



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2020/1 More Time! A Belated 200th Birthday Celebration for Darien

Town Events Rescheduled for June and the Fall of 2021

DARIEN, CT, May 7, 2021— It may be a bit late, but the Darien community will finally have an opportunity to wish the town a Belated Happy 200th Birthday, as event plans move forward with a view toward public safety.

Here are the new dates for the 2020/1 More Time Bicentennial Events:

Weed Beach Festive Nights

The Bicentennial Bash

Friday, June 4 / Rain Date: Saturday, June 5

6:00 — 8:00 PM

Anniversary Day Ceremony

Saturday, June 12 / Rain or Shine

Slawson Cemetery, Hanson Road

5:45 — 7:00 PM

Heritage Day

Saturday, October 23 / Rain Date: Sunday, October 24

Museum of Darien, First Congregational Church of Darien, and The Mather Homestead

Times To Be Announced

“The great news is that — finally — the Darien community will be able to gather and celebrate the town’s Bicentennial safely and in accordance with the state’s Covid guidelines,” said Al Miller, chairman of the Darien 2020 Bicentennial Committee.

The town’s Parks and Recreation Department is partnering with the Bicentennial Committee to host the Weed Beach Festive Nights Bicentennial Bash, a belated birthday party for the town. This event will be the first of several Festive Nights the Department is planning this summer at Weed Beach, said the town’s Recreation Program Supervisor Jami Gore.

“This will be a beach party that really celebrates this major town milestone and also the fact that we can actually gather once again with friends and neighbors to have some fun,” Gore said.

Highlights of the Bicentennial Bash include live classic rock with the band Exit Ramp, cake decorating for kids provided by Sprout Chefs, trivia questions, and an option to purchase a boxed dinner from The Waters Edge at Giovanni's, a 2020 Bicentennial Gold Sponsor.

To comply with the state's Covid-19 reopening guidelines, registration is limited, and a small fee will also be required for entry to the Bicentennial Bash, Gore said. Online registration will be open soon on the Parks & Recreation [website](#) and will be limited to residents.

The online registration form will allow residents to opt for either a pre-purchased meal that will be provided by Waters Edge at Giovanni's during the event, or residents may simply purchase a vehicle admission and bring along their own picnic dinner, Gore said.

The cost will be \$25 per vehicle with no meal option, or \$45 per person, which includes the fee for the vehicle entrance and a meal from Giovanni's, Gore said.

The following week, on Saturday, June 12, Bicentennial officials are planning a more subdued event to mark the day in 1820 that Darien received its town charter. The graveside ceremony will honor Thaddeus Bell, Jr., the Revolutionary War veteran who championed the cause of the town's independence.

Organizers are working with the Darien's faith community for a community-wide "Ring of the Bells" starting at 6 pm to mark the beginning of the Ceremony. The Rev. Denise Terry, interim minister of the Congregational Church of Darien, will recite an opening prayer, First Selectman Jayme Stevenson will deliver the keynote address and members of the Darien Scouts will also participate in the Ceremony.

Katherine Love, Honorary Regent and members of the Good Wife's River Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, will present the Thaddeus Bell Jr. Grave Marker as their gift to the Town of Darien and the Bell Family.

For questions and information about ADA accessibility at Slawson Cemetery, please email info.darien2020@gmail.com. The Ceremony will be recorded and aired on Channel 79, Miller said.

Plans are also in the works for a Heritage Day event in October featuring the Fifth Connecticut Regiment to be held at the Museum of Darien, the First Congregational Church of Darien and The Mather Homestead. A Closing Ceremony is also being planned in November at the Museum of Darien, Miller said. More information on these events will be announced soon, he added.

Three years ago, in June of 2018, volunteers and town officials first gathered at the Museum of Darien to brainstorm plans in anticipation of the town's upcoming 200th anniversary in 2020, said Maggie McIntire, executive director of the Museum of Darien.

Since then, Miller, who also serves on MoD's Board of Directors, was selected to head the 2020 Bicentennial Committee and in early 2019 the Committee became an official town entity under the Monuments and Ceremonies Commission. In addition to four major town Bicentennial events, the Committee has also launched Bicentennial projects such as the Darien Heritage Trail project, which is being generously funded by The Darien Foundation, and working with the Darien Library to create a 2020 Time Capsule project. Also, under the leadership of Sarah Lexow Keena, the committee's education liaison, a 2020 Logo contest was organized with high school students, and 2020 merchandise was designed to help offset some event costs.

The official celebrations got off to a strong start in January of 2020 with the Bicentennial Opening Ceremony, an event at Town Hall that attracted about 400 people. After plans for the next three major events were derailed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bicentennial Committee quickly pivoted and rescheduled the three remaining events and official 2020 project unveilings.

Information on Bicentennial events and projects is available at www.darienct.gov/2020. To participate, volunteer or donate visit www.darienct.gov/2020 or email info.darien2020@gmail.com.

To sponsor or donate to the town's Bicentennial Celebration, please write a check to Town of Darien, and include "2020 Bicentennial" in the memo line of the check. Checks may be mailed to Darien Town Hall, 2 Renshaw Road, Darien, CT 06820 and include ATT: 2020 Bicentennial on the envelope.

A special thank you to the Official 2020 Bicentennial Sponsors for their generosity and continued support:

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