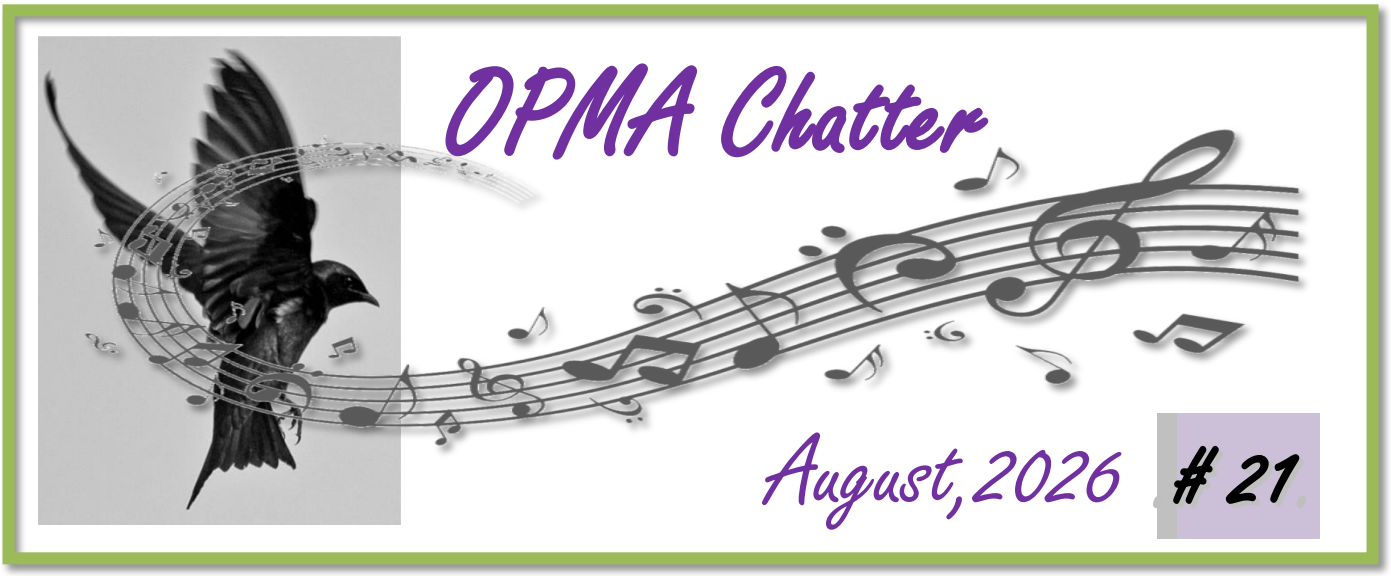


ONTARIO PURPLE MARTIN ASSOCIATION ---- (Founded in 2000)
www.ontariopurplemartins.ca
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CHARTWELL residents visit the PM colony of Al Hamill

In **2022**, our Chairperson Paul Hamel had been in contact with John Huschilt - a gentleman from Chartwell Retirement Home in Tecumseh - who was really interested in trying to attract martins to the premises. He had obtained Chartwell's permission, and at some time after that, a PM house had been acquired and installed.

John contacted Al Hamill in **2025**, and following several conversations after that, Al ended up visiting the residence in mid-summer of last year. He saw that the house was full of starlings, as it had round holes, and there was no way to look into compartments individually without dismantling it.

Al offered to do revisions that would make it more suitable for martins. He brought it home to his workshop and installed Starling Resistant Entries (SREH), and fixed it so that each compartment could open separately. He took it back in late March 2026, just before it was time to put the house up, which was taken care of by the staff at Chartwell.

At that time, Al made the suggestion that perhaps some residents might want to come out and see a martin sanctuary in action. This resulted in one of a number of arranged "excursions" for the residents being a July 6th visit to Al & Anne's home.

The bus ended up full for this trip (which included a lunch at Cooper's Hawk and possibly a stop at Priscilla's Ice Cream)!

Fifteen Chartwell residents were greeted by Al and Anne, along with a number of OPMA members who were on hand to greet them and help with the tour:

L→R *Ken Winter, Fern Bellavance, John Balga, Ron Delcourt, Al Hamill, Karen Padbury, and Marianne Knapp.*







Al and Anne's colony is a showcase of many different types of PM accommodations: Chirpy Nests……Trio Castle…...Trio Grandpa…..T14…...and Gourds.





The visitors were given a "birds-eye" view of nestlings !





Ron Delcourt, our OPMA Bird-Bander, with the tools of the trade on display, explained the why's and how's of banding purple martins.







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Karen Padbury with two of the guests - John Huschilt and John's son Paul, who had come from Toronto to join his father on this field trip.



Everyone seemed to have enjoyed the visit, and hoped it could happen again!



“Patience is a virtue”.

This definitely applies to establishing a PM colony. They come on their time, not ours.

Purple martins were seen and heard this year in the vicinity. John played dawn song regularly to call them down to investigate.

Al will check the Chartwell PM house later this summer to see if there are any tell-tale signs of PM inhabitation in the compartments. Hopefully he’ll be able to report that this year was the beginning of the Chartwell PM colony!

But if not, 2027 welcomes Purple Martins with a renovated house, dawn song to entice them, and lots of people waiting and ready to welcome them!

Thank you, Al & Anne, for providing this wonderful opportunity, and thank you to all the OPMA members who were there to support this first-ever type of event - a great example of

“**Community involvement possibilities for the OPMA!**