



# Winthrop summer season unfolds Free concerts at Norcross Point

BY WARREN WATSON  
Correspondent

From smallmouth bass fishing to Shakespeare, from fireworks to a robust hike, the greater Winthrop region is readying for a banner summer season.

Local and regional vacationers will hike, bike, boat and frolic at the region's 28 lakes and streams. Groups such as the Friends of the Cobossee Watershed and the Kennebec Land Trust will host various activities, classes and lectures. They will be joined by the Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce, the Theater at Monmouth, the Bailey Library, and restaurants and businesses throughout the region as catalysts for leisure and fun.

The Winthrop region includes a main village situated on the stream linking Maranacook and Anabesacook lakes, with Lake Cobossee only a few miles away.

The conservation-minded Kennebec Land Trust continues to be an active engine for conservation topics, hiking and special activities, according to its executive director, Theresa Kerchner.

Kerchner's group will offer public events about the fishery and nature hikes, and a special Tri-Sports Challenge Aug. 21 that features a triathlon variation that tests contestants in running, paddling and swimming.

In Monmouth, professional summer theater returns to Cumston Hall for the 47th season at the Theater at Monmouth. Scheduled plays include: "Cyrano," "Love's Labor Lost," "The Barber of Seville," "Henry V," "The Illusion" and "Puss in Boots."

During the busy summer, Friends of Cobossee Watershed will be on the lakes helping to rid predator species and generally assisting boaters. The organization will take to land as well, sponsoring the July 4 Friends on the Fourth 5K Run.

In the event of rain, there is always the option of visiting the Bailey Public Library just off Main Street in Winthrop. Summer programs will be on the menu, with special author nights for published writers.

And, of course, the Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce will again offer its annual sponsorship of the fireworks display at Norcross Point on July 4, and other special events.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- June 26: 10 a.m. to noon. Mushroom Identification Walk, sponsored by the Kennebec Valley Land Trust, Small-Burnham Conservation Area, Litchfield.
- July 4: 8 a.m. 14th annual Friends on the Fourth 5K Run, American Legion, Winthrop, sponsored by Chamber of Commerce.
- July 4: 9 p.m. Annual July 4 Fireworks, Norcross Point, Winthrop, sponsored by Chamber of Commerce.
- July 8-17: 19th Annual Maine International Film Festival, Waterville.
- July 13: 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Stream fish ecology with Mercy Gallagher, state fishery biologist, Ladd Recreation Area.
- Aug. 20: 10 a.m. Annual Sidewalk Art Festival, Winthrop, Main Street, sponsored by Chamber of Commerce.
- Aug. 21: 7:45 a.m. KLT Tri-Sport Challenge (swim, paddle, road race), Echo Lake's Camp Winnebago in Fayette.

Make plans to attend one or all of the FREE awesome events planned at the Seventh annual Concerts at Norcross Point this summer sponsored by The Winthrop Area Federal Credit Union and Kennebec Savings Bank, and hosted by the gracious folks of the Town of Winthrop. All concerts (except Aug. 20) are Sundays from 2 - 4 p.m. If you have a boat, come early, put your craft in the water, enjoy a day on Maranacook Lake, boat back to the edge of the Point and relax to the sounds of our favorite offerings from the comfort of your own flotation device. There is a playground for the little ones and Coordinator Elizabeth McKenney often has sidewalk chalk for children's artistic statements. Public restrooms will be available. All shows are dependent upon the weather. This year's talent includes quite a few new acts and some excellent jazz and folk. Call 620-6231 (Central Maine Taxi's phone line) the day of the show for possible cancellation notices or visit [facebook.com/ConcertsatNorcrossPoint](http://facebook.com/ConcertsatNorcrossPoint) for updates. Come early and stake out your lawn chair! Concert schedule is as follows (search websites by band name for more information):

- July 10: The Boneheads! [entertainmaine.com/artistbank/artist](http://entertainmaine.com/artistbank/artist).
  - July 17: Sons of Be's! [facebook.com](http://facebook.com)
  - July 24: Simons and Goodwin: [simonsandgoodwin.com](http://simonsandgoodwin.com)
  - July 31: The Colwell Brothers Band [soul-sensations.com](http://soul-sensations.com)
  - Aug. 7: Hana Kahn [hanakahn.com](http://hanakahn.com)
  - Aug. 14: Sandy River Ramblers! [youtube.com](http://youtube.com)
  - Aug. 20: Pat Pepin [patpepin.com](http://patpepin.com) Concert in conjunction with the annual Winthrop Art Walk. Following the concert, please plan on attending the annual Winthrop Rotary BBQ to end Hunger down at the football field, to raise money to help others in our community at large.
  - Aug. 21: Make up date, if we don't need it, we will have a community jam, with a PA provided, so bring your instruments. (No Karaoke, please, this is a live music event)
  - Aug. 28: Mike Whitehead Group [facebook.com](http://facebook.com).
- Norcross Point is located at the head of Maranacook Lake off of Bowdoin St. and Memorial Drive in Winthrop. Follow signs to Norcross Point or the public boat landing. Look for the gazebo. Parking is limited. Come early and bring a lunch or visit one of our fine area restaurants and ice cream stands.

## Fast Eddie's becomes a summer destination

BY WARREN WATSON  
Correspondent

Most restaurants and tourist-oriented businesses in central Maine focus tightly on weekend customers during our oh-so-short summer.

Not so at a unique drive-in restaurant on U.S. Route 202 in Winthrop, midway between Augusta and Lewiston — Fast Eddie's Drive-In.

Wednesday night rules at Fast Eddie's on "Cruise-In Night," when the historical car-hop culture returns at the restaurant and ice cream parlor. On any given Wednesday, up to 100 cars — Mustangs, Corvettes, Jalopies, late 1950s Chevrolets, motorcycles, and even Model T and A Fords — gather under the awning and on the lawns.

Russ Angell, a veteran owner-restaurateur, is in his element. Pull right up to a spot under the awning and a car-hop waitress will be right there to serve the customer. One's mind drifts back to the early 1960s and the famous California car movie "American Graffiti," which launched the career of famed director George Lucas.

Russ and wife, Barbara, of Wayne, work the place. Barbara is in the kitchen and ice cream parlor. Russ works the grounds, making sure customers are happy and contented. It's their eighth season moving in after the first Fast Eddie (Eddie Collins) closed the business in the late 1990s.

"I love it. Fast Eddie's is so much fun," said customer Kim Phinney, who also runs a Win-



Fast Eddie's owner Russ Angell with car hop waitress, Lauren Kaiser, stands beside the famous sedan popping out of the side of the restaurant.

throp business, Café at 130 Main.

The Oscar-winning film "Graffiti" set the style and tone for the '60s and '70s. Set largely at Mel's Drive-In, the film featured cars "backing and forthing" from the car hop with kids working out teen rites of passage.

That's the spirit of Fast Eddie's on a Wednesday night. Waitresses don tank tops and tennis shoes. Waitress Lauren Kaiser, who has been with the business from high school to her years at the University of Maine at Orono, has an extra spring in her step on a busy, balmy night.

"She's a loyal, reliable server," Russ Angell said, noting that his own children — Kristan, Amanda and Tyler — have also worked at the drive-in over the years.

It's a "have-fun" kind of place. Young people scamper on the

lawns and on a small swing set. A rock 'n' band plays a medley. After all, a topless car wash once occupied the place — under a different owner of course. It was also a Texaco service station, later a Citgo.

The Angells work tirelessly to keep the business fresh, from the food to the ice cream, to the quality and authenticity of the experience. "Reputation is hard to change if someone has a bad night," Russ Angell said.

And it all has to be "period correct," said Angell, whose dining room is a collection of past heroes, from James Dean to Marilyn Monroe, from Bogart to the Blues Brothers, from local stock car driver Vanna Brackett, to a wall-full of photos of the

great near-miss editions of New England's sad-sack, almost pennant-winning teams.

The music is eclectic. One minute it might be "Bang a Gong," the next might be "Little Sister." "We used to spend money to buy period items for the walls," Russ Angell said. "Don't have to do that anymore. People just bring the good stuff in."

**MORE INFO**  
Fast Eddie's  
'50s Era Drive-in  
1308 U.S. Route 202  
Winthrop  
Open daily 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.



Warren Watson photos  
The sign on Route 202 for Fast Eddie's The restaurant is located midway between Augusta and Lewiston.

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# Hopkins Flowers & Gifts follows a family tradition

BY WARREN WATSON  
Correspondent

A celebration-minded customer once asked florist Gary Hopkins if he could serve him a hot cup of coffee with the floral arrangement he was about to deliver.

As far as Hopkins knows, both packages arrived in fine style. He should know. He is a second generation proprietor of Hopkins Flowers & Gifts at 1050 Western Ave. in Manchester. In the flower business, customer service comes in various shapes and sizes — all with the customer in mind, he said.

Hopkins, 60, learned from his father, Albert, who once delivered in heavy snow, served as a regular vendor for the late U.S. Sen. Edmund Muskie, D-Maine, and was a trusted part of the floral trade

throughout New England.

“It’s still very competitive going against all the discount stores,” Hopkins said, “and always changing with evolving tastes and floral culture.”

He said his business used to sell up to 300 corsages at Easter, for example.

“Now we might do a dozen,” he said. “Today, that culture is dominated by cut flowers at the various holidays.”

Three generations of the Hopkins family, including his wife of 41 years, Elizabeth, have handled flowers at the familiar business along U.S. Route 202. Hopkins followed his father, who opened the business in 1952 along a stretch of road that once featured trolley cars and even a drive-in movie theater.

**“It’s still very competitive going against all the discount stores, and always changing with evolving tastes and floral culture.”**

**GARY HOPKINS, OWNER OF HOPKINS FLOWERS & GIFTS**

Albert Hopkins served in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II, crossing the Atlantic Ocean 27 times during the conflict. After the war, he worked for a half-dozen years at Bath Iron Works before being laid off as demand for ships dwindled. To fill time, the younger Hopkins said, his father took a job at Cross Flowers in Farmingdale. There, he learned the florist business and built up a potential clientele.

Opportunity came along in 1952 and a business debuted.

Gary Hopkins, a strapping youngster, who now stands 6-foot-4, was a fixture at his dad’s business from the time he was 5 years old.

“My father would pay me 2 cents apiece for all the sweet peas I could pick,” he said of the family’s nearby vegetable garden.

He continued to work with his dad through Winthrop High School’s “Coop Education” program — which combined work and school experiences — before matriculating in 1974. Gary bought the business from his father when he was 24.

Gary’s own boys — Ryan, 35; Matthew, 33 and Todd, 31 — also have worked in the family business, but today have careers of their own.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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Warren Watson photos

Full-service florist Hopkins Flowers and Gifts is located on Route 202 in Manchester.

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# Augusta Country Club celebrates a century of golf this summer

## Founder's Day is set for June 30

BY WARREN WATSON  
Correspondent

There is something in the air at the Augusta Country Club in Manchester these days — it's apparent on the greens, on the tees and up and down the fairways.

It's the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Club that is nestled in the trees and greenery of the former Arthur Brainyard dairy farm located at the head of Lake Cobbossee.

The Augusta Country Club (ACC) is celebrating a century of action this summer, culminating with Founder's Day on June 30.

"The membership is excited," said Jason Hurd, general manager and head golf professional now in his fourth year at the course. "It's an honor being here."

ACC member John Christie, lifelong journalist and founder of the Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting in Hallowell, said the course is impressive.

"I've probably played 500 rounds at Augusta since joining in 2000, yet each new round presents a fresh puzzle to be solved with my very modest skill," Christie said. "You could spend a lifetime trying to conquer ACC — and many have — and never be bored."

Augusta-Manchester was like another world in 1916 when the course was designed and built as war raged in Europe. Trolleys ran down Western Avenue to Manchester and Winthrop, and large hotels were home to tourists on Cobbossee's Pond Road shoreline. Interest in golf was growing and courses sprang up across the United States.

Mark Laney, ACC member, has researched the early days of the Augusta Country Club. He said that in the early 1900s, several area businessmen, under the leadership of Walter S. Wyman, Percy Hill and Guy

Gannett — the owner of the Guy Gannett Newspapers in Portland and Augusta at the time — met to discuss the feasibility of creating a nine-hole golf course.

The group secured options on three tracts of farmland on which to build. They finally settled on the Brainyard dairy farm, which included 100 acres of land, a house, a stable, a connected barn and some smaller buildings.

On Aug. 1, 1916, golf course architect Arthur G. Lockwood was paid \$114 to design and build the course, according to Laney.

The course has evolved since, now featuring 18 holes — nine on either side of Western Avenue (the second designed by the legendary Donald Ross), two tennis courts, a practice range, a full-service pro shop, a restaurant for formal dining and a bar and grill. The club acquired beach acreage on Lake Cobbossee itself, and club members have lake access to



this day.

Although the country club is private, the course is open to the public. Hurd, a golf pro who also is president of the Maine PGA, said that outside golfers can reserve tee times two days in advance.

Membership at ACC now totals 420 individuals for either golf or social options. Hurd said the number is flat "like most

"The membership is excited. It's an honor being here."

JASON HURD, GENERAL MANAGER AND HEAD GOLF PROFESSIONAL AT THE AUGUSTA COUNTRY CLUB



Warren Watson photos  
The pro shop and cart center at the Augusta Country Club in Manchester.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Augusta Country Club, Western Avenue, Manchester, 1-207-623-3021 [augustacountryclub.org](http://augustacountryclub.org).

Golf and tennis rate available for memberships and outside play. Dining available. Call 623-3021 for details.

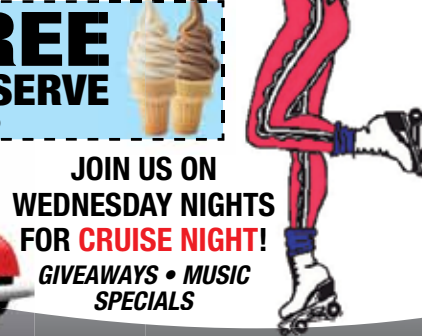
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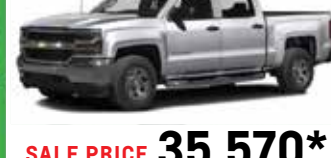


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# Café at 130 Main uses area vendors

BY WARREN WATSON  
Correspondent

Kim Phinney firmly believes that Augusta-Winthrop area businesses can stretch their success by working together.

Her Café at 130 Main, a unique coffeehouse in the heart of Winthrop, works with area vendors and sees their success translating into deeper and more profitable connections in her own community.

"Winthrop doubles in size in the summer months (with tourists) so it works to our advantage," said Phinney, owner of the 2-year-old Café at 130 Main. She has partnerships with other vendors, including soup and coffee.

Café at 130 Main anchors the same Winthrop block that once featured the legendary eatery Ned's.

"In fact, we have had customers come in this year and last who thought we were Ned's," said Phinney, whose café features specialty sandwiches, soup, quiche and salads, as well as latte and cappuccino.

"People are still discovering us," said Phinney, who noted that the community of Winthrop awarded her a grant to help get her business started in 2015. Ned's, a popular eatery, closed in March 2007.

Phinney said that several initiatives are part of that discovery process. Working with the town was a first priority, so is working with the Winthrop Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce and its roster of



Warren Watson photos

Owner Kim Phinney of the cafe at 300 Main in downtown Winthrop.

businesses. In late May, Café at 300 Main served as a site for the Chamber in its business after-hours series. About 25 members attended the networking get-together at the intimate surroundings of the new restaurant.

Phinney hopes Café at 130 Main will develop as a community meeting place, a spot for business luncheons and Internet viewers, a mini-gallery for local artists — and just for plain old conversations and occasional music.

Phinney's husband, Clark, will coordinate front-of-the-house activities, including art procurement and sales, from which the restaurant will take no cut.

With the summer nearly

upon us, Sunday brunch will be available. And on June 25, Phinney will turn the venue into a supper club, featuring a five-course dinner. Reservations, still available, will be required at \$45 per person. Call 395-5027.

**MORE INFO**  
**Café at 130 Main**  
130 Main St.  
Winthrop  
395-5027  
Hours: Monday closed  
Tuesday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Wednesday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Thursday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Friday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Saturday 9 a.m. - p.m.  
Sunday closed

The menu will feature gazpacho; farmhouse bacon jam with bruschetta; seafood trio pot pie; and zucchini, asparagus and arugula greens salad.

And yes, there will be dessert — strawberry Chantilly or chocolate silk pie. Later, gourmet dinners also are planned.

Ever since she was a girl, Phinney worked around central Maine restaurants. She also loved to cook ("I baked with grandma.") When laid off from an office position, she decided to work toward opening a restaurant of her own. That later became Café at 130 Main.

Phinney also believes that her products should use farm-fresh ingredients and specialties. Café at 130 Main recently began featuring Shipwreck Coffee of Farmingdale and the seafood stew from Augusta's Red Barn. That community-minded spirit carries to other restaurant features.

"Patrons can buy a cup of coffee and 'pay it forward' to a young person who might be short on cash," Phinney said. "We call it 'suspended coffee.' Kids come in and ask for it."

It's all about community, after all.





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