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Friday, June 13, 2025

## Raymond's Hawthorne House ready for 63rd annual Strawberry Festival

By Kendra Raymond

Can anyone say "chocolate dipped strawberries from Migis Lodge?" These little gems and some other delicious treats can be in your future for folks taking part in the iconic Hawthorne House Strawberry Festival this year.

The Strawberry Festival will be held from 6 to 7:45 p.m. Saturday, June 28. Walk-ins are welcome, but reservations are encouraged for planning purposes.

Going strong for over six decades, the festival seems to improve yearly, gaining in attendance and popularity. The annual event serves as a fundraiser for the Hawthorne House in Raymond. Participants can expect an evening of fresh strawberry desserts and treats, camaraderie, and a chance to learn something new about the local author and legend Nathaniel Hawthorne.



The 63rd annual Strawberry Festival will be held from 6 to 7:45 p.m. Saturday, June 28 at the Hawthorne House, located at 40 Hawthorne Road in Raymond. COURTESY PHOTO

Hawthorne House Community Association member Abel Bates recalls the longstanding history of the Strawberry Festival.

"I moved here in 1972 and am pretty sure it was an ongoing annual event in 1973. No idea how long before that," he said.

Margaret Myatt is also involved with the Hawthorne House and Strawberry Festival especially in developing and maintaining the website.

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Story & Column Ideas

She has gathered the following historical facts:

\*\* In 1956 the Hawthorne Community Association reorganizes after years of inactivity.

\*\* The first Strawberry Festival at the Hawthorne House in Raymond was held in the early 1960s, shortly after the Hawthorne Community Association reorganized and began hosting regular events.

\*\* A 2005 Portland Press Herald article notes that, according to association president Frank Chambers, the Festival has "been held since the early 1960s."

\*\* The Association's own chronology marks the "start of the 'modern era'" between 1956 to 1961, with a period of rapid growth from 1962 to 1969 due to new activities –such as the Strawberry Festival – being introduced.

\*\* So, the very first Strawberry Festival likely took place in 1962, in the wake of that reorganization, and it continued as an annual spring/early-summer celebration from that point forward. Nathaniel Hawthorne's boyhood home, built in 1812, had come under the Association's care in 1922 but remained largely dormant until the 1950s revival – leading to community staples like the Strawberry Festival."

Camp Wawenock alumni Ann

Ewig believes that the Strawberry Festival dates further back and aimed to include deeper community ties.

"Even prior to the Strawberry Festival being held at the Hawthorne House, Camp Wawenock under Sid and Lillian Usher also celebrated this event at their location (before) the 1960s," she said.

The jury is still out on the actual history of the Strawberry Festival, but nevertheless, a full house is expected for the famous Raymond Cape event.

The Hawthorne House summer newsletter announced, "We know that the strawberries and cream will be as delicious and fresh as ever. And don't forget the luscious chocolate-dipped strawberries from Migis Lodge."

Adding some exciting news about a special addition this year, the newsletter continued, "A special Strawberry Festival treat! We have a special guest speaker, Kris Hansen, the author of "My Dear Sister: Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Sisters." Hansen will present her reflections on Nathaniel's life from Salem to Raymond, and his passionate relationship with his two sisters which evolved upon his marriage to Sophia. Kris will read excerpts from the family letters and share images of Hawthorne's story on our big screen. It will be an insightful, literary multimedia presentation. Signed copies of this delightful biography will be available for purchase."

The Hawthorne House is wrapping up a significant fundraiser aimed at renovating the dated and inefficient kitchen in the building.

Tom Ewig, President of the Hawthorne Community Association, said he is pleased with the results of the Buy a Brick campaign, which allowed patrons to purchase a ceremonial dedicated brick proved successful, collecting over \$10,000 for the organization.

"We started a brick campaign to pay for the (kitchen renovations) at \$300 each," he said. "We were able to sell 37 bricks, which largely funded the entire project. The bricks are at the HH but we need some time to create a patio around the stone commemorating Nathaniel Hawthorne. We plan to have a celebratory barbecue July 19 to celebrate the final phase of the improvements."

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A memorial stone has been placed in front of the HH honoring Hawthorne's contributions to the community and the literary world. It reads, "Time flies over us, but leaves its shadow behind." The patio will encircle the stone and serve as a focal point at the HH welcoming guests in, as well as a resting spot or area for photos.

Ewig explained the renovation process.

"We gutted the old kitchen and started from scratch. Basically, we knew what we needed and worked with Lowe's to assemble all the parts from the stove, fridge, and microwave, to cabinets and sinks. Then, to a large extent Lou Chanese and Abel Bates did all the prep work and final assembly of the cabinets. They installed the appliances and painted where needed," he said. "With the kitchen renovations winding up, Ewig says that the improvements are significant and will serve the facility for years to come."

The Hawthorne House is governed by a Board of Trustees who nominate officers at each annual meeting including Sylvia Sullivan, Rebecca Tracy, Treasurer, Jessica Bates, Tom Ewig, President, Ed Kranich, David Carew, Mary Ann Moeri, Vice President and Secretary, Abel Bates, Dave Moeri, Paul Tracy, Steven Kelsey Hazen, Dan Grotto, Thomas McCosker, Katrina Martin, and Shirin Shahinfar.

Ewig is committed to growing the Hawthorne Community Association and dedicates countless hours to the organization.

"We have many public and private events planned at the HH," he said. "Since this is not a destination museum. We want to make it relevant to the Raymond community as an open space for all types of events from birthday parties, showers, reunions, and weddings."

To make reservations for the Strawberry Festival, send an email to [hawthorne@maine.rr.com](mailto:hawthorne@maine.rr.com) or call 207-329-0537.

To keep updated on the Hawthorne Community Association events, visit <http://www.hawthorneassoc.com/> <

Posted by [Ed Pierce](#) at [2:06 AM](#)

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