

Laker of the Quarter

Music from the Lake

About 40 years ago, Jon Nicholson, a long time WSLA board member, bought property on Lake Monomonac where once stood a rustic log cabin owned by the Schlotz family. Jon and his wife were looking for a vacation retreat away from work in Belmont and home in Acton. "That's what my parents were looking for," said Jill Nicholson Sackett, "and the lake area was the perfect spot. It wasn't too far from Acton or even Boston."



Jon Nicholson knew more than geography. Having helped his own father build houses, he knew what he wanted in the new home and so designed it himself, specific angles and all. The whole family came to cherish the house. "We had so much fun back in the 70s and 80s," Jill recalled. "Those were wonderful times." Hence when retirement time came, the lake property seemed like the logical spot for a year-round home. "They had made friends here, there was a real connection. It was a

really nice location and one they loved. It was like a peaceful respite for them," Jill remarked.

There's more to the story, Jon Nicholson was also the director and founder of the Winchendon Winds, a professional concert band, which he led until his death a year ago. Jill spoke with immense pride about her father's steadfast devotion to the organization. "He wanted a high level of quality and that's what the Winds were and are about," Jill explained. "He felt this community and this region needed what the Winds were able to provide. There was nothing like it around here and he was very passionate about it. Music pulls people together and that's what the concerts are for," she added.

This past summer, the Winds performed three concerts at the Unitarian Universalist church on Central Street across from the Clark Memorial YMCA. Under the guidance of conductor Lucinda Ellert, the season began with a salute to the British and Emerald Isles. That was followed by a lawn Fourth of July concert entitled "America" which attracted a large crowd on a warm and breezy Sunday afternoon to hear familiar patriotic favorites including George M. Cohen's 'Star Spangled Spectacular', 'America the Beautiful' and the traditional 'Stars and Stripes Forever' ending. 'Family Favorites and Features' was the theme of the season-concluding concert which was forced inside by the threat of rainy weather.

"My father would have been so proud," Jill noted.

"He was a music educator and had a vision for a wind ensemble which would be unique to the region and appeal to audiences with sophisticated musical tastes. He did that and we're going to carry it forward," she promised.

More information on the Winchendon Winds can be found on www.winchendonwinds.org.



3 year old Brady having a blast with his dad— a definite dare devil loving his time at the lake!



August 20 | Gary Drudi, above, celebrating his 70th birthday and 55 years at the lake!

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