

# THE HERON

Chandler Pond Preservation Society Newsletter ♦ Spring 2007 ♦ Number 17



## Eurasian Watermilfoil **UPDATE** *by Bill King*

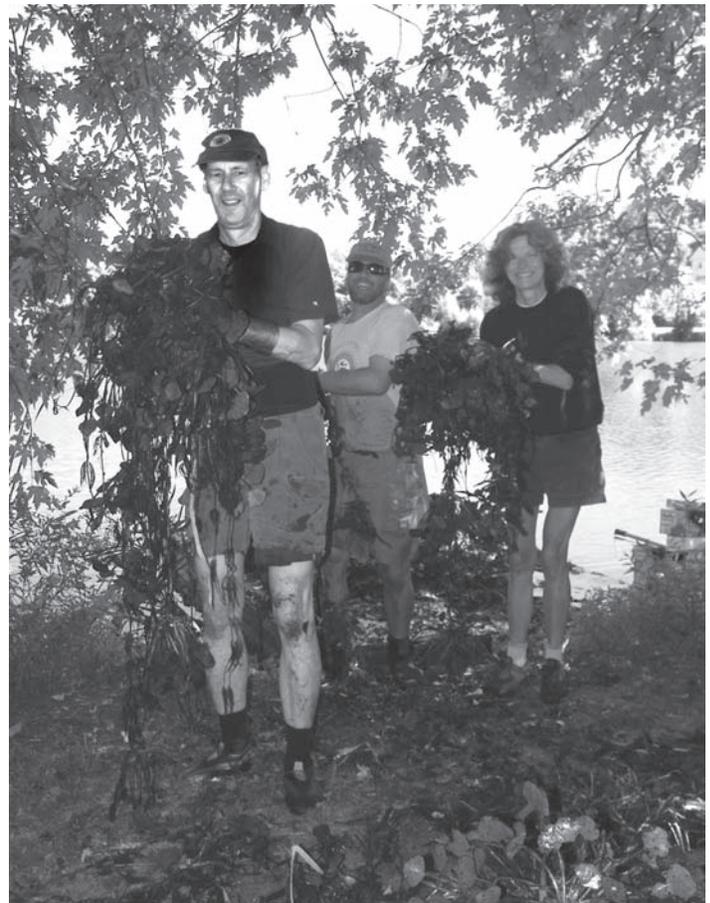
In last winter's newsletter we reported on the appearance of the very invasive aquatic plant Eurasian watermilfoil in Chandler Pond. Fortunately, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course, and you, our members, responded generously and the treatment was a great success. With continued annual dues collection and fund-raising events, the Chandler Pond Preservation Society should be in a good position to fund treatments when they become necessary in future years.

When the Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) was first noticed at Chandler Pond in late May of 2004, the infestation was already too far gone to simply uproot the plants and collect all of the viable pieces. Because Chandler Pond is shallow enough—the maximum depth is 5 feet—that the plant can grow everywhere in it and take over, several Massachusetts Commonwealth officials told me that we needed to contract for a chemical treatment with one of the only two licensed aquatic herbicide applicators. With support from the office of our district city councilor, Jerry McDermott, the Boston Parks Department contracted with Aquatic Control Technologies Inc. of Sutton, MA ([www.aquaticcontroltech.com](http://www.aquaticcontroltech.com)) to obtain the state Department of Environmental Protection permit, notify abutters, and appear before the Boston Conservation Commission. The \$1,500 price was a discount, since ACT, Inc. used our measurements and map of aquatic plant abundance in their application. The Commission's hearing was in February, 2005. Four CPPS members attended. Chris Busch of the Boston Environment Dept., who was the chairperson of the hearing, distributed copies of *The Heron* newsletter to the other members. After approval was granted, the Parks Department paid \$5,000 more for the treatment itself and CPPS paid another \$500. In addition, three Kenrick Street residents paid \$250 total for ACT

Christine Stewart and Bill King rake waterchestnuts and watermilfoil fragments out of the pond from a raft.



Richard Wood



Richard Wood

CPPS volunteers Bill King, Alex Wajsfelner, and Christine Stewart drag waterchestnuts and watermilfoil out of the pond.

Inc. to spray Japanese knotweed (aka "Japanese bamboo"), another troublesome invasive, with Rodeo (glyphosphate as in Roundup).

### Tackling the Invader

In the spring, the watermilfoil infestation was visibly much heavier than the year before. We filled four 30-gallon bags with plants that we removed from the dam by the time ACT, Inc., made the first application of the slow-acting chemical Sonar (fluridone) on May 16, 2005 (see photo on the next page). Subsequent heavy rain so diluted the concentration of Sonar that two more applications were performed, on June 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. (Note that ACT was paid to achieve the result, not just to perform the procedure.)

You probably noticed the heavy growth of green algae, called blanketweed, floating on and cover-

*(Continued on page 2)*

ing most of the surface in mid-summer 2004. There was so much that the geese, ducks, and swans left visible tracks in the algae where they swam. Apparently, it accumulates when it sticks onto rooted plants that have grown up to the surface; otherwise, it would just have washed away. Then the primary rooted plant at the surface was the Eurasian watermilfoil, and next the somewhat invasive curly-leaf pondweed. The native *Elodea* (aka waterweed) also collects blanketweed, but to a lesser extent, mostly in shallow water. The second treatment included a copper-based algaecide to reduce the algae in order to increase Sonar's effective. This second treatment also greatly diminished the native *Elodea*, which had been protected by its dormancy at the time of the first treatment.

Thirty days after the last treatment, CPPS volunteers resumed clearing the grate at the outlet as the rain washed the now-rootless masses onto it. Once they had cleared away the rotting plant debris, the offensive odor plaguing the pond finally disappeared. The presence of baby swans and geese, fish eating birds, and large numbers of fish shows that the ecology was not harmed by the treatments.

The herbicide applicator, Dominic Meringolo, advised us that the watermilfoil at the inlet was protected by the influx of fresh water, so volunteers uprooted the Eurasian watermilfoil near there—the only place where it still looked healthy. This uprooting requires one to grasp the stem at the base, since the rest of the stem can easily break and give rise to a viable floating fragment as well as a viable root. In late August and September, the volunteers went out in rowboats belonging to two pond residents and poled the boat dock. They harvested the small number of floating, soon-to-sink, fragments which could be found along the shores and especially in masses of blanketweed algae and invasive waterchestnuts. The waterchestnuts were pulled up again as well.

This spring, as in 2006, we will try to find any watermilfoil survivors before they can spread, but at least these past two winters the ice skaters did not report that the ice was bumpy because of the floating watermilfoil pieces on the surface.

### Golf Course Efforts

Meanwhile, the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course manager, David Stowe of Stirling Golf Management, Inc, agreed to pay \$500 to include an herbicide treatment of Diquat for the invasive curly-leaf pondweed in his small lowermost pond, near the out-flow underground pipe that leads to Chandler Pond's inlet. This pondweed can co-exist with Eurasian watermilfoil since they both cover the surface early in the year. Curly-leaf pondweed goes to seed in midsummer and sprouts in the fall to be ready for early spring growth. The main reason for the treatment was to prevent it from reseeding Chandler Pond right after its herbicide treat-



Richard Wood

Sonar Application: Dominic Meringolo and coworker zigzagging across the pond with the ACT Inc. motorboat equipped to pull up pond water and return it with diluted Sonar.

ment. However, the Newton Conservation Commission required a separate hearing, held on April 28, and a separate permit and notification of all abutters of the Golf Course, which added to the expense for Newton. The permit, which was granted for 3 years, also included repairs to the walls of the sluiceway at the upper end of Dana Brook and dredging of the very small siltation collection pond in the middle area, as was last done in 1997. In addition, it allowed some uprooting and some spraying of the very invasive purple loosestrife. The Reward (diquat) treatment was applied late because of heavy rain earlier. The natives *Elodea* and coontail (*Ceratophyllum echinatum*) still looked healthy after the treatment.

### Future Efforts

In order to obtain the DEP renewal permit for a potential "spot treatment," the Parks Dept. has to agree to pay \$250 by mid-February, before seeing what is growing. They also agreed to pay \$800 for inspections by ACT. I expect, and hope, that if we hand-pull Eurasian watermilfoil this spring from boats, using rakes, and in the water, outfitted with snorkels and face masks, another chemical treatment will not be needed for a few years.

Contrast the difficulty of all these eradication efforts with the ease with which a child can dump his goldfish and aquarium plants into a pond, lake, or stream!

Massachusetts enacted a law, as of January, that bans the sale and import of an extensive list of invasive plants, both terrestrial and aquatic•. These are plants that are not native to the region and have proven to be a problem or are expected to be a problem if bought and sold here. A few were already banned previously, but according to the owner of The Pet Shop on Harvard St. it was



### YOU CAN HELP FIGHT WATERMILFOIL!

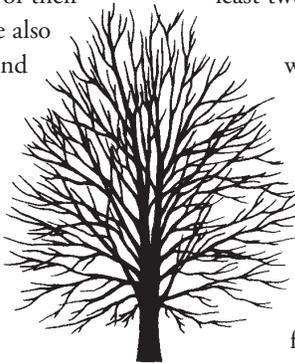
If you are interested in this hands-on project, which will greatly help keep Chandler Pond beautiful, please call Bill King at 617-787-0165. Aquatic weeding will start the weekend of May 19 and continue into June.

• These plants can be found at "www.mnla.com," the website of the Massachusetts Nursery and Landscapers Assoc. Some already common plants, such as Norway maple, ailanthus, and the shrub Japanese barberry, can be sold before 2009 if the specimens were imported before 2006. Most of the 141 listed plants are not yet in Massachusetts. The purpose of including such common plants as Norway maple, is to reduce their spread with new road and housing development near wild areas.

## Tree Census Makes Sense *by Linda Mishkin*

Trees are wonderful things. According to research, trees contribute to a physical environment that helps revitalize urban neighborhoods and produce stronger communities by creating outdoor spaces that attract people. In addition to stimulating aesthetic appreciation, trees can also stimulate civic engagement. The Urban Ecology Institute, like many related organizations, seeks to connect its urban community with its green infrastructure to the benefit of both. Located on the campus of Boston College, UEI is a non-profit organization that is part of the larger Urban Ecology Collaborative. The Collaborative includes non-profit organizations in the Northeast that work with communities to improve the quality of life in urban areas and to build a generation of civically engaged young people. As reported by Charlie Lord, UEI's Executive Director, "Residents living near green spaces enjoy more social activities, have more visitors, know more of their neighbors, and have strong feelings of belonging." He also reported that studies of inner city neighborhoods found that the greener the area, the lower the crime rate.

Lest we take our leafy friends for granted, researchers and residents alike are focusing attention on the well being of our urban forest, one tree at a time. Under the auspices of the UEI, the Greater Boston Urban Forest Inventory Workshop hosts summer training programs that teach volunteers how to participate in a street tree inventory. According to UEI's website, the Urban Tree Inventory Project instructs students in the use of PCs, Geographic Information System software and CITYgreen software that links each tree location to a database of geographic, classification and health information. The software helps calculate the economic impact of trees. (For example, trees retain stormwater, thereby reducing the flow of water into city drains. With less water entering the drains, an economic impact would be any resultant reduction in the cost of water treatment for the city. Also, shade trees around buildings and air conditioning units could have an economic impact by reducing the cost of electricity.) When completed, the inventory will help identify areas in need of green infrastructure and provide data critical for routine management of



public trees. Eventually, each tree surveyed will appear on a map of Greater Boston, accessible at the UEI website.

Trees around Chandler Pond are integral to this important inventory. The survey here began last summer and included trees along Lake Shore Road and the Boston College Brighton campus/seminary property. About 25 local 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders from several local schools, including Brighton High School, Urban Science Academy, Odyssey High School, Nativity Prep, and St. Columbkille, participated. Prior to beginning the survey, students completed a two-week training program offered by the Summer Institute at BC. The Institute is a collaboration of UEI, the Science Education faculty in the Lynch School of Education and the Environmental Studies Program at Boston College. It is funded as part of a National Science Foundation grant and will run for at least two more summers.

The inventory mapping is a work in progress. If you want to see what has been done to date, visit the Urban Ecology Institute website <http://www.urbaneco.org/> and click on Community Forest Program and then Greater Boston Urban Forest Inventory Database. Trees in Allston/Brighton are not yet on the map. But in time, the very trees you walk by when you stroll around Chandler Pond will be part of a magnificent resource intended to contribute toward improving the urban forest of Greater Boston. The effort by individuals, such as the students who surveyed our trees this summer, will help make Greater Boston even greener and greater. 🦢

1. Sullivan, W.C. and Kuo, F.E., Forestry Report R8-FR 56, 1996
2. Tree City USA 2005 power point presentation at BC
3. *ibid.*

### Tree Problems? Tree Envy?

Have you noticed a street tree with broken limbs? Would you like to have more trees on your street? Through the Constituent Services Unit of Boston Parks and Recreation you can report problems with trees or parks, or request plantings of trees, by calling the Park Line at 617-635-park. The line is available on Mondays through Fridays from 7:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

### Eurasian Watermilfoil Update *(continued from page 2)*

only a couple years ago that any aquarium plants were restricted.

Eurasian watermilfoil was first found in 1955 as an escaped aquarium plant in New York state. An official in the DCR Lakes and Ponds Program told me that humans, not birds, most likely spread this pest. However, I find it suspicious that our geese, ducks, and swans travel to other water bodies which have untreated, but not rampant, Eurasian watermilfoil. The depth or flow rate in these bodies inhibits the invasive from taking over, a situation which Chandler Pond does not share.

We have to remain vigilant to keep watermilfoil under control at Chandler Pond! 🦢

### Visit the New CPPS Website: [www.chandlerpond.org](http://www.chandlerpond.org)

Up and running for a couple months now, our lovely new website has many useful features. Check it out! 🦢

#### THE HERON Committee:

Chair: Linda Mishkin

Layout & design: Wilma Wetterstrom

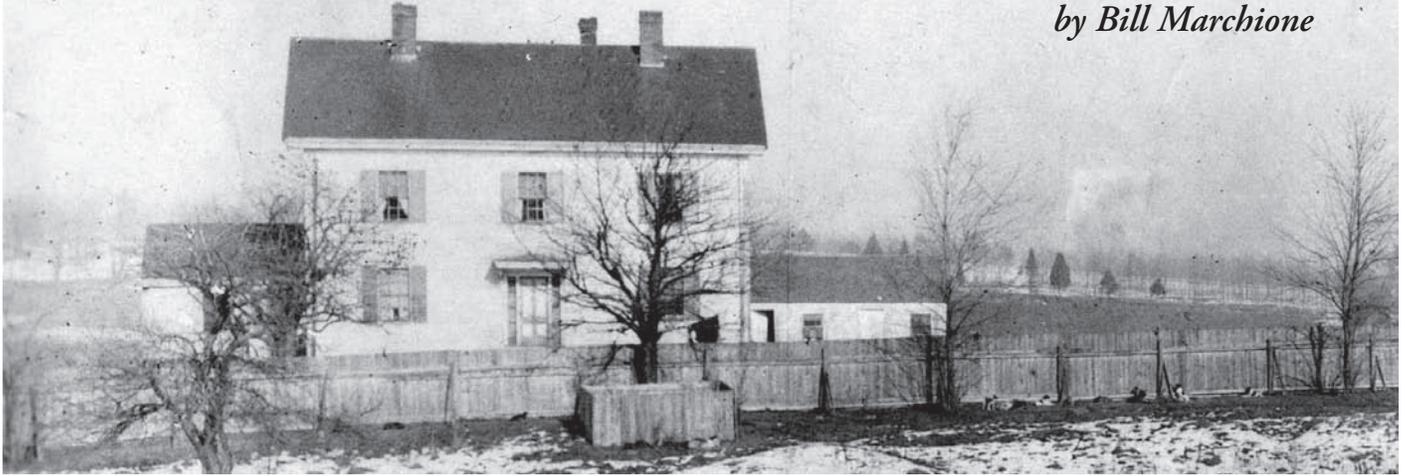
Photographer: Richard Wood

Writers: Bill King, Bill Marchione

Linda Mishkin, Doug Kierdorf

# A Short History of the Brighton Poor Farm

by Bill Marchione



Above: The Brighton Poor House constructed in 1866, still stands on Undine Road.

Left: Nathan Appleton, Jr., standing, owned the Poor Farm from the late 1870s to about 1900. He is shown here with his nephew Charles Appleton Longfellow.



Until the mid-1850s, the thoroughfare we now call Lake Street was simply “The Road to the Poor House.” The name Lake Street was not applied until Chandler’s Pond was excavated in 1855 in the adjacent valley. At its upper end long stood an important local institution, the Brighton alms or poor house, which was founded in 1818.

## The Poor in the 19th Century

The term “the poor” covered a wide range of conditions in the early 19th century: physical disability, old age, widows, orphans, even those suffering from mental illness. Such public assistance as was provided the indigent was furnished by local government.

Brighton established its Poor House at a relatively early date, May 11, 1818, when it purchased from Thomas Park, a major landowner, a farmhouse and seven acres located in the remote southwestern corner of the town, for the substantial sum of \$1,435. Since the entire town budget in 1818 amounted to only \$2,000, the town was obliged to borrow from a wealthy citizen to make the purchase.

## The Residents of the Brighton Poor Farm

The number of residents at the Poor House varied greatly over the years. Reliance on its services was heaviest in the 1840–1853 period, which witnessed a major depression (1837–1841) followed by the Irish potato famine immigration (most intense between 1846 and 1853). In 1846 the Brighton Almshouse had sixteen inmates. By 1855, there were just five: four elderly men, ages 87, 83 and 63, an insane woman, age 37, and a 63-year-old woman.

By 1870, the Almshouse had only three inmates: two laborers, ages 22 and 25 (who were almost certainly part of the workforce then constructing the nearby Chestnut Hill Reservoir), and the same insane woman mentioned above. Thus from the late 1850s on relatively few people were served by the Brighton Poor House.

## A New Poor House

For reasons not entirely clear, Brighton undertook major improvements in its Poor Farm in 1861 by constructing a new almshouse and by adding seven additional acres to the property at a cost of nearly \$3,000. After 1861 the 14-acre Brighton Poor Farm extended all the way from the vicinity of present day Undine Road to the southwestern edge of Chandler’s Pond.

An 1862 town report described the new almshouse as

two stories high, with two Ls, each fifteen feet by eighteen. It will accommodate, it is believed, from fifteen to twenty permanent occupants, besides the family of the keeper of the house. The number of paupers now in it is three.

This building, now a private residence, still stands on Undine Road.

The town records for the period provide no information as to who benefitted from the construction and outfitting of the new almshouse or the purchase of additional acreage for the poor farm. The proposal to expand and modernize the facility was first made at a March 11, 1861, town meeting. It was immediately referred to the Selectmen (a body that included Granville Fuller, lumber dealer and architect) “with instructions that they report the most feasible plan for the support and accommodation of the Poor.”

## House of the Poor and the Truant

The year 1865 marked a turning point in the operation of the refurbished Brighton Poor Farm. Instead of renting the property out as in past years, the Selectmen placed it under the jurisdiction of the town’s Overseer of Highways, John R. Black. It was also used as a detention center for truant boys, the young men being put to work on its fields and on the town’s heavily traveled roads.

# Mallards, Mockingbirds, Mute Swans, and More: The Ever Changing Bird Life of Chandler Pond

*Lo! the winter is past,  
the rains are over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth,  
the time of the singing of the birds is come,  
and the voice of the turtledove  
is heard in our land.*  
~Song of Solomon, 2:11-12

The cold weather and absence of food that drove most birds away in January has lifted and the pond is already alive with quacking, tweeting, chirping, and squawking. This is a great time to be out bird-watching; not only does the warmer weather make one feel alive again, but the tree leaves have not yet opened so the spring arrivals are easier to spot hopping amidst the branches, gobbling up buds and the first tender, juicy insects of the year.

Over the winter Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads, Mallards and Canada Geese were out on the pond until there was no open water. Among the hearty stay-overs were Cardinals, Blue Jays, Chickdees, and a few Song Sparrows. Now the males are singing their heads off, trying to attract the attention of females who are looking for a good provider. The Blue Jays do not so much sing as squeek, their voices sounding like a rusty gate.

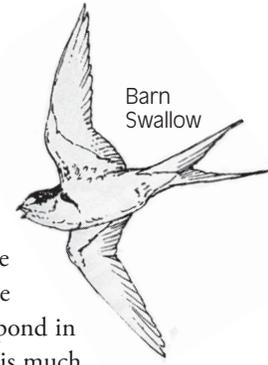
In the last few weeks the Red-winged Blackbirds have arrived in numbers and are building nests in the reeds and filling the mornings with their rattle. The Cormorants are back and hanging out in their usual spot on the turtle-rest in the middle of the pond. Grackles and Robins abound and for the past couple of weeks there has been a raft of Ruddy Ducks on the pond. We normally only get them out of breeding season but now one can see them resplendent in their cinnamon plumage and bright blue bills. They will undoubtedly be decamping for northern climes soon. Other recent arrivals include Tree Swallows and a few Barn Swallows that have been couring above the pond eating bugs. The last to arrive will be the Chimney Swifts, charcoal grey crescents that spend the

summer wheeling and crying above the tree tops and gorging on flying insects.

A pair of Mute Swans has already built a nest in the reeds at the inlet on Lake Shore. For the past three years Swans have nested in the northwest corner of the pond. I cannot say if the current pair is the same one that nested on the pond in past years, but their nesting site suggests not. It is much more vulnerable than the past sites and will be especially so if the water level in the pond drops and their nest is connected to dry land. This happened four years ago and resulted in the female Swan being killed by a predator. Swans are aggressive critters and we do not advise getting too close to their nest. The cob is already patrolling the pond and making life miserable for the Canada Geese. The Swans' eggs usually hatch around the end of May.

Other birds to look out for in the coming weeks are Orioles, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and a variety of other warblers. In the past few years we have had Palm, Black and White, and Yellow Warblers. There will also be Goldfinches, White-throated Sparrows, House Finches and a pair of Black-Crowned Night Herons that have nested for the past few years. There is a Kingfisher that hangs out along the northern edge of the pond and whose cackle can be heard even when he cannot be seen. Other, more exotic visitors in the last few years have included Spotted Sandpipers, Cedar Waxwings, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Wigeons, a Pie-billed Grebe and, of course, the Great Blue Heron after which our august publication is named. So keep your eyes and ears open.

I would like to take this chance to say good-bye to an old friend. Duke, the great, black, lion of a dog who lived on Lake Shore and has been a fixture around the pond for years, won't be with us this summer. His great heart was stilled on December the 19<sup>th</sup>. We miss you, buddy. ~ Doug Kierdorf



## **BRIGHTON POOR FARM** (continued from previous page)

Under Black's management the Brighton Poor Farm was greatly improved. The 1866 report described it as "well kept up."

The stones have been picked up and removed from the grassland, thereby causing it to yield a much larger quantity of hay than it otherwise would. The meadow-mud dug out of the pond was made into compost, and afterwards spread upon the land under cultivation, enriching it much, and increasing the product of the root crops twofold. Improvements have been made on the walls and fences, but the time required for work on highways has prevented a great deal of work from being done which otherwise would have been.

By 1869, the Brighton Poor Farm was generating \$422.38 worth of produce a year. It is perhaps no coincidence that these improvements came during the period that horticulturalist Charles H. B. Breck was an overseer of the poor. The same 1869 report described the inhabitants of the Brighton Poor House as "well

cared for, having plenty of everything good to eat, and decent clothing to wear."

## **Country Estate, Animal Shelter**

Shortly after the annexation of Brighton to Boston in 1874, the 14-acre Brighton Poor Farm was sold to Nathan Appleton, Jr., son of great textile manufacturer Nathan Appleton, Sr., and brother-in-law of the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Mr. Appleton owned the property, which served as his country residence, for over a quarter of a century. In the early 1880s Appleton, who loved animals, deeded an acre at the southern end of this estate to philanthropist Helen Marrett Gifford for the establishment of the Gifford Sheltering Home for Animals. The upper portion of the U-shaped Undine Road was originally called Appleton Road. It was renamed Undine Road sometime after 1910 after a well-known spring located on the property. 🐾



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*Coming this summer:*  
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 Brighton Main Streets  
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 Thursday, Aug 9, 7-9 pm.  
 Check website for details.

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Sp 07

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.  
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