

# Highland Lake News

Published by the Highland Lake Watershed Association - A Nonprofit Organization Dedicated to the Preservation and Protection of Highland Lake

Spring

2018

## President's Message by Sam Sciacca



*(Third of four articles on HLWA issues)*

If you are reading this, you are likely holding a dinosaur (metaphorically speaking). I am referring to a printed newsletter, sent via snail mail, to a physical location. Many organizations have long since transitioned to electronic distribution of PDF versions delivered either by downloads or sent through email. This is just one of the areas where HLWA will need to consider moving to a more electronic means to communicate.

There are a number of reasons HLWA needs to think about a digital version of this newsletter. One is electronic distribution would allow a more frequent newsletter to be produced. Topics of interest and upcoming events could be sent out monthly vs. four times per year. Another is our distribution list could expand to whomever we would like it to go to (students, other organizations, past members who have moved away)

without additional costs. Our current printing and distribution costs are significant, and a fair amount of volunteer time is required to secure the advertisements which are necessary to (barely) cover the costs of printing and mailing. Additional advantages of digital publishing would be the ability to make last-minute edits and use multiple color in photos which is prohibitively expensive in hard print.

However, there are other reasons to consider moving to a digital product. The next generation of HLWA members has grown up in a "content on demand" environment. Traditionally printed information (newspapers, magazines) has been steadily decreasing in favor of digital content material for computers, pads, e-readers and Smartphone display. This generation of new members will continue to look for e-delivered content, including the HLWA newsletter. Additionally, there may be a need (or interest) to publish a newsletter in something other than our traditional quarterly publications. A digital approach would allow HLWA to issue newsletters whenever the need occurs.

Developing a digital communications plan goes beyond just the newsletter. A reliable email list for members needs to be developed and maintained. Currently, we have good email addresses for some (but not all) members. We also need to consider utilizing other digital communications and social networking tools, such as Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat. In the fall of last year, I saw a great demonstration of a Smartphone application and website that was built by the Bantam Lake Preservation Association (BLPA) to monitor possible cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) occurrences. The Smartphone application allows individuals to take pictures of suspected cyanobacteria which are geotagged (time and GPS location) and automatically uploaded to the BLPA website for analysis and public alert. Such an application could be very valuable to HLWA for documenting fish kills, sediment/storm drain flows, algae blooms, and other transient occurrences of concern.

The point is the mechanisms of communications (both gathering and disseminating) continue to evolve, and as they do, HLWA will need to evolve as well. Often, transition can produce challenges. Not every current HLWA member may be comfortable with an all-digital/electronic communications plan for information. A partial (vs. total) reduction of printing and mailing newsletters would likely worsen the economics of the effort and not eliminate the need to solicit advertisements to cover these costs. On the other hand, an

*(continued on next page)*

Welcome a new advertiser on page 8!  
And check out all our other wonderful advertisers!

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### President's Message (cont.)

all-electronic newsletter would allow us to "publish" more frequently, advising members of important developments and issues on a timelier basis.

The digital "revolution" will not stop there. Years ago, HLWA conducted a member survey which was typed, mailed and filled out by hand to be returned by mail. The information this survey produced was very valuable but required a significant amount of work to produce, complete and correlate the results. Today, an online survey could easily serve the same purpose with respondents able to answer from the ease of their own computer (and no mailing costs).

Transition always presents challenges. But transition is necessary to adapt and grow the organization for the next generation of volunteers and members whom we will rely on to carry on the mission of HLWA.

P.S.: It is important HLWA has a current email address for our members so if the HLWA Board needs to quickly communicate with you, we are able to do so. If you are unsure if we have your current email address, please send an email to [hlwa@hlwa.org](mailto:hlwa@hlwa.org) with your preferred address.

### Legacy Program

by Dick Labich

#### **Open space land acquisition to preserve our water quality and property values.**

There has been some recent news from the HLWA's Legacy Committee. In the last issue of the newsletter, we announced the acquisition of two properties, totaling approximately a half acre, located on Mountain Road across from Taylor Brook State Park. Since then, our stewards have placed markers on the property, identifying the property as part of the HLWA's Open Space Legacy program.

In late fall, the stewards also visited our 41 owned and pending donated properties to assure there have been no encroachment issues or any concerns over trash that needs to be cleared. The stewards are doing an excellent job in keeping these properties clean and protected. As we have stated before, if you are interested in "getting back to nature" and joining us in this important effort, please contact me.

I have listed some of the responsibilities of the committee to better understand why the work of the committee is so important.

1. **Preserve open space in the watershed by accepting donations of undeveloped land in the watershed. Our mission statement is to protect the quality of water of Highland Lake for future generations.**

Protecting the ecological condition of the lake protects the property values of lake residents and is a major contributor to the Winchester tax base. In addition, the greatest development opportunity in Winchester is the continuing improvement of the lake properties which make a significant contribution to the Winchester grand list every year.

Every tree in the Highland Lake watershed absorbs, on average, 150 gallons of runoff water annually, preventing the water carrying pollutants from reaching the lake. Therefore, one might conclude any open space in the watershed is of equal ecological value.

2. **Provide a buffer against any future development which is not done with environmentally sound practices.**

The buffer of open space prevents possible contamination from reaching the watershed and possibly prevents contaminants from reaching the lake.

3. **Future possibilities for recreation should be considered.**

The Stevens Preserve's trail on East Wakefield Boulevard, open to the public, has been well done and reminds us future considerations for recreational trails are distinct possibilities as the HLWA gains open space clustered donations which may be near the Winchester Land Trust's (WLT) properties.

4. **Work with future POCD committees to ensure the Lakeside District remains environmentally sound.**

The HLWA was pleased the present Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) committee was environmentally concerned and drew up new guidelines for the Lake District that were designed to protect the lake. However, these guidelines could easily be altered in the future. We need to continue to participate in periodic updates to the regulations, such as those that occurred in 2016.

5. **Continue to work with WLT in joint land acquisitions.**

The HLWA and the Winchester Land Trust are working together and should continue to work together to acquire open space in the watershed. The joint acquisition of Long Pond Ridge and the Stevens Preserve parcels should be considered major accomplishments in this highly developed area. Future joint efforts to preserve open space are important goals in our mission to preserve the quality of Highland Lake's water for future generations.

We will also be working with other Land Trusts in surrounding towns for the benefit of continuing dialogue on open space initiatives, such as were discussed at the first annual Open Space Symposium in October 2017. The second symposium will be held in October 2018.

There are other reasons to contribute land and monetary support for the Legacy program and important benefits to the community as well. Preserving property as open space also preserves our wonderful community character, helps to maintain and increase property values, adds to the watershed's quality of life, and benefits the water quality of Highland Lake.

Please consider supporting Highland Lake and the Legacy program by making a cash donation to the HLWA or by donating a vacant piece of property so it will remain as open space.

It should be noted anyone considering a donation to the Legacy program should make out a check payable to the "HLWA Legacy Program" and send it to P.O. Box 1022, Winsted, CT 06098. If you have any questions, please call me at 860.738.0167.

## Water Data Collection Update

### “Geese be Gone”

by Jen Perga

Is your lawn plagued by geese and their droppings? The solution to this problem is simple, natural, and protects the health of the lake. Planting a buffer garden deters geese and makes it difficult for them to reach your lawn. See the photos of different plantings homeowners have employed; they range from shrubs to flowers and everything in between. Listed below are the benefits of a buffer garden.

1. Geese are deterred from leaving the lake and climbing up to your lawn.
2. Grass cuttings, leaves and other yard debris are less likely to get into the lake where they decompose and provide nutrients for weeds.
3. Native plantings will attract native birds, butterflies and other beneficial organisms to your yard.
4. Nutrients from your home (fertilizers, pet waste, and soap from car washing) will be absorbed by the plants in the buffer garden and won't promote weed growth.

What are you waiting for? Head to your local nursery, choose some native plants and protect the lake. Best of all, reduce the visits of the geese to your lawn.

*Examples of some nicely done buffers around the lake*

## Highland Lake Boat Parade

**Saturday, July 14, 7:00 p.m.**

**Rain date: Saturday, July 21, 7:30 p.m.**

Join us for a slow cruise around the lake. The Winchester Marine Patrol will lead the parade beginning at Holland Beach and proceed around the lake in a clockwise pattern.

Be creative. Be exciting. Have fun and decorate your boat or your shoreline. Let's light up the lake and show some Highland Lake spirit!

New and exciting prizes will be awarded - gift certificates to some of Winsted's favorite establishments!

Vote online: Check out our Facebook page and website for a complete listing when it's available.

After the parade, you can vote on the boat you like! Either go to our website ([hlwa.org](http://hlwa.org)), follow the instructions, and click on the link provided; or go to our Facebook page (Highland Lake Watershed Association) and click Like on the picture of the boat you like best.



## Hundred Year Anniversary of the First Year-Round Resident of the Lake

by Dick Labich

**Highland Lake was once a wilderness according to the first year-round resident.**

*The following is taken from an article in the August 20, 1978 Waterbury Sunday Republican. HLWA Board member and former President Clare Stevens has provided me with numerous historical newspaper articles on our lake; I thought this article was especially interesting. I have not reprinted the entire article due to space limitations and therefore edited it to fit the allotted space.*

WINSTED – Perhaps nothing in Winchester has changed so drastically over the past 60 years as Highland Lake, going from virgin wilderness to shoulder-to-shoulder cottages. And Pete Nelson has been there to witness the transition.

“I can’t comprehend the change that’s taken place,” the 77-year-old Nelson said at his East Lake Road home this week. Nelson, who was the first year-round resident at Highland Lake, said he moved to the lake because it was “wilderness and I was an outdoorsman.”

Nelson came to live at Highland Lake in 1918, at a time when no one else dared to weather the severe winters. “Let’s just say I lived in a shack. It was located between second and third bay. All I had was a cot and a stove, that’s it. I had some canned food to rely on, but no vegetables, nothing much else. I mean, you were isolated. There was no one else around. It really appealed to me.”

Perhaps part of the appeal of isolation was the crowded conditions of Nelson’s childhood. From 1904 to 1912, Nelson lived in the Gilbert Home. An orphan, he found himself thrust into a close relationship with hundreds of other children with problems similar to his. After leaving the Gilbert Home, Nelson went to work as a farmer. Nelson was on the farm from the time he was 11 until “I got out on my own at 16.”

On the farm he did “everything, milk the cows, hay, you name it. I did whatever I was told to do and we worked from sunup until sundown.” Moving to Highland Lake was a kind of an emancipation for the young man “who was just learning to be a carpenter.”

Winters at the lake were a challenge. Whenever the dirt road (now Wakefield Boulevard) would get snowed over, “I’d have to drive my Model T Ford down the lake over the ice. That was the way I got to town most of the time.” Nelson would ride the ice-covered lake until he came to a “shallow” spot in the snow where the road looked accessible. The lake route didn’t always result in success.

“Heck, one time we had about six inches of hail and that got me stuck on the lake.” That time Nelson was forced to abandon his car for a time. Incredibly, he relates, someone managed to steal his tires and his battery in the midst of that violent hailstorm while he was trying to figure out how to rescue his vehicle. “I guess people haven’t changed much,” he laughed.

On another occasion, Wakefield Boulevard became a mudbed due to heavy winter rains. “That time I took the road and got stuck in the middle of it for three days.” Nelson said that one sign of how “heavily traveled” the road was was that no one asked him to move his car the entire three days it was lodged sideways in the road.

There was a good amount of traffic at the lake in the summertime, however, Nelson says. The lake was always a tourist haven and people from New York would stay at the old Highland Lake Hotel, which burned down in 1928, or at summer cottages mainly on the east end of the lake. “Sure, there was a race track for trotting horses here for a while and there was a pavilion where some of the big bands used to play.”

Traffic got so bad on the lake’s dirt road during the 1920s that at one point Burt Moore, a farmer, hung out a sign by his house that read, “If you wish a good road, don’t drive in the same track as the car before you.”

Nelson said the pace of life in those days at the lake was simply “slower.” “For example,” he related, “there was one woman named Katy who ran a grocery store here. She’d drive around the lake in a motorboat taking food orders and making deliveries. During the day you’d put a flag out on the dock if you wanted her to stop by and at night a lantern. It took her about an hour between taking your order and getting back to you.”

As for electricity, well, Nelson had it but it wasn’t quite like today. “All you got back then was a lightbulb, that’s it. But I was so far out here that I had to pay \$25 a year for having the wires come to me whether I used the electricity or not.” At that time Nelson was making 30 cents an hour as a carpenter.

The things that have changed at the lake, aside from the simple growth of population, are almost too many for Nelson to list. “This life is now a luxury,” he said. Asked which life he liked better, he was a bit more cautious. “That one was quieter . . . what can you say about it beyond that? You’d go to bed with the chickens and get up with the sun. And there wasn’t such fast living. It was probably healthier.”

But Nelson’s business was building and building he did. At least 36 or maybe 48 of the cottages now (*remember this article was written in 1978*) standing at the lake were done by his hand. On changing Highland Lake into what it is today, Nelson admits, “Yes. I’ve done my share.”

*(One could argue that in 100 years Wakefield Boulevard should be in pristine condition. However, the next time you complain about the potholes on the road, smile and try to recall this article and just how bad the road was 100 years ago.)*



## HLWA Board Meet and Greet

by Beth Papermaster

More than 50 people enjoyed a lovely reception at Mario's Tuscany Grill for the first HLWA Board Meet and Greet. Over delicious appetizers and pizza, people met new friends and connected with longtime friends. It was so nice to be with warm and friendly lake neighbors in the midst of a cold and gray winter. Guests were able to talk informally with HLWA Board of Directors and share stories or concerns about the lake. The event was such a success that HLWA looks forward to hosting more gatherings like this throughout the year.



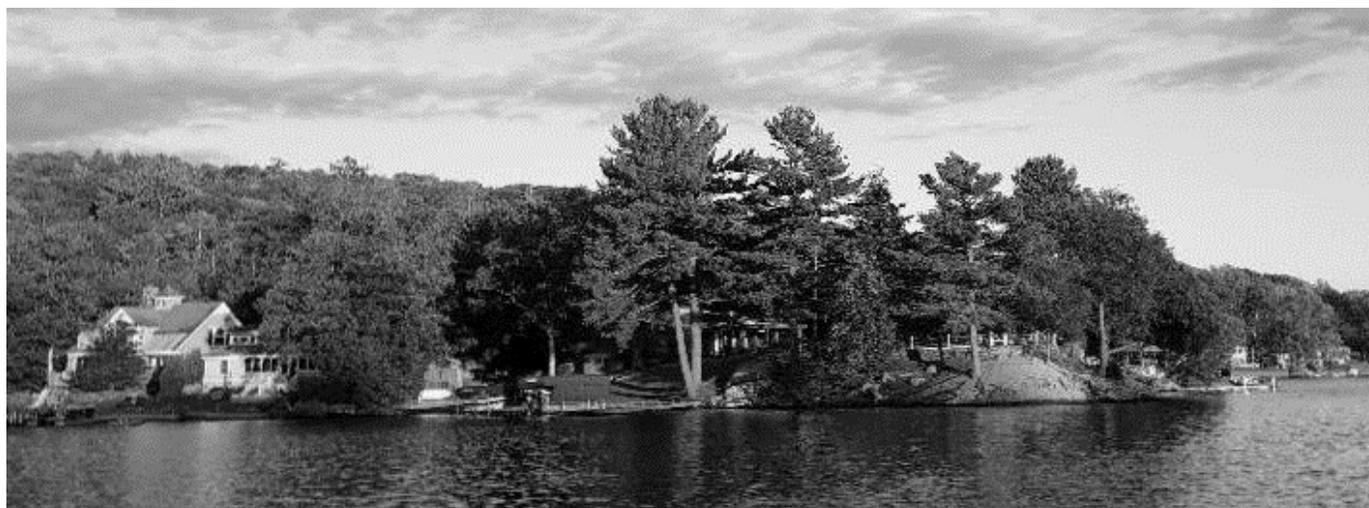
Above, Steve Molinelli, Anne and Jeff Lippincott, and Jo-An Cracco. Right, Jean Labich, Valerie Lochner, and Sam Sciacca.



## Magnificent Pines

by Candy Perez

The next time you are out on the lake or driving along the edge, look up at our magnificent White Pines. Having traveled to the California Redwoods, I often look up at our White Pines and think that while they may not be as tall or wide as the redwoods, in relation to their local peers, they are magnificent! We already know trees help water quality, but being able to look up at these giants in our own neighborhood is beautiful. When we first moved to the lake in 1963, my father would often point out how long it took a tree to grow. We would count the rings and in certain trees we often found trees that were more than a hundred years old. These magnificent pines certainly are that old and some probably much older. I am always in awe when I realize I will never again see one grow that tall in my lifetime. So the next time there's a dusting of snow or bright sunshine, take advantage and look at our white pine groves around the lake - you will be amazed. And perhaps as a bonus you will also see one of our eagles or other varieties of birds and wildlife that call them home.



## Save the Dates!!

**Spring Cleanup** - April 22, 9:00 a.m., with luncheon following at 12:00 p.m. Email [bethpapermaster@gmail.com](mailto:bethpapermaster@gmail.com) to volunteer!

**Annual Meeting** - July 14, 9:00 a.m. at Franciscan Center.

## Membership in the HLWA

by Carol Zacchio and Beth Papermaster

It is time to renew your membership (or become a new member) for the fiscal year July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. Now you can become an HLWA member with just the press of a button! Well, it takes a few more steps than that, but becoming a member has never been easier. Membership can now be done online! Visit [www.hlwa.org](http://www.hlwa.org) - click on the box under Membership and Donations. After you pay online, a membership form will be emailed to you to complete. The traditional way still works great too! No matter how you choose to sign up to be a member, HLWA is happy to have you!

In 2017-18, HLWA recorded 259 members, and we hope all of you will join HLWA for 2018-19. Your membership demonstrates your commitment to a clean, safe Highland Lake and your dedication to keeping our lake community thriving.

There are many ways you can participate in important and fun HLWA activities. Please consider volunteering to work on a

committee or single event. We would love to have your help with some of the following important and fun activities:

- ◇ Walk the wooded properties preserved by our Legacy Program to monitor for any misuse of the properties
- ◇ Plan, work on or host a social event
- ◇ Visit new residents to the Highland Lake area
- ◇ Help obtain water samples and water quality measurements
- ◇ Help with the newsletter – write articles, solicit ads, edit or proofread
- ◇ Attend town meetings that may impact Highland Lake

These are just some of the many “jobs” handled by our member volunteers and your involvement is important. Below is a membership application. We look forward to having you as a member!

### HIGHLAND LAKE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION, INC. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

P.O. Box 1022, Winsted, CT 06098

Property owners in the Highland Lake watershed are eligible for voting membership. Others who wish to support the mission of the Association are eligible to join as an Associate Member. Membership dues are \$50.00 per year (**July 1-June 30.**) Dues and donations paid to HLWA qualify for IRS consideration as a contribution to a charitable organization and may be tax deductible.

**Primary Residence** *Correspondence will be mailed to your primary residence unless you indicate otherwise*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Lake Residence** *Do you want the summer newsletter mailed to your lake address?*    Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Lake Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Winsted, CT 06098

Phone: (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dues** for fiscal year 7/1/18 to 6/30/19 \$ \_\_\_\_\_; additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Please make check payable to HLWA*

#### Volunteer opportunities:

<input type="checkbox"/> HLWA Board of Directors	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Data Collection
<input type="checkbox"/> Town Meeting Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Activity Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup Campaigns
<input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming New Owners	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing/Fundraising
<input type="checkbox"/> Website Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance

(Form also available on website [www.hlwa.org](http://www.hlwa.org))

# Be a Good Lake Neighbor

## On land

- Notify your neighbors if you are having a party; better yet, invite them to join you!
- Have guests park so they don't block neighbors' driveways.
- Starting a bonfire? Check the wind. Neighbors may not want your smoke in their house!
- End loud parties, loud noise, and loud conversations at a reasonable hour - remember, sound travels and amplifies over water.
- Remember that police enforce Connecticut fireworks laws.
- Control your pets from excessive barking; respect leash laws.
- Clean up after pets – it keeps bacteria out of the lake.
- Don't feed geese or ducks – bread is unhealthy for them; their droppings are unhealthy for you and your property!
- Use power tools and mowers 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Monday - Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Sundays and holidays (Town regulations).
- Keep grass clippings, leaves, and yard debris out of the water – they contribute to weed growth and will float to your neighbors' property! Remind your lawn care company!
- Respect speed limits when driving your car - people are out for walks and bike rides.

## On the water - know the rules of the lake

*(For local and state boating regulations go to: [www.ct.gov/DEEP/boating](http://www.ct.gov/DEEP/boating))*

- 6-mph motorboat speed limit from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise.
- Personal watercraft cannot be used between sunset and sunrise.
- 6-mph speed limit for all after 5:00 p.m. Sundays from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day.
- Slow-No-Wake speed for motorboats applies within 100 feet from shore unless taking off or landing a water skier (200 feet for personal watercraft).
- Jetpacks and Flyboards cannot be used in a Slow-No-Wake area, within 200 feet of any dock or shore, or within 100 feet of any vessel except to transit the area.
- No boats longer than 22 feet or pontoon boats longer than 30 feet are allowed.
- A mooring buoy must be located so no part of the vessel moored to it shall at full swing be more than 50 feet from shore.
- No motorized activities (skiing, etc.) can be started from town-owned beaches or parks.
- Overnight mooring is allowed only at authorized docks, mooring buoys or lifts.

Thank you for being courteous and following the regulations! They are for the benefit of all!



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**Recipe Corner**

*by Marlene Rouleau*

This is a hearty appetizer to perhaps serve at our spring cleanup. Enjoy!

**Chicken Pâté**

- 3 tbsp. butter
- 2 medium boneless skinless chicken breasts (cut into pieces)
- 1 tbsp. chopped garlic
- 1/3 cup lightly salted cashews
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/4 cup grated asiago cheese
- 1/2 tsp. hot pepper sauce (Tabasco)
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil

Salt and pepper chicken. In a skillet, melt butter and then sauté chicken and garlic in skillet (about three minutes). Stir in cashews, remove from heat and cool completely. When cooled, put mixture in a food processor - add onion, mayonnaise, cheese and pepper sauce. Process until smooth. Add basil in at the end and process a little. Serve at room temperature with bagel chips or chips of your choice.

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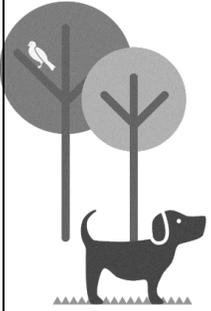
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