


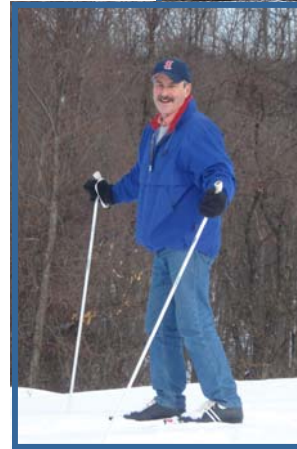
The Woodlands Villager

Volume 6 Issue 1

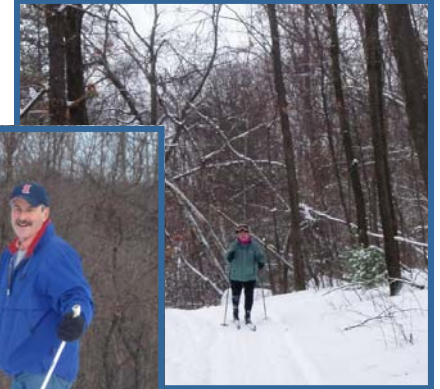
February 2009

Woodlanders Create On-site Cross-country Ski Trails

Good news for all of you who enjoy cross-country skiing and snowshoeing! Resident Adrien Rock is leading an effort to creating cross country trails throughout the Woodlands. One trail starts behind the Briarwood Building, runs down in a gentle slope and circles back. There are several more challenging and hilly trails that travel through the woods, down toward Clamshell Pond and over to the meadow area on Woodlands property. A “beginners” area, which is a small oval track between the Sales Office and the Briarwood, has been established for those who are just getting started. If you would like to participate in cross-country or snow-shoeing outings, please contact the Homeowners Association at 978-365-5996. Beginners are welcome! 



Adrien Rock



Sue Flanagan



Beginner's ski track

Upcoming Activities...

Winter has hit us hard this year, but that's no reason for us to hibernate! With the holiday season behind us, there's more time to get together. We invite you to join the fun at one of these gatherings.

Valentine's Day Martini Tasting

One of our most popular events, our third annual Valentine's Day Martini Tasting will be held on **Friday, Feb. 13 from 7 to 10 p.m.** We'll serve a variety of martinis for you

to try along with a chocolate fondue with fresh fruit for those with a sweet tooth. Cost is \$10 per person, which you can pay at the door. Please RSVP by Mon., Feb. 9. to Donna or Linda at the Homeowners Association at 978-365-5996.


Hope to see you there!

Warm-Up Winter Chili Competition

There's nothing that warms up a winter day like a serving of homemade chili. On **Sunday, March 1 at 4 p.m.**, we invite you to attend our Warm-Up-Winter Chili Competition. You can enter the contest with your best chili recipe or just come to sample the chili and vote

for your favorite! The winner will receive a restaurant gift certificate as a prize. Please RSVP by Mon., Feb. 23 to the Homeowners Association at 978-365-5996.

Third Annual St. Patrick's Day Party

We'll be hosting our Third Annual St. Patrick's Day party on **Saturday, March 14 at 7 p.m.** The party will feature Sue Flanagan's famous Irish stew and Irish coffee. Wear something green if you can and bring your own beverage. We would welcome an appetizer or dessert to share as well. Please RSVP by Fri., March 6 to the Homeowners Association at 978-365-5996. 

The Woodlands Homeowners Assoc.

Donna Phelps, Property Manager

Phone: 978-365-5996

E-mail: dphelps@woodlands.com

Management Office

Open Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Sales Office

Michelle St. Michael, R.E. Broker

Phone: 978-365-5955

E-mail: michelle@woodlands.com

Open daily: Noon - 5 p.m. or by appt.

**EMERGENCY
CONTACT NUMBER
978-365-3111**

The Woodlands Board of Trustees

Ed Aleo - Maples

Ted Equi - Aspens

Tom Gorman - Oaks

Jim Leighton - Briarwood

Frank Savell - Birches

Woodlands Board of Trustee meetings, generally held on the third Thursday of each month, are open to residents who wish to observe the meetings. Residents who have questions or remarks for the board must be "in good standing" (up to date on all fees, assessments and service billings) and must submit all topics/questions in writing at least one week before the next board meeting. The board may elect to take questions under advisement. Additional consultation as a board may be required prior to responding. Please write to: The Woodlands Board of Trustees, c/o The Woodlands, One Woodland Circle, Clinton, MA 01510.

Advertising

Rates for a full-page insert:

Residents - \$20, Non-Residents - \$30

Advertisers must provide 170 copies on 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Ads must include a contact name, street address and phone number.

Advertising Disclaimer: Please note that advertisers in this newsletter are not endorsed by The Woodlands management team or trustees. The decision to run advertisements is at the sole discretion of Woodlands management.

Woodlands Updates...

Village Center Building

Workers at the Village Center Building have completed the wiring for fire detection systems and finished installation of the HVAC and sprinkler systems throughout the first floor. Communications wiring is now being placed and connected, and we are working with a security company to install a card-based access system to allow controlled entry to the build-

ing for residents. Sheet rock work will begin this month.

We have begun contacting residents who have volunteered to take part on the Village Center Planning Committee. This committee of residents, led by members of the Board of Trustees, will discuss equipment rental, operating hours and regulations, and more. If you would like to participate, please contact the Association at 978-365-5996. 🌿

News and Notes...

Thanks to Woodlanders on behalf of WHEAT

Woodlands residents made the holidays happier for 48 local children last month through our Giving Wreath effort for WHEAT. Many thanks to all of you who participated by purchasing gifts for these children in need.

Pick Up After Your Dog, Even in Snow

We've been seeing an increase in the number of dog droppings throughout the Woodlands community. Please pick up after your dog, even in the snow. Please note that if your dog urinates on landscaped grass in winter – even on top of snow – it will leave patches of dead grass in the spring.

When Snow Removal Crews Are at Work

Please do not interrupt our snow removal workers when they are clearing snow. Interruptions will slow their work and can create

safety issues. If you have a special concern or comment, please call the Homeowners Association during office hours. If you have an urgent concern when the office is closed, please call our emergency number at 978-365-3111.

When snow removal crews are clearing your street and you are driving out of the community, please drive out the "open" side of your street to avoid driving through the snow that workers are piling and removing.

Woodlands Residents Business Listing

We would like to assist residents who have businesses that offer products or services that may be of interest other residents. If we have a sufficient response, we will include a resident business listing insert in a future issue of the newsletter. If you would like to be included in the listing, please send a note or e-mail to Donna Phelps with your name, business name and description, phone and e-mail address. 🌿



Woodlands Community Vs. Single-Family Home: A Real-Life Cost Comparison

Today's economy is challenging most of us to count our dollars and avoid spending when we can. In times like these, many condominium owners are paying their monthly condo fees and/or assessments and wondering, "Would I be spending less in a single family home?" The truth is that if you owned your own home outside of a condominium community, you would have to pay individually for all the expenses and services purchased in bulk by the Woodlands Homeowners Association. Here is a comparison of the fees paid by an average Woodlands homeowner and the comparative costs of typical single family home in the Clinton area.

CONDO FEE EXPENSES	WOODLANDS TYPICAL MONTHLY FEE	SINGLE-FAMILY HOME AVERAGE MONTHLY FEE
Snow Removal, including driveway clearing and roof raking	\$34	\$58
Landscaping, including mowing, pruning, fertilizing, lime, weed control, spring and fall clean up.	\$56	\$162
Building Maintenance, including emergency response, exterior repairs, maintenance service and staff, insect treatments, exterior lighting and house checks.	\$53	\$85
Replacement/Reserves set aside for siding, roofing, walkways etc.	\$41	\$41
General community services, including pump station operation, accounting and legal fees.	\$6	\$0
Homeowners Association Master Homeowners Insurance Policy	\$12	\$66 <small>Discounted to compare to the \$10,000 deductible of Master Policy.</small>
Social Activities	\$1	\$0
Management Services, including overseeing landscaping, snow removal, repairs, banking and collections, newsletter and communications, resident requests and issues, yearly budgets, committee meetings, office expense, annual meetings and more.	\$44	\$0
Town Water/Sewer	\$24	\$50
Comcast Cable	\$25	\$62
Comcast Internet	\$25	\$43
Trash Pick-up	\$9	\$35
Alarm Monitoring	\$10	\$37
TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENSES	\$340	\$621

Letters from the Heart

These residents have taken the time
to reflect on their lives here at the Woodlands.
We'd like to share their thoughts with you...

Happy New Year Woodlands!
Here's to a great year to all of us
and more importantly our sales! If
buyers only knew about the wonderful com-
munity we have and the special people
who live (and play) here, we would need
twice the land to hold all the units that
would be sold. I've had the pleasure of
living in a townhouse and now a Briarwood
unit. Each have their own unique setting,
quiet surroundings, and friendly neighbors.

There is such a contagious community
spirit that lives within the Woodlands, and I
felt that from the first visit when I was
house hunting. Michelle, in the sales of-
fice, loves living here and expresses that to
any potential buyer. Our home office per-
sonnel - Al, Sue, Linda, and Donna - are
always planning and working long hours to
better the community. They are very ac-
commodating and care about the people
who live here.

Most of all, I love the people here and have
made some very special friendships. Liv-
ing here for me has been like having an-
other family. 2008 was a difficult year for
me personally, but here at the Woodlands,
I have access to a wonderful support sys-
tem. Most people here look out for their
neighbors and help one another. There are
so many interests, activities and clubs...just
think what it will be like when we have the
new fitness and community center!

Before we know it, spring and summer will
be here and we will see each other outside
- walking, biking, grilling. In the meantime,
keep warm, keep busy and invite a
neighbor to dinner!

Mary Martin

Five years! I can't believe I've been
living in The Woodlands nearly half a
decade. I'm told I was the ninth resi-
dent. When I moved in, my neighbors Don
and Pat were the only people living on the
street. By day, this place was alive with
building activity. At night, you could clearly
hear the coyotes howling somewhere just
beyond the peak of the property.

The Woodlands is more than a monthly
mortgage payment to me. It's become
home. Three things come to mind when I
think of this place. First, it's really peaceful
out here. When my two nieces, come to

visit, they love sleeping in because it is so
quiet. When I walk the property, especially
at night but also during the day, there's a
serenity in the air.

Second to the peace and quiet are the peo-
ple here at The Woodlands. I've yet to
meet someone who lives here whom I
haven't grown to like. This place is becom-
ing a community. Just after our first snow-
fall of the season, I was out shoveling my
driveway. It was drizzling, the snow was
heavy and the pavement slippery. One
neighbor, just out on a walk, volunteered to
help me finish the job. What a nice guy!
Of course, being a guy, I passed on the
offer. Instead, he helped Pat next door,
and then my neighbor Kathy joined in and
the three of them cleaned out another
neighbor's driveway. That's community!
And this kind of stuff is fueled by the front
office. I'm not a kiss-up or anything, but
I've been here long enough to realize that
Al, Sue, Donna, Linda, and company genu-
inely care about the people who live here.
And the people here seem to care about
one another. I'm a pastor, and I'd call that
community.

One more thing. This is the first place I've
ever owned. I probably couldn't put a nail
in straight on first try. So I'm no expert.
But people "in the know" who see my place
tell me this is quality construction. There's
a lot of pride that went into building these
places - and I watched nearly every one of
them go up! Of course, I understand that
everything mankind makes has some flaw.
But I'm proud of my home here at The
Woodlands. Rightfully so.

Ron Cousineau

I remember a George Carlin comedy
routine...as his plane flew over a town
he described the houses below as
"places to store stuff"... a funny but im-
personal view of those structures. The differ-
ence between a house and a home is so
much like the difference between a devel-
opment and a community.

We came to The Woodlands just over a
year ago. As we sorted through boxes
filled with "stuff" from our old home, the
doorbell announced our first visitor.
Joanne, our neighbor, greeted us with her
homemade banana bread and welcomed
us to the community.

Moving to a new home is an event filled
with excitement, anticipation, and perhaps
some apprehension. So we came with
expectations, but received much more than
we expected. Joanne was the first of many
neighbors we would come to know and,
from that first day, a sense of belonging to
a community began. We became involved
in many activities and shared a plot in the
community garden.

As we have met and befriended more resi-
dents, it impressed us that the Woodlands
reminded us of the communities that we
grew up in; close-knit neighborhoods where
family and friends were close by. During
the past year, we've made good friends
and neighbors, sharing good times and
occasionally sad news of an illness or hurt.
And we realized that the Woodlands is
more than a development, it's a real com-
munity of neighbors. We feel blessed to live
here and look forward to enjoying this new
year and many more here at the Wood-
lands.

Louise & Ed Aleo

We have enjoyed being part of the
Woodlands community. Friendly
neighbors and a beautiful setting
make this a very special place to live. But
the most important thing we have found is
the people that live here. Neighbors help-
ing neighbors. There is a true "sense of
community" that we've never experienced
anywhere else!

In the past, our schedules have not permit-
ted us to enjoy many of the social activities
available - but we always feel welcome and
people are genuinely happy to see us when
we do attend. And if you like your privacy,
you can enjoy the beautiful views!

Prior to residing at the Woodlands, we did
not do much in Clinton - even though I
came from Berlin and Jim from Worces-
ter. We have found that it offers almost
something for everyone. We still have so
much more to discover. We can't wait for
the fitness and community center to be
completed! With all of the new friends
we've met, we welcome the opportunity to
have a central place to gather, entertain
and of course exercise too!

Kathy & Jim Gatos

Woodlands Snapshots

2008 Holiday Party



Woodlanders enjoy a festive holiday meal together at the Fifth Annual Woodlands Holiday Party



Mary Ellen Hart , Michelle St. Michael-staff, Geri Steele and Ted Equi

New Years Eve Progressive Party



Monica Dowling, Pam Miller and Gerri Bateman



Eunice Gorman and Reiko Taura



Karen Scibinico



Mary Martin



Polly Bacon-Gilbert, center, with granddaughter Djinni and Djinni's husband Mark.

Woodlands Clubs, Classes and Committees...

Book Club:

Monday, Dec. 8 saw the Book Club discussing Leif Enger's bestselling novel "Peace Like a River." Enger is an excellent storyteller and delineator of characters. The stage for his tale of a warm and close family is rural Minnesota in the 1960s.

The eldest son in the family shoots and kills two bullying locals who molest his young sister. He is charged with murder, but escapes and becomes a fugitive with the FBI in pursuit. His family sets out to find and help him as they all struggle in the harsh Minnesota winter.

In the course of the novel, the father works several "miracles," and though they make for a sense of surprise and novelty, they are mostly distractions from the story of the family. But as usual, our discussions were lively and informative.

"Thunderstruck" by Eric Larsen was our selection for the Jan. 12 meeting. Following his patented approach, the author selected two events of the same time frame, found a connection between them, and told two factual stories at the same time. In "Thunderstruck," the time frame was the turn of the century era (late 1890s to early 1900s), and the two stories are Marconi's development of wireless communication and a hideous London murder. In order not to spoil future readers' chance to be thunderstruck by the tale, the connection will not be revealed here.

Our group enjoyed the highly detailed portrait of life at the turn of the above century, which saw the beginnings of our own era in the

development of technologies for communication, transportation, apprehension of criminals, and medicine.

The author transports us in a literary time machine back to days that we recognize as the ancestors of our own times. Larsen has a highly effective technique of using true past events, conversations, and people in order to spin a tale of suspense and intrigue that rivals any fictitious characterizations and plots, no matter how wild and weird an author might construe them. It's another case of truth outperforming fiction.

Our next meeting is on Feb. 9, featuring "Atonement" by Ian McEwan. Interested? Call Carl Armbruster.

Bridge Club:

This club meets weekly on Wednesday nights from 7 to 9 p.m. If you're interested in playing bridge, contact Marie DeMember.

Cross-Country Ski Club:

This is a new group that will meet to enjoy cross-country skiing or snowshoeing on Woodlands property. Beginners are welcome! Contact Adrien Rock.

Dining Out Club:

The Dining Out Club meets once each month on a Thursday night. The next Dining Out experience will be scheduled in February at a location and date to be announced. Woodlanders are invited to join the group and to suggest new restaurants to try. To accommodate both light and hearty appetites, restau-

rants are asked in advance to provide individual checks.

If you have not attended a dining out event in the past and would like to be notified of upcoming outings, please contact Michelle St. Michael at michelle@woodlands.com.

Finance Committee:

This committee meets quarterly on the second Tuesday of the month at the Management Office. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 14 at 7 p.m. Contact Donna Phelps at the Association at 978-365-5996.

Knitting Club:

This group meets on Thursday afternoons at 1 p.m. All knitters - experienced and beginners - are welcome. Contact Monica Dowling.

Recreation/Outreach Committee:

This committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month to create and plan activities, events, and outreach efforts. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3 at 7 p.m. at the Management Office. Interested residents are welcome to drop in - this group is a great way to get to know your neighbors! Contact Donna Phelps at the Association at 978-365-5996.

Whist Club:

We are trying to determine if there are residents who are interested in forming a Whist card playing club. Contact Adrien Rock. 🍀

Words from a Woodlander...

By Carl J. Armbruster

The Power and the Magic of the Ballot

The national election last November 4 saw the country's highest number of voters in the last 44 years. Clinton's voters also turned out in large numbers, which I saw first-hand as one of the town's election workers. But what really struck me was the attitude and demeanor of those voting. My job was to assist voters as they deposited their ballots in the ballot box by answering their questions ("which side goes up?") and by assisting when the ballot did not enter the machine.

In some cases, I had to get them another ballot because they had incorrectly marked it or failed to use the special pen provided. As the hours wore on, I also assisted in recording the numerous absentee ballots.

As I viewed the steady stream of voters, I could not help but take note of the expressions on their faces and their body language.

In many instances, it was obvious that this was the very first time they had voted. They approached the box hesitantly, frequently asked questions, and seemed relieved when the machine accepted their ballot.

Many glanced at me with a questioning look, and I often responded by saying something like "Yes, you've voted and your vote has been recorded." They would reply with a simple but warm "Thank you."

The age span of these first-time or infrequent voters ran the gamut from teenagers to oldsters, including recent immigrants and the severely handicapped. Some were family voters—a mother, a father, and a couple of young children who asked if they could put their parents' ballot into the voting machine. There were smiles all around when the ballot disappeared into the box.

"They realized they were participating in a serious national election and wanted to contribute their opinion."

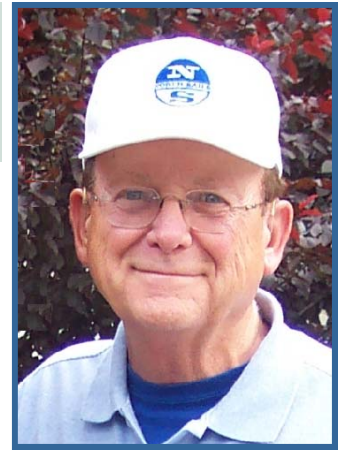
Silence on my part did not seem appropriate as they looked at me, so I would make comments such as "Nice going, you've done your civic duty." A polite and relieved "Thank you" was the response, along with a big smile.

In a few instances where the ballot had been spoiled and I had to get them a replacement, I was asked if they could keep the spoiled ballot as a souvenir of voting. I explained why they could not, but I was impressed by their enthusiasm as first-time voters.

Of course there were many, many experienced voters who knew exactly what to do, and even some who seemed in a desperate hurry to get it over with and get out. I made it a point to thank those folks, since they clearly had some heavy thoughts on their minds.

My overall impression is that the voters were engaged. They realized they were participating in a serious national election and wanted to contribute their opinion. I felt grateful to be a citizen with the right to vote. And I felt sad for the 32 percent of the citizenry who did not experience the power and the magic of the ballot box.

Author's note: This column covers a wide array of topics, and residents are invited to share any thoughts or information that may be of interest to us Woodlanders. 🍀



Carl Armbruster
(612)



One Woodland Circle, Clinton, MA 01510

Phone: 978-365-5996

Fax: 978-365-5949

Upcoming Events

Valentine's Day Martini Tasting - Friday, Feb. 13

One of our most popular events, our third annual Valentine's Day Martini Tasting will be held on Friday, Feb. 13 from 7 to 10 p.m. We'll serve a variety of martinis for you to try along with a chocolate fondue with fresh fruit for those with a sweet tooth. Cost is \$10 per person, which you can pay at the door. Please RSVP by Mon., Feb. 9. to Donna or Linda at the Homeowners Association at 978-365-5996. Hope to see you there!

Warm-Up Winter Chili Competition - Sunday, March 1

There's nothing that warms up a winter day like a serving of homemade chili. On Sunday, March 1 at 4 p.m., we invite you to attend our Warm-Up-Winter Chili Competition. You can enter the contest with your best chili recipe or just come to sample the chili and vote for your favorite! The winner will receive a restaurant gift certificate as a prize. Please RSVP by Mon., Feb. 23 to the Homeowners Association at 978-365-5996.

Third Annual St. Patrick's Day Party - Saturday, March 14

We'll be hosting our Third Annual St. Patrick's Day party on Saturday, March 14 at 7 p.m. The party will feature Sue Flanagan's famous Irish stew and Irish coffee. Wear something green if you can and bring your own beverage. We would welcome an appetizer or dessert to share as well. Please RSVP by Fri., March 6 to the Homeowners Association at 978-365-5996.