

THE LARK

October 2019

Meadowhill.net



EXECUTIVE BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Important
Message

Among the goals of the Executive Board are to follow our documents and the law, to be inclusive, open and transparent. Over the past few months we have received requests that board meetings be held in the evenings to facilitate attendance by owners that continue to work. Other owners expressed reservations about meetings held at night, especially when they end in darkness. Holding meetings at night would preclude attendance by the maintenance supervisor, would increase the management fee, and might result in a change in manager. Until several years ago, meetings were held in the evenings with only one or

two non-board owners in attendance. As meetings were moved earlier and earlier attendance increased to the current level of 20-30 attendees - well above typical for associations of our size.

At the August meeting we voted to experimentally hold "listening sessions" in the evenings open to all owners once a quarter. Most board members will be in attendance, with no votes taken. These sessions will be held at 7:00pm on Tuesdays eight days prior to a regularly scheduled board meeting: on October 8th, February 11th, and May 12th. Due to winter vacations, we have also cancelled the January board meeting. By state law the board is only required to meet two times a year. The March meeting has also been moved a day earlier to Tuesday March 17th.

Owners are reminded that they are not limited to speaking at meetings, they can submit written comments at meetings or through the manager and can discuss their concerns with individual board members outside of meetings.

MEET MIKE CURTIS, THE ORIGINAL HAPPY CAMPER



Batman and Robin. Holmes and Watson. Simon and Garfunkle. History is full of famous twosomes. Here at Meadow Hill, the best-known duo by far is the Facilities tag-team of Darien and Mike. We introduced Darien a few issues ago; now it's time to meet his counterpart, Mike Curtis.

Equally happy to go by Mike or Mikey, our Assistant Operations Manager has lived his entire 29 years within a stone's throw of Meadow Hill's northern fence line. Mike attended Glastonbury High School, where he played baseball and golf until turning his attention to other activities, primarily camping with his parents and sister at the family campsite in New Hampshire. Mike continues to treasure time with family and still enjoys frequent weekend getaways to the New Hampshire homestead. He is close to his sister Debbie, who lives near Dunkin Donuts park and manages the Chili's restaurant in Manchester.

Mike first came to Meadow Hill while in high school, working here as part of the Maintenance staff for several summers. After graduating, he went to work for CRST Logistics in Bloomfield for a few years, then moved to the business development center of Gengras Motor Cars in East Hartford. Injuries from a serious car accident in 2012 put him on the sidelines for a few months of recovery. During that time, an opening arose at Meadow Hill, and Mike was offered the position. Luckily for us he accepted and has been an invaluable part of the MH community ever since.

Mike works closely with Darien on all manner of projects to keep MH in good shape: grounds upkeep; external building maintenance and repair; internal repairs and painting; damage remediation; snow removal; and anything else that needs doing. Mike enjoys the variety of work, and acknowledges that he has learned a lot from Darien. While grateful for the skills he has developed, his expanding capabilities sometimes cause friction with his “other boss,” i.e., his dad, who doesn’t always appreciate Mike’s professional input on home projects!

Easy-going and with a ready smile, Mike loves helping out the residents at Meadow Hill and enjoys having something different to do every day. He appreciates the experience and wisdom of the folks here and likes to engage in conversation when he’s not too busy. But don’t try to get him to talk politics – he’s pretty clear that he’s not going there! The biggest downside about his job is the occasional New England snowstorm with all the extra work involved (and who can blame him!). As Mike says, “winters are tough around here!”

As for advice to residents, he suggests folks refrain from leaving unwanted items in the Maintenance yard except on designated bulk pickup days; and advises against putting bulk items or recycled cardboard between the bins in the trash sheds; as they won’t always get picked up. He encourages residents to ask if they have questions and is willing to stay after his normal 4:00 quitting time to help get someone the answers they need.

During his leisure time, in addition to family camping, Mike enjoys trout fishing and salt-water fishing. He also loves the occasional round of golf, which gives him a chance to relax and spend time catching up with friends as they play. But he won’t drive the golf cart – he gets enough of that here at Meadow Hill!

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM ONLINE HACKERS

For many of us, the internet has become part of our daily lives, and as useful as it is, it does carry with it the threat of having important online accounts hacked for nefarious purposes. Kathy and I know this all too well, as it recently happened to us. Our nightmare started with a phone call from our bank, asking if we had recently tried to call in and get access to our account information over the phone. We had not, and we quickly discovered that someone had gotten possession of one of our signed paper checks and used it to forge and cash a check for almost \$1000 against our account. Then, armed with that little bit of information, the thief tried to access our bank accounts via phone, but was unable to penetrate the security measures. The culprit then began to “phish” for and attack other accounts, including our retirement accounts.



During the ensuing several weeks, we had to close and reopen our bank accounts twice, with all the associated work of changing all our automatic payments and deposits, notifying credit monitoring bureaus, contacting banks and credit card companies, updating all of our online accounts, changing password, and so on. Fortunately, we did not lose any actual funds (the bank reimbursed us for the forged check) and our other accounts remained safe, but this incident still carried plenty of cost: we paid \$200 to have our computer professionally cleaned (they found lots of spyware and other malware bits); I spent about 8 full days of labor cleaning up the mess; plus the emotional turmoil of having been attacked in such a faceless, yet personal, manner. After several quiet weeks, we are crossing our fingers that our information is now secure, but it will be a long time before we really will breathe a sigh of relief, and the lessons we learned or re-learned will remain fresh. Among those lessons are useful tips for all of us who shop, work, bank, communicate, book travel, pay bills, or otherwise interact with the online universe:

- Exercise good password habits, e.g., use strong passwords, don't repeat passwords for different accounts, don't use character strings that are easily guessed based on your name or address, and don't store your list of passwords in an electronic document on your computer.
- Use 2-factor authentication whenever possible. This means that each time you login to an account, after you enter your password you will be sent an additional security code via text or email (text is more secure). You must enter the code in order to complete the login process. In this way, even if someone has figured out your password, they would need to have your phone in their possession in order to access your account. It's a little more work, but much more secure.
- Make sure you have good anti-virus software running.
- Don't use "auto-login" or saved login information for accounts you use frequently. It's a little more work to type in your username and password each time, but it may be more secure.
- Freeze your credit reports with Experian, Equifax and Transunion. That way if your identity does get stolen, the thief won't be able to open bogus credit cards or accounts using your name.
- Don't leave paper checks lying around where they might be seen by someone else. It only takes a few seconds for someone with a smart phone to snap a picture of the check and use it make a forgery.
- Set up notifications on your credit cards so you get a text or email after every transaction; that way you'll know immediately if someone has gotten access to your credit card information and is using it illegitimately.
- If you receive an email or phone call telling you an account has been compromised and instructing you to provide some information or respond in any way, do not respond to the email or call any number provided (unless you recognize the number and already know that it is genuine). Instead, independently look up the company's contact information and call them.
- Be vigilant. If something smells fishy don't hesitate to check it out.

If you aren't sure how to implement some of these measures, remember that the Riverview Community Center offers free computer help in the evenings. Sign up at the Community Center.

We haven't stopped using the internet and its useful tools to do our business, but our experience demonstrated that we had become way too lax in some of our cyber-habits. While there is no such thing as absolute online security, we don't intend to get caught short again if we can help it. By Mike Proulx

WILDLIFE WATCH: The Ruby-Throated Hummingbird



One of the joys of life at Meadow Hill is the abundance of birds that grace our property with their color, song, and often fascinating behaviors. Among the many wonderful species, one of the loveliest and most mesmerizing is also the tiniest – the hummingbird. Found only in the New World (North, Central and South America), there are about 17 species in the US alone. Of the 5 or 6 species that have been observed in Connecticut, the most common - and the one I see sipping nectar at my feeder – is the ruby-throated hummingbird.

Both males and females of this handsome species have a metallic green back and crown, white throat, and near-black wings. The female has rounded tail feathers with white-tipped outer feathers, but the male has a forked tail lacking the white tips. And of course, the male sports

a gorgeous red throat, which may be difficult to spot from some angles or in poor light. Measuring about 3.5 inches from tip of beak to tip of tail (the males are generally even smaller), these tiny dynamos may weigh as little as a penny!

Hummingbirds in general share many amazing characteristics:

- They have the highest metabolism of any animal on Earth, necessary to support the rapid beating of their wings; their heart rate can reach as high as 1,260 beats per minute.
- They are able to hover in mid-air by flapping their wings 12-80 times per second.

- The rapid wing beats create the distinct humming sound for which they are named.
- They are the only bird species that can fly backwards.
- Despite their tiny size, they are strong fliers and have one of the longest migration routes in the entire bird kingdom – up to 2000 miles. Some species, including the ruby-throated, will fly an incredible 500 miles across the Gulf of Mexico – without stopping.

Other facts about the ruby-throated species:

- You will generally see them here from late April into September. They winter from central Mexico to western Panama; and some live year-round in Florida; they tend to return to the same summer locale year after year.
- Winter habitat includes tropical deciduous forests, dry forests, second growth forests, forest edges, citrus groves, scrubland, hedgerows, and along rivers and marshes.
- Their summer habitat is similar to their wintering range. They are often found in mixed woodlands, eastern deciduous and pine forests, gardens, pastures and orchards. They remain close to the trees they nest in, while also having a supply of flowering plants and insects nearby for food.

Speaking of food, hummers do not live on nectar alone, though they rely on the sweet liquid for immediate energy. But for growth and long-term sustenance, they also eat many insects. They have adapted well to human development, and gladly avail themselves of human-created garden habitats for feeding, shelter and nesting. It's easy to attract them to a yard or garden with commercially available nectar feeders and a variety of flowers. They are attracted to red and orange flowers, and especially like trumpet shaped blossoms. Nectar can be purchased (avoid those with red dye as it is not known if this may have negative health effects) or made at home. I make my own, mixing 1part sugar to 4 parts water and bringing just to a boil on the stove before removing to cool. I then keep it in the fridge until ready to refill my feeder. Feeders should not be placed within easy reach of cats or near windows that the birds might fly into.

Despite their lack of size, these are plucky creatures that will vigorously defend their nesting or feeding areas. In amazement, I've watched an angry hummer repeatedly dive at an intruder, chirping loudly all the while, until the other bird was driven off. Of course, they themselves can become prey to larger birds, bullfrogs, praying mantis or large orb-weaving spiders and domestic cats.

Their population is robust and considered stable and they are protected by law, which is good news for those of us who love to sit on our porches and watch the comings and goings of these delightfully busy little gems!

Information sources for this article include beautyofbirds.com, hummingbird-guide.com and ctaudubon.org

SOCIAL HAPPENINGS

SAVE THESE DATES!

	<p><i>Halloween Party</i> Mark your calendar for Halloween Meet and Greet Party October 31, 5-7 pm. Watch for flyer in early October!</p>	
	<p><i>Holiday Party</i> Meadow Hill Holiday Party December 7th, from 5pm until... Enjoy Great Food & Entertainment</p>	

**Great food + Great friends+ Great time =
Octoberfest**





A big thank you to the committee:
John and Donna Goselin, Ellie Augur,
Marge DeMay, Moira Finnegan, and
Laurie and Mike Yingling for their efforts.



REFURBISHED COURTS NOW OPENED

Our newly refurbished courts officially opened in style at the Meadow Hill Sports Day, with the help of many folks including Ed and Suzanne Litke, Tillie and Bob Kolwicz (Pickle Ball), Roger Bouchard (Corn Hole), Luther Weeks (Shuffle Board) and Sandy O'Leary (Social Chairman).



KEY DATES	
October 2 – Game Night October 8 – Yom Kippur October 8 – Board Listening Session October 14-15 – Fall Clean Up (dump run)	October 14 – Columbus Day October 16 – Board Meeting October 24 – United Nations Day October 31 – Halloween Party
GARDEN CLEAN-UP REMINDER	
	<p>If you have a garden plot on the riverbank, it's time for pre-winter cleanup. As the growing season comes to a close, this is a reminder that all stakes, tomato cages, material to prevent weeds, and anything else that will interfere with spring roto-tilling needs to be removed. Any plants or weeds can remain in the garden plot. Thanks!</p>
FALL CLEAN-UP DAYS....	
<p>Will be Monday/Tuesday, October 14th/15th. Two items per unit may be discarded by depositing them in front of the Greenhouse <u>on October 14th or until 10:00 am on October 15th</u>, at which time, they will be taken to the Transfer Station. Heavy or bulky items may not be included (sleeper sofas, refig., etc.) Darien Covert</p>	
GREENHOUSE REMINDER	
	<p>Fall is approaching. The greenhouse welcomes fragile, quality container plants. To provide space for all interested residents, it is necessary to limit the number of plants to 2 or 3 large or 3 or 4 small plants. No window boxes. Please label plants with your name and unit number. Thanks for your cooperation. Sandy MacGregor, Greenhouse Chair</p>
LARKERS WANTED!	
	<p>If you enjoy writing, editing, or proofreading, and would like to help keep your MH neighbors informed, the Lark has a place for you! Contact Gene Flynn at 860-212-7347 about becoming part of the Lark team!</p>
MEADOW HILL RESIDENT NOTES	
<p>Crafts and Needlework – If you enjoy knitting or crocheting and enjoy giving items to those in need, please contact Linda Fillion at 860-559-5504 or email Lfillion@cox.net for details and patterns. Items such as baby hats, booties, lap robes and prayer shawls are really appreciated by Middlesex Hospital, where we donate about 96 such items per year through our monthly deliveries.</p> <p>Game Night – We will meet on the first Wednesday of the month from 7PM to 9PM at the Hollister House. We'll teach you, or you can bring your own games. For more information call Howard Rosenthal at 860-430-6076.</p> <p>Lark Submissions Please contact Gene Flynn at 860-212-7347 for more information on submitting articles and notices.</p>	<p>Book Club meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 1:00 at the Clubhouse. Everyone is welcome. If you would like to learn more, please call Carol Fredrickson at 860-633-0158 or Suzanne Litke at 860-439-9611. October: <u>The American Duchess</u>: A Novel of Consuelo Vanderbilt by Karen Harper. November: <u>The Only Woman in the Room</u> by Marie Benedict.</p> <p>Clubhouse Rentals - For all rentals and scheduling of the clubhouse or Hollister House, please contact Marge DeMay at 860-633-6599, Unit #90.</p> <p>Clubhouse – The Clubhouse is open for all residents every day. Come enjoy the gym, play pool with a friend or check your email. In the event of a scheduled rental, board meeting, etc., the upstairs room will be closed.</p>

MANAGEMENT COMPANY

IMAGINEERS, LLC
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Assistant Manager: Pat Lokiec
860-768-3313

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Larry Abbott
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DIRECTOR

Tom Lombardo
860-652-0090

DIRECTOR

unfilled

To Email Management staff or Board Member click on <https://tinyurl.com/MHillContacts>

BOARD MEETINGS

Monthly Board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 1:30pm in the Clubhouse.

Listening Session October 8th
7pm at the clubhouse

THE NEXT MEETING

Oct 16th

1:30 PM

IN THE CLUBHOUSE

Current and previous meeting minutes can be found at www.meadowhill.net

Hard copy minutes are available at the clubhouse office one week following the meeting.

MEADOW HILL COMMITTEES

Advisory committees play an important role in Meadow Hill. They provide information and work that improves Meadow Hill beyond what the Board and Manager can do without assistance. If you would like to contribute to making Meadow Hill even better or if you feel your views or those of your area are not fully represented on a Committee, consider joining a committee. Here is a list of current committee chairs.



Amenities: OPEN

Budget: L. Abbott(C/L)

Nominating: L. Abbott(C/L)

Grounds: M. Proulx(C), C. Liscomb(L),

Trees: G. Flynn (C), T. Lombardo (L)

Stables: E. Lembo (C), E. Litke(L)

Social: S. O'Leary(C), L. Abbott(L)

Rental: M. DeMay (C), L. Weeks (L)

Communications: G. Flynn (C), L. Weeks (L)

Friends of the River: R. Bouchard (C), B. Kolwitz (C), L. Abbott(L)

Vegetable Garden: D. Fillion(C), L. Abbott(L)

Maintenance: L. Weeks (C), E. Litke(L)

Greenhouse: S. MacGregor(C), L. Weeks(L)

Rules: L. Weeks (C), L. Abbott & T. Lombardo (L)

Key: (C) – Chair, (L) – Liaison

REQUESTS AND REPORTS TO THE BOARD

Committees and Residents should submit agenda requests and reports to Imagineers 10 days before the monthly Board meeting.

To email Board Members or submit work orders refer to the MeadowHill.net.