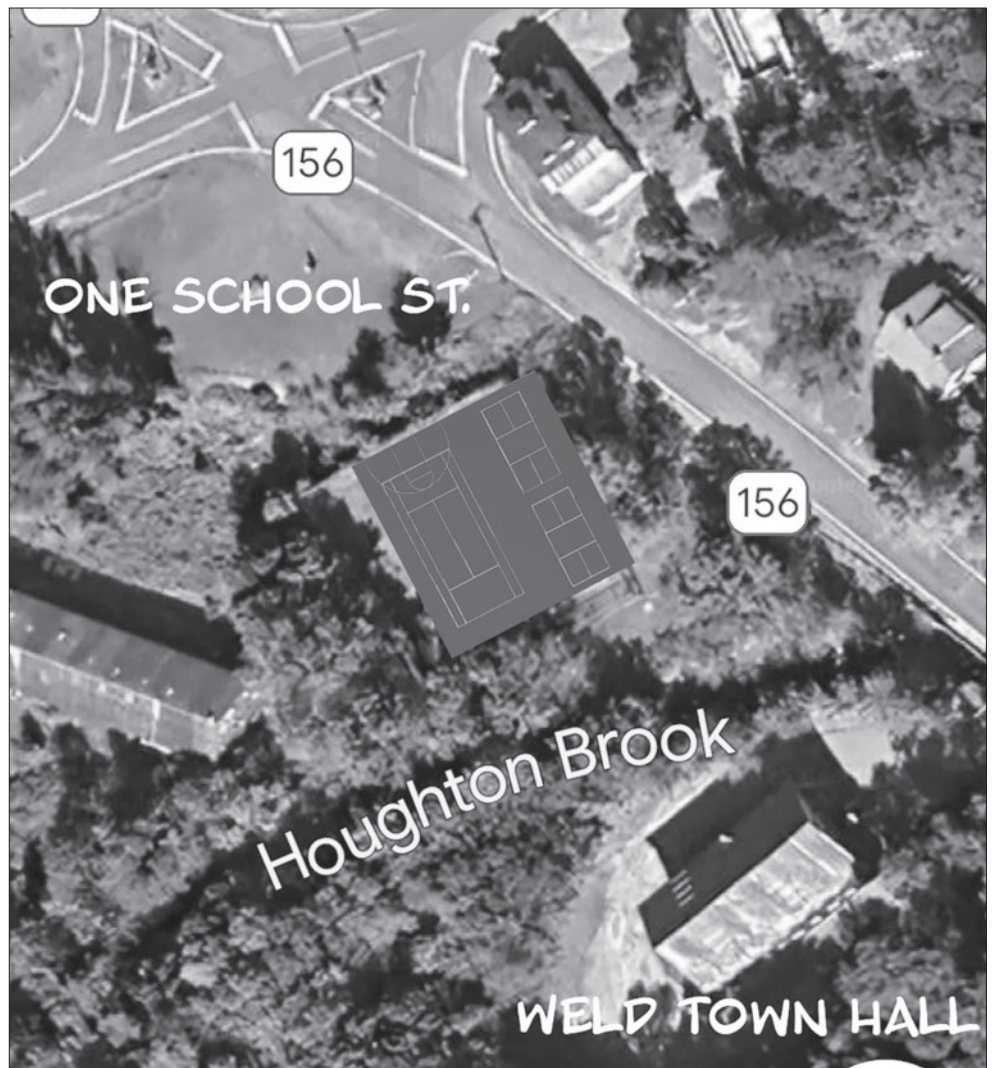
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Since the tennis courts were constructed 50 years ago, winter and summer residents have stepped up to keep them maintained. Dick Fairbanks was a clay court perfectionist and slaved over the courts for decades. At the present time, red slate topping in two 30-gallon barrels must be picked up at Maine Tennis & Track in the town of Gray. Twelve bags of calcium chloride need to be transported from the Farmington Farmer's Union to Weld. All of this must be spread over the one remaining court and the entire surface rolled repeatedly to create a smooth playing surface. There is a month, or more, gap between readying the courts before people start playing in the early summer. By that time, grass had started to take over the playing surface. So, in a sense, all the spring work and expenses have been wasted.

At the beginning of this year, the Board of Selectmen appointed the Recreational Space Committee and tasked it with the following actions to be completed by the end of 2025:

1. Propose a site on town property for the development of a multi-purpose recreation court ("court")
2. Recommend to the Selectboard what type of recreation activities will be conducted on the court
3. Propose a cost estimate for the building of such court and a five-year maintenance cost plan for the same (such plan should include contractor proposals)

The Weld Recreational Space Committee consists of: Lise Bofinger, Chairman; Carla Gauthier, Secretary; Mary and Mike Olson; Maddy Bujold; Kris Tyler; Andrea Bowen; Peter and Elaine Carter; and Nancy Stowell.



This committee met all summer working on the tasks set forth by the Select Board. The consensus was to keep Map 25 Lot 39 as a recreational area. Currently the court area, the overgrown fence, the dilapidated tennis shack, and the extremely hazardous playground equipment are an eyesore. A revitalized area would feature one hard surface court dedicated solely to tennis, an additional two pickleball courts and a basketball practice area, along with new fencing and landscaping, and possibly a "playscape."

The committee will be actively pursuing grant funding. The goal is to avoid making this project an added tax burden to the citizens of Weld.

How will this project benefit the Weld Community? It would:

- Lure activity back into the

village center.

- Greatly improve the appearance of the entrance to our community.
- Entice businesses into Weld.
- Energize the core of our community.
- Support the original mission of that lot to support recreation.
- Add value for our rapidly growing population.
- Add to the impressive recreational opportunities already at Mt. Blue State Park and the Tumbledown Mountain area.
- Give rise to a potential partnership with Weld Historical Society and One School Street to create a larger recreational complex connected with pedestrian bridges across Houghton Brook to the Weld Town Hall and on the other side, over the drainage ditch to One School Street.

A Passion for Old Homes

by June Huston

When I first noticed Hathaway Farm vacant and slipping into disrepair, I knew I wanted to save her! I had admired the property on School Street, across from Proctor's Pond, for many years. I loved how proud she looked to me, standing so straight with her horseshoe driveway beckoning visitors to her front door. I had even peeked into the windows and admired the original woodwork and the gorgeous barn with log beams screamed out to me that it needed a woodworking shop. I repeatedly checked real estate listings and the registry to see if ownership had changed. In December 2021, my Christmas wish came true when the home hit the market "as is" and I bought it with a prayer from an investment company out of Illinois. I couldn't test the well, heat, septic or electrical in the dead of winter without power which had been severed at the pole. I knew it wouldn't be affordable for me to keep her unless some of these utilities were functional.

My infatuation with the Weld community began 10 years ago when my boyfriend Todd and I found what we planned to be a great little snowmobile camp on Maxwell Road. As the seasons passed, we quickly realized that we were going to enjoy Weld all year long. Driving in from Dixfield, my smile gets bigger every mile as the rivers and mountains start to surround me and then embrace me as I enter the village. By trade, I am a general contractor in my hometown of Kennebunk. Kitchen and bathroom remodels certainly pay the bills, but my passion has



always been restoration and respecting the history of old homes. During COVID, there was an abundance of empty seasonal homes to work on and eager summer beach residents that wanted to make upgrades while they weren't there. The influx of work provided me with the financial opportunity to purchase the farmhouse.

When it became mine in the dead of winter, I found myself wandering around the house and envisioning how each room must have looked in her glory days and loving her a little more after each visit.

A Passion

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Fall Woods-Walk Find

by Carol Conant

Trees are bare of their foliage and meadows have standing stems with crunchy leaves and blossoms gone by. Rising just feet above the meadows, clinging to stiff young branches, is a large wasp nest of grey curly paper material.

The enclosed structure is built from chewed wood fibers mixed with starches from hornet saliva. Though it's called a hornet, the bald-faced hornet is actually a species of yellowjacket wasp that builds its nests aurally.

The color of the nest varies

with greys and browns, dependent on the wood that is chewed. The size of the nest starts small like a golf ball and grows all season as the colony of the hornet grows throughout the summer. They have been known to grow to 24 inches long, with only one entrance located at the bottom.

By the time of cold temperatures in late fall, the queen has moved out to hibernate elsewhere for the winter and all other hornets have moved out or died off. These nests will not be reused by the hornets a second time... so these pieces of nature's sculptures will remain for only us to enjoy.



A Passion

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There was a hole in the roof of the main house, and the water had been pouring from the second floor into the original metal kitchen sink and most of the wood floors were either painted or had floor coverings on them, but I envisioned them all restored. I anxiously awaited spring's arrival to begin work.

Scott Pratt helped with the demolition of all the collapsed livestock buildings, and I found some folks to help seal up the roof. The Lowe brothers also helped me with siding replacement so everything could be weather-tight. Dylan Orff restored power to the house from the pole and rewired. I was thrilled to be able to save all the original floors. I restored all the woodwork with sanding and new coats of shellac, patched and

repaired all the original plaster walls and ceilings, I scraped up layers of floor to prepare for their sanding, and primed and painted every room in the house. As I spent a week slapping blue paint on the front of the house, I knew in my heart that I could never let her go.

While I was busy restoring School Street, I met Bonnie Rackliffe at one of her barn sales on Church Street. She told me that she was planning to sell her home next year, and then the next year she said it would be the following. The "year" came this summer, and she excitedly stopped by to let me know that she was putting it on the market the next day. Telling me her story, she purchased the house when she was roughly my age now and had dreams of restoring it. She made some great progress, but she ultimately decided that she would rather move to Florida near her son

rather than work on the house every summer. We agreed upon a price within a couple of hours and signed the contract that day. At the closing, I'm not sure who looked happier. She was looking forward to the next chapter of her life knowing that I would do right by the house and I was accepting a new challenge. After several hugs and promises that I would give her progress reports, we parted ways. I intend to make her proud and I am hoping that someday it will be home to a nice young family as it's perfectly sized.

Through all the hard work, I've forged many new friendships that I hold close to my heart, and my momentum has been maintained by the outpouring of support and encouragement offered by the community. To all that have offered kind words and cheered me on...I am extremely grateful!



Mud Magic!

by Lily Miller, age 11

(Lily was featured in the 1st issue, April 2024)

I am going to tell you how to make desserts out of mud and dirt, like cookies, cupcakes, pop tarts, and my favorite cakes! It's a way to have fun in good weather, and you can pretend that you have a bakery. I love to bake, and it is fun to do with mud, too!

Cookies: All you need is dirt, and water. To start, you just mix dirt and water to make mud (this will be the start to all the desserts). Then you make a ball with the mud and flatten the ball into a cookie. You can sprinkle leaves on top to make a sprinkled cookie.

Cupcakes: Again, all you need is dirt and water. Mix it to make mud, but don't make the mud too watery because that can ruin it! Shape the mud into a cupcake or a mushroom shape. Just try to make an oval, but then squeeze the bottom to make it smaller on the bottom. Then pour a thinner (waterier) mud over the cupcake and add leaves, flowers, or some kind of fruit, and put a cherry on top.

Pop tarts: All you have to do is make the mud, then create two squares and put them next to each other. Next, you put a pile of balled up leaves in one of the squares and close them together.

Cakes: For this one you will need **a lot** of mud. When I make a cake, I make it three layers tall or more. Start by making three circles or any other shape, really. I like making the top layer a heart shape. Once you have your shapes you just stack them up biggest to smallest. Then just put some of the thinner (waterier) mud on top or on the sides (really wherever you want!) Now just decorate it with whatever you want, I like a flower, little fruits, and leaves!

Giving Thanks

by Treelyn Bronish

My name is Treelyn Bronish. I am a 13-year-old girl from Weld, Maine. I have been hunting in Weld with my grandfather, Mike Bronish, since I was eight. For the last two years I have been trying to get a bear as I work towards completing my Grand Slam. (The Grand Slam in Maine is when you shoot a bear, deer, turkey, and moose in the same year).

This September with the help of my grandfather and a good family friend, Clint Bradbury, and many others, I was lucky enough to get a 406-pound boar (a male bear). It was not big enough to make permanent records, but it did make the three-year records.

I would like to thank Clint Bradbury for all his help and for passing down knowledge that he got from my great-grandfather, Ed Bronish. I would also like to thank my neighbors, Julie and David Jervis, and a good family friend, Ronny Cushman, for helping me and my family, into the night until midnight, to retrieve the bear.

Giving Thanks

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Helping Hands

by Susan Fesenmaier

I broke my back in the summer of 2024. It was life changing. I needed help to keep from being overwhelmed. A friend introduced me to a handyman, Sherwood Berry. He has been like a gift from God in my life. I consider him an important friend.

He started with my yard. I have a large yard and like to keep things neat. I also love to garden, but it has been getting to be too much for me to do everything on my own (I live by myself, up on Center Hill).

Pressure was mounting before I broke my back. I couldn't handle things as well as I used to because I'm older now and can't move as fast. Having the help of a skilled handyman has allowed me to continue the things I enjoy. I'm fortunate to have the resources to have Sherwood's help weekly.

I've always liked to work. It's therapy for me. I was brought up on a farm. With farm life, everybody works and there's enough work for everybody.

So, I'd like to continue working on projects as much as I can here in Weld. I've learned to accept that I can't do it all alone. It's been a good lesson.

The first job Sherwood did was clearing around a stone wall at the back of my yard. I always wanted to be able to see this beautiful wall. Bamboo had grown up around it and I couldn't tackle the growth. Now I can enjoy this beautiful element of Weld.

Helping Hands

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Pumpkin Whoopie Pies

by Brenda Smith

Preheat oven to 350F. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Mix together:

- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup canola oil
- 1 small can, or 1-1/2 cups, of pure pumpkin puree (I use Libby's brand)
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- In a separate bowl mix together:
- 3 cups of flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1-1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1-1/2 teaspoons ground cloves

Mix wet and dry ingredients together. Use a cookie scoop (I use a 2-tablespoon size scoop) to drop mounds of batter onto the prepared cookie sheet, spacing 2 inches apart. Bake for 10-to-12 minutes, or until pies spring back slightly when pressed gently and they appear dry on top. Let cool on pans for five minutes before moving to a wire rack to cool completely.

Filling:

- 1 eight-ounce package regular cream cheese, softened
- 3 tablespoons butter, softened
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 pound powdered sugar or 4 cups

Using an electric mixer, mix until well blended, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed.

Using a one-tablespoon cookie scoop, add one scoop of the filling to the bottom of a whoopie pie cake. Then top with another cake.

You can keep each whoopie pie tightly wrapped in plastic wrap at room temperature for up to two days. Alternatively, you can store them wrapped and kept in an airtight container in the fridge for up to about five days; or you can wrap them in plastic wrap, then place in a sealed freezer bag, and kept in the freezer for up to three months.

Yields about 18 whoopie pies. Enjoy!!

Managing the Tax Payers' Dollars

by Dina Walker

I recently wanted to donate an old printer to the Town through the Weld Recreation Committee but was told that the Town couldn't accept it. Why?

While it would be ideal for the Town to accept every in-kind donation it receives, it's not always practical for the Town to do so, especially when the burden may outweigh the benefits. With every in-kind donation, we must consider the limited resources the municipality (tax dollars) must use and maintain the item in question. For something like an old printer or computer, technology has advanced so quickly in the last thirty years that it would cost the Town more money to upgrade the computer to current technology than to just purchase a new computer. For any toys or regular household items, the Town also has limited storage space to keep them and maintain them in good condition. The Town also does not have a regular employee who processes these items,

only volunteers. So out of respect for the taxpayer's dollar, we sometimes must make the difficult decision of rejecting some donations.

Why did the Select Board hold a Special Town Meeting in September 2025?

In addition to the Annual Town Meeting, the Select Board may call a Special Town Meeting anytime the municipality requires the Town Legislature, rather than the Select Board, or any other body, to take a municipal action. Examples include accepting an in-kind donation, a non-budgeted cash donation, or adopting an ordinance.

In this case, a Special Town Meeting was called for the Town Legislature to gather in September 2025 to accept an in-kind donation (fire safety equipment worth about \$20,000) from a citizen, Brent Daugherty. Municipal law requires that any in-kind donation (e.g., goods) be accepted by the Town Legislature unless a warrant article/ordinance states otherwise.

I hear the budget planning season for the 2026 Town Budget is underway, how does the budget process work?

The process starts with the Treasurer sending out a Request for Budget Proposal ("Requests") to the various department heads, committees, and officials in October to be returned by early November. The Select Board Chair (acting as town administrator), calls the elected Budget Committee members together to begin a series of meetings to discuss the various Requests to draft a budget proposal for the Select Board's review.

The Select Board then meets in working sessions to review the Budget Committee's submitted proposal before including the draft budget proposal in the town warrant. for recommendation to the Town Legislature for then votes whether to approval at the Annual Town Meeting. All meetings are open to the public for observation.

Helping Hands

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Next, he rewired a lamp and changed a faucet that was leaking. He painted the side of my house, and at that point I really began to appreciate how talented Sherwood is and how he does such a variety of things well. He knows a lot but he's very humble. He's also very honest, and he makes me think about my own honesty.

I sometimes feel like on my list of important people, Sherwood comes right after my granddaughters, Pearl and May. I say that only half kidding. I'm lucky. He brings a smile to my face. He's very grounded. We would all benefit from having someone like Sherwood in our lives.

Giving Thanks

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Most importantly, I would like to thank my grandfather who has been my best friend since day one. He brought me along and passed down his love, passion, knowledge, and skills for hunting, fishing and the great outdoors.

At the time of this writing, Treelyn was one-turkey-away from completing her Grand Slam. In addition to hunting, Treelyn often places in ice fishing derbies and loves all fishing. She is a coach's helper for the Town of Wilton recreation department, enjoys playing soccer, playing cards with the Cushmans, baking, photography, reading and writing. Treelyn is currently writing her first fantasy fiction book. She is homeschooled in Weld.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN



**The
Weld Observer**

2026 Submission Deadlines:

February 1st

August 1st

May 1st

November 1st

Articles, letters, drawings, cartoons, photos, recipes....

All submissions will be published in black and white.

Via e-mail: **weldrecnews@weld-maine.org** or drop your submission
in the Weld business box in front of the **Weld Town office**,
23 Mill Street in Weld. Attention: **Weld Recreation Committee**