

# Highland Lake News

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

Winter

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## President's Message by Sam Sciacca



Earlier this year, I received an email from a new lake resident who was quite dismayed over boating activity on the lake this past summer. The writer expressed concern over the size of boats that were on the lake and the damage being created to the shore and docks from this boating traffic. He expressed the feeling that the Highland Lake Watershed Association (HLWA) should do something about the boating traffic. He is not alone in this sentiment. As fellow property owners and lake residents, some HLWA members have shared this concern with the Board of Directors in the past as well. The fact of the matter is the HLWA does not have authority or jurisdiction over the recreational use of Highland Lake.

The recreational use of the lake is legally controlled by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The DEEP establishes the boating regulations/restrictions for every body of water in the state that is under their authority, which includes Highland Lake. These regulations stipulate permitted boat size, speed limit, overnight mooring, quiet hours, etc. DEEP also operates the Highland Lake public boat launch and controls/monitors access to the lake for watercraft that are being launched on any given day. A listing of boating regulations specific for Highland Lake can be found on the DEEP Boating Division website ([http://ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2686&q=383986&deepNav\\_GID=1620](http://ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2686&q=383986&deepNav_GID=1620)) - you can also see our [hlwa.org](http://hlwa.org) website for a link). The DEEP, Town, and Connecticut State Police share the cooperative responsibility to enforce these regulations, and the Winchester Police Department has asked anyone who feels the regulations are being violated to call them with the specific information.

HLWA is a private, volunteer-based organization dedicated to preserving the water quality of Highland Lake and the surrounding watershed area (about 4,000 acres). Working closely with a number of commissions and departments of the Town of Winchester, our efforts primarily revolve around environmental issues such as monitoring lake hydrology, monitoring and control of invasive species, and preservation of open space in the watershed to limit the effects of runoff into the lake. However, even in this important mission, we do not have the authority to actively undertake actions to accomplish this (e.g., apply weed control, establish boat regulations, enforce existing state and town regulations). Primarily, we have three tools at our disposal to accomplish our mission;

1. Education of the general populace on the importance of caring for the lake and things individual property owners can do to preserve the water quality.
2. Acquisition of land in the watershed to slow the growth of development and maintain open space buffers which reduce phosphate-bearing and silt-bearing runoff.
3. Cooperation with various local and state agencies which have authority and impact on lake-related issues to ensure government interests and activities in the recreational use, land development and maintenance of infrastructure in and around the lake are balanced with the need to preserve water quality.

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**President's Message (cont.)**

There are numerous individuals in the HLWA who put in countless hours in testing water quality, attending meetings, raising funds, soliciting agency support, and speaking up at both the local and state level on issues which could impact the lake's water quality. Three of our six standing committees, Water Quality, Government Relations, and Legacy, exist solely for the purpose of supporting these efforts. We also have established a Boating Safety Ad Hoc group, which is looking into ways that our membership can/should contribute to improving the safe and environmentally sound use of Highland Lake for recreational use.

We are always looking for more help in these areas, and if you are interested in adding your energy to the energy of the hundreds of individuals who share your vision for a clean, healthy lake, I would welcome and encourage you to consider joining one or more of these committees.



**Have You Sent in Your Dues Lately?**

*by Sam Sciacca*

As I write this article, I am reflecting on the fact that although we mail out nearly 800 copies of the newsletter, we have less than 200 people who have sent in their dues to be an HLWA member for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. So the question that comes to mind is this: Why are there nearly 600 people interested in keeping abreast of the activities and objectives of the HLWA, but not "interested enough" to contribute \$50 to our cause?

So to help you along with the consideration of this question, let me give you some interesting facts about HLWA dues and donations.

**Dues are never used to fund HLWA social activities.** All money received as dues is used for water quality, open space preservation, and charitable contributions to organizations that share similar goals with the HLWA.

**Dues paid to HLWA qualify for IRS consideration as a contribution to a charitable organization.** Depending on your particular tax situation, the actual cost of your donation to HLWA may be significantly less than the amount you send to us.

**HLWA activities reduce town costs.** Through activities such as water testing, roadside cleanup, herbicide treatment assistance, education and grant application writing, HLWA actively seeks to reduce the cost of lake stewardship to the Town of Winchester.

So as the year draws to a close, please consider sending your dues (or an additional donation for existing members) to HLWA to

help us continue the work of protecting the nearly 4,000 acres of watershed

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which include, and surround, Highland Lake. In doing so, you will be joining a great group of people who share the vision, passion and enjoyment of a healthy lake, both for today and for many years to come.

Thank you.

**Legacy Program**

*by Dick Labich*

**Open space land acquisition to preserve our water quality, scenic views and property values**

On my way home from our last HLWA Board of Directors meeting, I saw three bears scampering across East Wakefield Boulevard on their way home. I am not sure where they have their dens; however, I hope it is in the five acres the HLWA and the Winchester Land Trust purchased last summer which will be preserved as open space. It reminded me that beside the benefit the lake receives from the Legacy open space program, wildlife such as these three bears and the red foxes we see frequently is also benefitting from the program.

I should mention I am very grateful for the hard work of the rest of the Legacy committee - Mike Peacock, Fran Delaney and Mike DeClement, the Legacy steward. They understand the benefits that will be gained for Highland Lake over the years and are committed to the program. Our legal counsel Mark Jones and surveyor John DiCara have also been extremely helpful in aiding the HLWA fulfill its goal to preserve open space.

The Legacy program has grown very well despite the economic environment. We have closed on more than 30 properties around the lake and are in the process of closing on a few more. These donors are aware of our goals for preservation of the lake but realistically realize the tax benefits that are available for these donations. They also realize open space is necessary to reduce the pollutants that would otherwise enter the lake.

In addition, we have received generous donations of money for the Legacy program. 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. Before considering any donation to the Legacy Program, you should consult your tax accountant or financial adviser. If you have any questions, please call Mike Peacock at 860-738-1941 or me at 860-738-0167.

**Email us at [hlwa@snet.net](mailto:hlwa@snet.net)**

**Website: [www.hlwa.org](http://www.hlwa.org)**

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## Water Quality Update

by Clare Stevens, Water Quality/Environmental Committee Chairperson

### Some History and Dynamics of the Deep Winter Drawdown

The winter drawdown of Highland Lake has been regulated by a policy and permitting process since 1997. Prior to that, the Union Pin Company, which owned the water rights at the head (north end) of the lake, decided how much water it needed to generate the water power that ran the equipment it used to manufacture straight pins for the clothing industry. Do you recall the many tiny pins that neatly held each fold of men's shirts in place? The Union Pin Company was a major supplier of those sharp-pointed instruments of shirt organization. Today, several plastic clips serve that same purpose, are far easier to remove, and spare us all of the travails of pricked fingers and the attempt to not leave blood stains on the new item of clothing before it was worn.

One of the main reasons for the establishment of the Highland Lake Association was to have an organized group representing the interests of the property owners to the Town of Winchester; the water level was a source of much distress! When I was a child in the early 1940's, my family's Rockfern Cottage, located in second bay, had about 20 feet of beach in front of the granite ledge that served as our natural retaining wall. The lake level was about 8 feet below its full-pond height that we maintain presently. Look at your waterfront today with the water level drawn down 8 feet and you will see what the condition was like back then throughout the summer.

### The Highland Lake Taxpayers Association—1959

As the years passed, the Highland Lake Taxpayers Association (HLTA) was created in 1959. The primary purpose of the association was to protect the interests of the watershed property owners. Direct waterfront property owners as well as owners of access to the water via rights of way joined hands to forward their interests to the Mayor and Board of Selectmen. The HLTA spent many years negotiating with the President of Union Pin Company regarding leaving the level of the lake higher in the summer to create more desirable recreational and aesthetic conditions. As President of HLTA in 1979, I met with Union Pin President Dick Ransom and Mayor Pete Hicks in an attempt to bring about a compromise. The HLTA Board offered to pay Union Pin's electric bill during June through September so Union Pin could have its electricity free and property owners would have water under their docks; the price tag was about \$300 a month and our members were only too happy to pay that price! Believe me, I have pictures of Rockfern Cottage in 1941 where our dock was completely out of water. Suspended in the air upon its nine-foot tall pier, it painted a bleak picture of a severely drought-stricken lake!

Union Pin was unwilling to honor our request. It owned the water rights and the right of refusal to change the amount of water it drew except to the property owners downstream; "riparian rights" granted these stakeholders who were the property owners along the stream that flows below the source that begins at the dam/gate/spillway/roadway structure on East Lake Street. Today we might argue that waterfront property owners have rights of "access" to the water.

### Union Pin Company for Sale

Finally there was a breakthrough in the long-lived debate over lake level. In the 1980s, the Union Pin Company decided to move

to the New Hartford Industrial Park. The outdated method of generating electricity had become less efficient and the aged building was no longer functional. The

Highland Lake Association Board of Directors (name change) decided to demonstrate the organization's determination to fix the problem of low water level. We hired a school bus, gathered 68 members from around the lake, and walked into a Selectmen's meeting. Our united show of influence left the Selectmen speechless and defenseless. After my short presentation "respectfully requesting" the Selectmen vote to purchase the Union Pin Company property and water rights so the control of the water level would be in the hands of the town, they voted. Faced by the roomful of folks and the realization we paid high taxes for the "privilege of owning waterfront property," the Selectmen made a unanimous decision to purchase the property.

As the Highland Lake Watershed Association President (HLWA - another name change), I was the most frequent and vocal spokesperson to the Selectmen and was "rewarded" with an appointment to the Union Pin Study Committee. What should the Town of Winchester do with the Union Pin property? The present plea regarding the disposition of town-owned properties had this predecessor! The HLWA had been assured the town would retain the water rights and be responsible for the water level, but the property could be developed.

### Creation of the Highland Lake Commission

As seasonal lake dwellers arrived around Memorial Day, the Board of Selectmen's meetings were frequented by Highland Lake residents who were angry and frustrated waterfront property owners. It didn't take long for the Selectmen to tire of the continuous barrage of complaints from taxpayers who wanted more tax money spent on Highland Lake for its preservation. Thus, the Selectmen decided to create the Highland Lake Commission. The Commission's primary charge was to develop a plan for the drawing down of the lake water level, taking into consideration waterfront property owners' needs to maintain or create shorefront retaining walls, requests for docks/moorings and the overall environmental impact. Lake water level issues and decisions needed to be based on factual and scientific information that the Committee researched and garnered input from the DEEP and consultants knowledgeable in lake science. Highland Lake water level issues were not only scientifically complex but extremely contentious.

Each year, as fall approached, the Selectmen and Public Works Department were pressured regarding how deep the winter drawdown should be. Property owners and contractors wanted to work on their retaining walls, build piers for docks or steps into the lake for safer, easier access to the water. The Highland Lake Commission was supposed to buffer the Selectmen from the growing pressure of frustrated and demanding lake residents.



Head of the lake looking north - Union Pin Company building north of the spillways and gatehouse to the right of the large building.

Selectmen were/are supposed to focus on the town budget, planning and economic development. Thus, the Selectmen decided they would no longer hear commentary about Highland Lake issues. Concerns or issues were directed to the Highland Lake Commission that conducted monthly meetings. As the lake population grew and many seasonal cottage owners converted their residences into year-round properties, the Commission's public comment time increased exponentially.

Many of the people the Selectmen appointed to the Highland Lake Commission were political newcomers, and this assignment was a stepping stone in the process of their greater political aspirations. Fortunately, the Highland Lake Association's former President, Shirley Allshouse, was appointed to the Commission. Most other members were not lake property owners. The Commission was short-lived. I attended many of their meetings and presented evidence of the harm the annual 8-foot winter drawdowns were doing to lake ecology. Finally, a new Board of Selectmen took a fresh look at Highland Lake issues, disbanded the HL Commission and formed the Highland Lake Water Level Committee (WLC). I was asked to chair the WLC and develop a long-term policy to recommend to the Selectmen. Selectmen could nullify or modify the recommendations and then vote to send them to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission for their approval and permit.

### Two Roles Dovetailed to Protect Highland Lake

Now I was wearing two hats: one as President of HLWA and Chair of the Highland Lake Water Level Committee. Those hats fit together perfectly!! One of our HLWA members, Dr. Craig Dennen, and I worked with Dr. George Knoecklein (PhD limnologist) to create the lake water quality monitoring program. Following Dr. Knoecklein's expert advice, we purchased state-of-the-art monitoring equipment and began our monthly testing and sampling program designed by "Dr. K." We created a "Health Chart" for the lake and we continue to chart the same elements today. Using fairly sophisticated equipment, the temperature and oxygen probes are lowered into the lake and data recorded each meter from surface to the lakebed in all three bays. Second bay is the deepest at 60 feet of water on the west side of the lake near the Harvey Wakefield and Long Pond Ridge plaques. The water samples we take are sent to the University of Connecticut Lab since they have sensitive enough equipment for analyzing lake waters for phosphorous, nitrogen pH and other factors. Dr. K advised us regarding which tests are most important in detecting trends in water quality over a long timespan and from which we can see if there are dangerous conditions developing. We can then implement strategies to correct or delay further deterioration.

After charting data for 12 years, it seemed appropriate for the Town to pay for analyzing it and to have a Highland Lake management plan developed. In 1991 I had chaired an Ad Hoc Committee formed by the Selectmen that developed a comprehensive plan, but it did not include water testing data. I put on my Water Level Committee hat and proceeded to submit a budget proposal to the Town Manager and Selectmen that would allow the town to hire Dr. George Knoecklein to research and develop a professional lake management plan. Wearing my HLWA hat, I provided Dr. K with all of the data the Water Quality Committee had gathered during its 12-year life-span. The combination of Dr. K's professional expertise with lake management and scientific knowledge produced a comprehensive plan entitled "The Impact of Winter Drawdowns on Water Quality at Highland Lake." His study contains important insights

regarding Best Management Practices for implementing winter drawdowns to diminish the negative impacts.

### Negative Impacts of Deep Winter Drawdowns

One negative impact during 8-foot draws is the exposure of many acres of lakebed when the water recedes. It is equivalent to having a huge building site around the 7-mile perimeter of the lake; wind sweeps across the dried mud and moves it into the deeper parts of the lake or it adorns your roofs, doorsteps and windowsills.

Another negative impact, particularly when we do an 8-foot draw, is the amount of water released. The gate (see picture) is opened about 3 inches of its total capacity at the beginning of the drawdown. To open it further and have more water drain rapidly could wash out Sun Chief Electric on Meadow Street. The streambed runs under Sun Chief just as it did with Union Pin in order to generate power. Also, the Mad River can only safely accommodate just so much water or it would rise and pop the bridges off their foundations!

Dr. K calculated about 3.1 billion gallons of water leave the lake during an 8-foot drawdown. Then he proceeded to calculate when the gate needs to be closed in order for



the lake to gradually refill before the opening day of the fishing season (April 15). He consulted precipitation figures for our area to determine if we are

*Inside the gatehouse is the cranking gear and wheel mechanism used to open and close the gate. A guillotine-like sheet of heavy steel is opened and closed over the opening in the dam that allows water to be drawn from the lake, through the dam sluiceway, and down the streambed that runs parallel with the road to the Mad River.*

risking not having the lake refill properly. Thus far Mother Nature has cooperated and the lake has recuperated its full-pond level from spring rains and snow melting.

Other issues include the ability of the fish and other wildlife to migrate into deep enough water to survive. Because Highland Lake is a relatively deep lake, the fish and invertebrates can successfully migrate from their shallow habitat into the deeper water. There has never been a fish kill as a result of winter drawdowns.

When the lakebed freezes in the shallower areas of the lake such as Resha Beach Cove, the frozen mud can be lifted during refill and float to shore, depositing massive amounts of mud, twigs, rocks and even tree stumps. The Water Level Committee consulted with the DEEP Water Bureau and Dr. Knoecklein to formulate the present 5-year drawdown policy. The present drawdown began a month earlier than previously and will end on December 15. This will allow the lake to begin to refill before heavy freezes occur and hopefully prevent mud islands from forming in the shallow coves. Dr. Knoecklein recommended we do as few 8-foot drawdowns as possible. The very best thing from an environmental point of view is there would be no winter drawdowns—regardless if it is 3 feet, 6 feet or the full 8 feet.

After this winter's "deep" drawdown, the Highland Lake Water Level Committee led by Chairperson Shirley Allshouse will meet to discuss the results of the new timeline for lowering and refilling

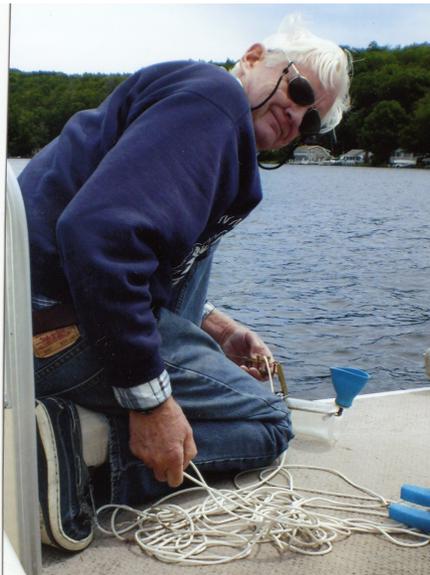
the lake. With Dr. K's advice, modifications can be made for future winter drawdowns.

One constant need is for the lake to be lowered at least 3 feet each winter to insure water will not run over the spillways, creating ice and hazardous driving conditions. Also, the lake level can always be adjusted by the Town Manager and Public Works Director in emergencies. One inch of rain causes the lake water level to rise approximately 3 inches. About 12 significant streams (including Sucker Brook and Taylor Brook) carry the water off the steep slopes of granite underlay and into the lake. Added water comes from the many storm drains that remove road water and send it into the lake. It is no wonder the lake level rises rapidly during major storm events.

**Daily Monitoring by Public Works**

Rest assured the lake level is monitored constantly during heavy storms. The Army Corps of Engineers designed and constructed flood control devices which have effectively kept Highland Lake property owners and downtown Winsted flood-free. However, it is a complex system of gates and dams I will describe in the next newsletter.

My sincere thanks to the people who have served on the town's Highland Lake Water Level Committee and on the HLWA Water Quality Committee. HLWA members who have kept our water monitoring program going this summer are Steve and Jan Becker, Ray Juros, Steve and Rosy Molinelli, Jackie Mulvey and Wayne Warren. They continue to collect the data vital to understanding the health of Highland Lake so we can better preserve it for future generations.



Summer 2013. Gerry Stevens using water sampler to draw water from three depths of the water, including surface and bottom of the lake.



September 2014. Members of the Water Quality Committee made their monthly visits to the three locations in the lake (one in each bay) where testing is done and recorded while water samples are drawn. Samples are sent to the University of Connecticut laboratory for analysis on phosphate content.



Summer 2012. Wayne Warren and Clare Stevens using the Hach meter to gather water temperature, conductivity and dissolved oxygen data each meter from the surface to bottom of the lake.

**HLWA Calendar**

- ♦ Dec. 14, 2014 - Christmas caroling - call 860.379.2303 to join us or to have us stop by!
- ♦ Feb. 28, 2015 - HLWA winter dance at Crystal Peak
- ♦ April 2015 - Lake cleanup
- ♦ June 2015 - Laurel festival
- ♦ July 11, 2015 - 8:30 a.m. - Annual meeting
- ♦ July 11, 2015 - 8:00 p.m. - Boat parade - 8:00 p.m. at Holland Beach proceeding clockwise around the lake
- ♦ August 2015 - Evening on Highland Lake Food and Wine Tasting - we are looking for a place to hold this event
- ♦ September 2015 - we are working with the Winsted Recreation Department to plan an ItsAllAboutFun Relay Race
- ♦ October 2015 - Lake cleanup

**Please notice** the lakeside tag sale, which we have previously held in May, is not scheduled for this coming year. If we have people who would like to take charge of this event, it can be done. Jean Labich will allow her garage to be used for storage for a week prior to the event, and we could use the Resha Beach area as other years - but we need new people to be in charge to run and plan this event!!

## Highland Lake Nature

by Mary Barbro

### You Don't See That Every Day

There were a few sightings that took place immediately after I sent in the last nature article for the fall edition that were definitely worth remembering. As I am writing this, it is the day after Halloween and this first sighting would have been perfect to have happened last night on All Hallows' Eve. I have to say it wasn't really a sighting but a screaming, screeching, howling noise you might say. While our friend was walking her dog at close to the witching hour of midnight, catlike battle noises began. They were, however, more disturbing and louder than the cat noises she has heard in the past. I'm sure it would be so terrifying to hear fighting noises of wild animals in the distance in the darkness and so late at night. To our friend's credit, she researched these noises on YouTube while it was fresh in her mind and was able to find an exact match to the yowling. It was the noise of two bobcats fighting. Now you don't hear that every day.

The next story was a sighting but one not many of us could say we have ever seen. Two of my friends were swimming and saw two eagles above. Eagle sightings may have been plentiful this year, but not like this one. As they were observing them, they were at first confused by the behaviors the eagles were exhibiting. It seemed as if they were fighting as they started spiraling in the sky, and then my friends realized - oooooohhhhhh! - they were observing a mating pair. That pretty much beats any of the other eagle sightings this year.

Sight and sound were involved in this next occurrence. Just a few days ago during our morning walk, we were startled by a squirrel falling through the air and dropping right in front of us. This poor creature dropped from a branch 30 to 35 feet above us. The sight and sound of it were frightening. You could actually hear its nails hit the asphalt as it landed on its feet. It was in shock for a few seconds, perfectly still, and then it ran for the shelter of the bushes on the other side, no doubt thanks to adrenalin. We have observed many squirrels cross over this tiny set of branches, but it's obviously a hazardous way to cross the street.

Our friend Terry doesn't just watch the sky for creatures during the day - she is always observing at night as well. She stays in a tune with not just bats, fireflies, birds and bugs but, during these clear, colder nights, at the spectacular sky views we have here. Her hot tub is one of her favorite night sky viewing areas, but she claims in boating weather there's no better way to see the sky than to lie back in a boat on Highland Lake and get an unobstructed view. It made me remember that, of course, that's how we looked at stars as children. We would take a blanket, lay on our backs and just look up. I realized I haven't done that since so long ago I can't even remember. Of course it's the best way. A good reminder not to forget our inner child. That inner child is so smart.

I've heard a lot of travel stories this year from friends, and so many have made the same comment - they went all that way to see nature, beauty and creatures in their natural habitat, but at home at Highland Lake they see more than where their travels take them. One thing I hear expressed from those I talk to around the lake is there is always a sense of being grateful for what we have. People here do not seem to take it for granted.

We're so lucky.



## The History of the Development of Highland Lake - Part Four

by Dick Labich

*This is the fourth in a series of articles on the development of Highland Lake taken from historical records supplied by Milly Hudak of the Winchester Historical Society. This article relates the controversy between the owners of lakeside homes and the manufacturers.*

The extension of Winsted's water system to Crystal Lake in 1895 removed the last obstruction to the development of the lake as a pleasure resort. Fishing and bathing could now be freely indulged in, and its popularity as a pleasant place for a day's outing or for the building of a summer house continued to grow with the years.

The maintaining of a high level of water in the lake during dry seasons is still a problem. Those who believed the building of Rugg Brook Reservoir would solve this problem have been somewhat disappointed.

The controversy has shifted now from one between the Water Board and the manufacturers, to one between the owners of lakeside homes and the manufacturers, as to which has the greater claim on the water. Although the water reaches low levels occasionally, it never gets as low as it is recorded to have done in 1810 when farmers wishing to cross the lake drove their carts across second narrows through the shallow water.

One of the problems which confronted those interested in promoting the public use of the lake as a pleasure resort was the difficulty of reaching the place. One must either drive or walk up a steep hill. At one time the officials of the P.R. & N.E.R.R. considered running a spur from near the Empire Knife Shop up to the north end of the lake. The steepness of the grade probably discouraged them, and it was not until the building of the Winsted-Torrington Trolley road with its extension up the mountain to third bay that easy access was opened to the lake, and the era of picnic outings became popular.

In 1903 Rev. N. M. Calhoun and other interested summer residents started a movement for incorporating the "Highland Lake Improvement Association." The object of this association was to make the district about the lake a sort of independent, self-governing body with power to regulate all civic matters. The project met violent opposition and a special town meeting was called where an attempt was made to appoint a committee to oppose the granting of the charter by the (State) General Assembly. The application for a charter was finally withdrawn.

The Highland Lake Hotel was opened July 1, 1900. It was conducted by A. M. Grant and was located on the west shore of third bay, a few rods south of Second Narrows. The hotel was fairly successful for a number of years but was sold in 1919 to Mrs. M. Fjelde. There was some talk in 1912 of building a new and more commodious hotel at the lake. Hatch's Landing, Highland Lake Farm and other sites were recommended as suitable locations. In an attempt to bring the project to a successful culmination, Mr. Rufus Eggleston, in October 1912, offered to make a present of 7½ acres of land with a lake frontage of 50 feet to any person or company who would construct such a

hotel. His generous offer was not accepted, there being quite a strong objection among owners of private cottages to anything which would further lend to the commercializing of the lake.

The constantly increasing number of cottages on the banks of the lake was more and more emphasizing the fact the public was rapidly being deprived access to its waters. With the exception of the park maintained by the Trolley Company on the east shore of third bay, there was scarcely any place open to the public for recreational purposes. A committee appointed in 1913 to see if a public park could be created on the west shore of first bay, where the Highland Lake Farm was located, reported the location was not at all desirable. About three years later a number of benches were placed at the north end of the lake for public use.

Again, in 1919, there was talk of securing all the land on West Lake Street, between the spillways and Wakefield Boulevard, removing the houses and, by adding sand to the shores, providing public bathing beaches. The Selectmen appointed a committee consisting of Mrs. Ruth C. H. Munsill, E. M. Phelps, A. O. Lamb, Benjamin Epstein, and Cornelius Hubbard, to investigate this or any other suitable location for such a public park, with the thought it might become a permanent memorial to the soldiers who served in the World War. This committee reported the various properties of West Lake Street could be secured for \$25,000 but were inclined to favor the purchase of land known as "Sandy Cove" on the east bank of first bay, a spot that had been a favorite swimming place since the early days. This land, they reported, could be secured for \$15,000. At the October town meeting in 1919, their report was accepted and "laid on the table."

Following the defeat of this park project, I. E. Manchester, editor of the "Citizen," proposed a substitute plan by which a wall would be built through the north end of the lake, extending from Captain Lewis' place on East Lake Street, to the Newett place on West Lake Street. He proposed to fill in the area enclosed by this wall and make a Memorial Parkway. Just how the spillways and outlet were to be taken care of is not quite clear, but with characteristic energy Mr. Manchester secured the adoption of his plan and an appropriation of \$2,500 for the purpose at a town meeting December 5, 1919. Mr. George G. Girard was interested in the plan and offered to donate all the gravel and stone necessary for filling from his Boyd Street property. About this time, E. Manchester & Sons announced they had secured a rebate of \$212 on a shipment of sugar which they had sold to customers. As they had no records of their sales, they would contribute the rebate money to the parkway fund. However, it developed in March 1920 that landowners refused to sell at the specified price, so the appropriation was never used and no further action was taken in the matter.

*(The spring newsletter will contain the fifth and final article on the history of the development of Highland Lake. The articles will conclude with the second attempt to secure a bridge across the first narrows in 1930.)*

## Membership Services Report

by Patty Masucci

The Membership Services Committee is in need of a few good **men, women and children** to make all the events on our 2015

calendar come to fruition. Please call Patty Masucci at 860.379.2303 to volunteer. Tell Patty you want to help put 2015 on the map for HLWA. Volunteer to spearhead one of the projects. One person cannot do this alone!!

Is the topography of your property conducive to entertaining 80 guests? Are there two or more properties that can be combined as one to host the annual picnic? Think of what you and your household can do to make Highland Lake a fun place to be in 2015.

Also, is there anyone out there who would want to run an event specifically for children? A "Splash Dash" or "Hot Dog on the Beach"? I will be meeting with the new Winsted recreation director shortly to start planning any events we decide to bring to our lake. Now remember - you who have younger children, please come forward to help with this project. Those of us whose grandchildren are even too old for just such an event as this need your help!! And we need you now!! I am convinced area businesses would even be happy to see and help with just such a project.

Look over the list of events in the calendar on page 5, pick one that appeals to you, and call (see number above) or email me at [pmasucci@yahoo.com](mailto:pmasucci@yahoo.com) to volunteer.

Do you want to host a luncheon after one of the cleanups? Would you like to host the Food and Wine Tasting? HLWA pays for all expenses that are incurred with hosting these events. This includes the purchasing of an insurance policy to cover all liability for the host family.

***Please do not wait - call me now!!***

## Deep Drawdown

by Shirley Allshouse, Water Level Committee Chairman

As is quite obvious, we are experiencing the effects of a deep drawdown of Highland Lake this year. It is the one year in the five-year policy that calls for the level to drop to as much as eight feet down. The next two years will be back to the regular winter drop of three feet down. Following the end of the current policy (in 2017), we will begin the next long-term policy which has yet to be determined by the Water Level Committee (WLC). The WLC is not part of the Highland Lake Watershed Association; it is a town committee created in the 1990s, and it has studied and gathered data over the years as they relate to the effects of water level on Highland Lake.

The WLC will consider a complex array of issues when it creates the new policy, including public safety, the condition of the lake watershed, precipitation figures as they relate to rate of drawdown and refill, aquatic plants (both native and invasive), the results from herbicide application, protection from ice damage, property owners' legal rights of access to the lake year-round, oxidation and compacting of exposed sediments, shallow well impacts, reptile, amphibian and invertebrate impacts, fisheries impacts, contiguous wetland impacts, floating mud islands and growth of filamentous algae. The Committee's research and experience through the years has yielded the conclusion that weed control from deep drawdowns is not very effective, as once thought. The convenience for some to have access to walls and docks for

maintenance must be weighed against all of the factors listed above.

If you have dated photographs or other information to contribute to the Water Level Committee, please contact me at 860-379-6714.

### Why Should I Purchase an Address Sign?

by Dick Labich

The blue reflective signs seen throughout our area that display the address house numbers are called reflective 9-1-1 signs. They are extremely helpful to Winchester emergency personnel when responding to an emergency situation when every second can measure life or death.

Why should residents post their address numbers at the beginning of their driveway?

- **Emergency responders can only help you when they find your location.**
- Posting your address number provides easy identification of your location for responders who are not always exactly familiar with your area.
- **Every second counts during an emergency.** Posting your address number allows emergency responders to save critical time especially if your home is hard to locate.
- Homes are often hidden from view at the beginning of the driveway, and your only posting numbers on your home does not help first responders.
- Posting a reflective sign will help first responders reach you, especially at night.
- **Posting your address on your dock is required by Winchester ordinance.**

The HLWA has been furnishing reflective, home address signs and horizontal dock signs since 2005. During this time we have reminded residents of the fact that emergencies can happen and every second counts if it means a delay of the emergency medical technicians, police or fire personnel. If they cannot find you in time because they have to guess what house you are calling from or what driveway leads to your home, it could mean the difference between life and death. This is especially true at night in our rural setting. This is why you need a reflective sign that illuminates at night from the headlights of first responders.

The Winchester Board of Selectmen passed an ordinance requiring a home address sign on your dock. Dock and Mooring Ordinance (Sec. 162) requires "Reflectors shall be affixed to the ends of a dock." In addition: "The street number of the property (in numbers at least 3 inches high) shall be affixed to the end of a dock so as to be visible from the watercourse."

If you would like one of these house address signs, a dock sign or the larger green sign, you can call me at 860.738.0167, or you can fill out the following information and mail it with your check payable to the Highland Lake Watershed Association to:

Dick Labich  
418 East Wakefield Boulevard  
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The signs and posts will be delivered to each homeowner as soon as they are completed.

**Order Form** (please print)  
(also on our website [www.hlwa.org](http://www.hlwa.org))

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

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

House Number Desired: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one or more of the following:

- 1) \_\_\_ I would like to order a vertical numbered panel (street). \$20
- 2) \_\_\_ I would like to order a horizontal (dock) panel.....\$20
- 3) \_\_\_ I would like to order the large green panel..... \$105
- 4) \_\_\_ I would like to order a metal post.....For each: Add \$8

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### Fall Cleaning at Its Best

by Patty Masucci

When the fall season rolls around and you begin to think "I must clean my house for the Holidays," remember your lake (**our** lake) also needs care and attention. Twice a year we clean our houses to make them look new and shiny to all our visitors who might stop by. Let's try to remember we must also clean our lake and roadways around the lake. Those people who do not own waterfront property should remember to clean their beach and rights of way to the lake. All items that litter our roadways and our beaches eventually end up washing into the beautiful lake and polluting our fish and beautiful water. Who wants to swim with soda cans, plastic wrap and packaging floating nearby? Ducks and waterfowl that are fed and nurtured also bring more fecal



The group at our fall cleanup luncheon!

matter and make swimming and boating unpleasant. Let's consider the birds of the air - they do not sow or reap and God takes care of them, but God expects us to do our part and keep our property and waterways pure and clean for them also.

Join us next April when we honor our lake by cleaning all the roads around it and by cleaning our waterfronts and beaches. This past October about 25 of us walked around the lake and committed to cleaning a certain assigned area by donning gloves, boots and other protective clothing and gear to venture into the wooded areas and picking up any debris and trash that had accumulated there since the previous cleaning.

I know it seems redundant to keep harping about keeping the lake clean and protecting our lake, but that is exactly what I am doing again. **Please help to protect your lake!!** Please join us while we work, and join us while we celebrate afterwards at a luncheon held to get to know each other. Anyone may partake of this activity. It is not mandatory, but it is a great way to meet your friends and neighbors around the lake.

Highland Lake has become a community of people who believe in working together for a better tomorrow, a better place to live and a place where we get to know our neighbors.

So next April join our group, receive your tee shirt, and help make your lake the best lake in the state.

## Reserve Your "Highland Lake Reflections" Book Now

by Shirley Allshouse

Have you purchased your "Highland Lake Reflections" book?



In 2009 on the 50th anniversary year of HLWA, a special committee was formed to create and publish a book of personal reflections, historical information, and pictures of Highland Lake.

The result is a fabulous 210-page book filled with personal stories, old photographs of the lake around the early 1900s, articles that tell the history of Wakefield Boulevard, Electric Park, the trolley that ran from Torrington to the lake, the tourist boats (steam launches), hotels that existed then, and much more.

The copies from the original printing have been sold out, so HLWA will decide (by its Board of Directors) whether to go ahead with another printing. To do so, they need to have confidence that there is a demand for additional copies.

Please contact Patty Masucci at [pmasucci@yahoo.com](mailto:pmasucci@yahoo.com) or call at 860.379.2303 to place your name on a waiting list for the book.

They are being sold by HLWA for \$45 per copy. The Association is not making money on this. It's not a fundraiser but rather an item that is meant to be a wonderful keepsake for lake residents and anyone who has ever had a connection with and fond memories of Highland Lake. They are very nice on the coffee table and make great gifts.

Please reserve yours now!



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Call Patty Masucci at 860.379.2303

## Great Ideas for Christmas Gifts!

The Highland Lake Watershed Association has lots of fabulous items that would be perfect to give your friends or loved ones for Christmas. We have mugs, wine glasses, tee shirts, polo shirts, fleece jackets - some displaying a logo of our lake with the words Highland Lake, Winchester, Connecticut - as well as house and dock signs (see page 5), the Reflections Book offered at \$45, and coasters of four vintage pictures of the lake offered at \$27. For \$100, we have a 19" x 9" hand-tooled wooden plaque with a carve-out of the lake, showing an accurate representation of its depths.

Our tee shirts come in various colors, are screen printed, with logos or lettering - all for \$18 each. Our polo shirts are \$30 each, and our fleece jackets are \$50. Hats with a sailboat or fish or plain lettering are available for \$20 each. Sweatshirts also come in four different styles - logo, lettering left chest, full chest lettering and lake design. Sweatshirts sell for \$35 and \$40 and come in a variety of colors.

Pewter Christmas ornaments are being offered again this year. They are handmade and shaped and feature a cut-out outline of the lake. They are signed by James Gagnon, creator, and cost \$40 each. An ornament with a beautiful scene of Highland Lake in the winter is for sale for \$10 each. There are trivets with seasonal lake scenes or a wildlife series - \$15 each or a set of four for \$50. You can also order mugs with these scenes at \$10 each or a set of four for \$35. See the website ([hlwa.org](http://hlwa.org)) under Patty's Shoppe for pictures of these.



We have two different style mugs - the 11-oz. white mug with the lake logo on both sides for \$6, or four for \$20; the 13-oz. clear mug with the lake logo on one side and with a gold rim for \$9, or four for \$30. The 11-oz. wineglass has the lake logo on one side and sells for \$7 each, four for \$25, or six for \$36.

Aerial Photography - Pictures of your home on Highland Lake and several overhead views of Highland Lake from different angles are offered at \$40 each, and a second picture purchased at the same time costs \$30. These come with a dark green matting. If so desired, a beautiful framed picture is available for \$179. A vintage 1914 black-and-white framed photo (40" x 11") of the lake is available for \$179. All picture prices are plus tax.

Floating key chains and shopping bags, offered at \$3 each or two for \$5, are great stocking stuffers! We also offer pennants to lake members for \$10 each.



**Attention newsletter recipient!**

Is your name correct?

Is the address correct?

If any of your answers are no, let us know by sending an email to [hlwa@snet.net](mailto:hlwa@snet.net).

## Recipe Corner

by Marlene Rouleau

As it is the time for holiday meals, we have a delicious recipe for leftover turkey sent to us by John Munley.

### Turkey Tetrazzini

Serves 8

Butter (for the dish)	1/2 cup flour
Salt and black pepper, to taste	4 cups chicken stock
1 pound farfalle (bow-tie) pasta	1 cup shredded Asiago cheese
10 tablespoons unsalted butter	1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 large Spanish onion, chopped	1 cup frozen peas
8 ounces button mushrooms, sliced	3 cups cooked diced turkey
1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and chopped	



1. Set the oven at 400 degrees. Butter a 9-by-13-inch baking dish.
2. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook, stirring occasionally, for 8 minutes or until the pasta is almost tender. Drain into a colander.
3. Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium heat, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter and add the onion, mushrooms, bell pepper, salt, and black pepper. Cook, stirring often, for 8 minutes. Remove them from the pan.
4. Wipe out the skillet. and return it to the stove. Add the remaining 8 tablespoons of butter. When it melts, whisk in the flour. Cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Slowly pour the stock into the pan and continue whisking until the sauce comes to a boil and thickens. Remove from the heat. Whisk in 3/4 cup of cheese, parsley, and plenty of salt and black pepper. Stir in the peas, mushroom mixture, turkey, and pasta. Mix gently.
5. Transfer the mixture to the dish, sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 cup cheese. Cover with foil and bake for 10 minutes. Remove the foil and continue baking for 15 minutes or until the top is lightly browned.

~~~~~

Here's a great desert Suzanne Carfiro made at a party recently. I received several requests for her luscious cream puffs.

### Easy Cream Puffs

1 cup water  
1 stick butter  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
4 eggs



#### Filling

1 pkg. instant vanilla pudding  
2 cups heavy cream (+or-)  
1 tsp almond flavoring (1/2 to 1-to taste) or 1 tbs almond liqueur

#### Topping

1 cup chocolate chips (+or-)  
2 – 4 tsp Crisco  
1 tsp butter

Heat oven to 400 degrees (375 for convection ovens). Heat water and butter to a boil in a 2-3 quart saucepan. Stir in flour and stir over low heat until it forms a ball. Remove from heat. Beat in eggs all at once and continue beating until smooth.

Have a wonderful holiday season and enjoy these great recipes.

Drop dough on an ungreased cookie sheet. (I use a 1 1/2-inch cookie scooper). When making them for a crowd (bite size), use a 1 inch scooper. If you want larger puffs, use a scant 1/4 cup. Bake until puffed and a golden brown color. This could be from 15 – 30 minutes, depending on the size. Cool. Cut off the tops and pull out any fragments of soft dough. Fill with the pudding filling, replace the tops, and drizzle the topping over them. Refrigerate for a minimum of 1 hour before serving.

**Filling:** Beat the pudding, cream, and flavoring with a wire whisk. Put in the refrigerator to thicken. Remove from the refrigerator and beat, adding more heavy cream to make a thick, custardy filling. (I have used a pastry bag to inject the filling into the cream puffs without cutting the tops off, but it is more work and more utensils to clean.)

**Topping:** Melt the chocolate chips, Crisco, and butter in the microwave just until melted. Stir and drizzle over cream puffs with a spoon. Refrigerate for one hour.



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**Primary Residence**

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

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