

Highland Lake News

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

President's Message by Sam Sciacca

Fall 2016



While the calendar tells us we are in the middle of 2016, HLWA (like many organizations and town governments) follows a fiscal year that starts on July 1 and ends on June 30. So we are currently just in the beginning of our 2017 Fiscal Year and off to a good and very active start!

On July 9, we held our general membership annual meeting. At the meeting, the HLWA annual report was released, providing an overview of the activities and accomplishments of the 2016 fiscal year as well as information on our financial position. I am pleased to say it was a very successful year on all accounts. If you were unable to attend, I suggest you download the annual report from the website (www.hlwa.org). We also had reports and Q&A with Selectman Steve Sedlack and Police Chief William Fitzgerald on both lake and town matters. And in a ceremony that was very special to HLWA, Bob

Moore was awarded (posthumously) the "Friend of Highland Lake" award. A very moving tribute was provided by Dan Papermaster and Mark Ricci, and the award was accepted by Sue Moore with Bob and Sue's extended family in attendance.

On July 15, we held our "Evening at Highland Lake" event at the home of Stew and Karen Jones. This year, the theme was "Pizza and Pints" and was very well attended. This is typically our most successful fundraising event, and we thank friends and family who attended to keep this tradition going. There is more detailed information on this event on page 4 of this newsletter, along with the listing of the many area businesses who contributed to the success of the evening.

At the first Board meeting of the fiscal year, the Board voted to install the current officers for 2017. Serving as an officer is critical to the functioning of the HLWA, and our thanks to all who accepted these very important roles. Appointments of Committee Chairs were also made and largely remain the same for 2017. You can see the committees and committee chairs on the website or on the listing in this newsletter. If you have any questions regarding the activity of a committee, or are interested in serving on the committee or assisting in the work, please contact the committee chair, send us an email (hlwa@snet.net), or visit the Highland Lake Watershed Association Facebook page, and we'll make sure to get you connected.

Summer is also the time when we, as an association, must be the most diligent in our monitoring of the lake conditions. Warm temperatures and increasing oxygen depletion put stress on the fish population, especially the trout. Warm water can also create algae blooms at this time of year. As I write this (August 13), the Towns of Morris, Bantam, and Litchfield have just announced the closing of beaches at Bantam Lake due to the growth of potentially toxic blue-green algae. If you see anything peculiar in the lake, such as a fish kill, fish attempting to breathe at the surface, or algae blooms, please contact an HLWA Board director or leave us a message through the website. One of our greatest tools in monitoring lake conditions is notification from boaters, swimmers and shore residents, and your help is greatly needed if we are to keep the lake safe, clean and useable, particularly in the heat of summer when people come to enjoy it the most.

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The Value of a Legacy

by *Candy Perez*

My father, Archie Perez, instilled in me the love and responsibility to care for Highland Lake. We learned the importance of the trees, ferns, and plants in the woods and along the water's edge.

In a time where we read about lakes being closed due to algae or bacteria, it is important now, as much as ever, to double our efforts to take care of the lake we so enjoy.

The Highland Lake Legacy program will provide for the next generations to grow up at the lake and have the same opportunity we have to splash around, try to fit three people on a paddleboard, be queen of the dock, or just take a five o'clock quiet ride.

So when Nora and I had the opportunity to recently celebrate at the lake, we directed donations to the Legacy program to do our part to take care of the lake. It has been there for us, and we want to insure clean water is there forever.

Legacy Program - An Important Responsibility for Lake Residents

by *Dick Labich*

The most important tasks the HLWA has is to assure the maintenance of the quality of the water of Highland Lake as well as to protect the Highland Lake watershed through the Legacy program by which we obtain undeveloped land and preserve it as open space. Members of the HLWA understand preserving forest land around the lake limits the storm water runoff and the resulting phosphorous that serves as a nutrient for the support of weed and algae growth.

The HLWA now holds deeds to 33 properties, which total nearly five acres and are assessed at nearly \$200,000, and is closing on seven additional property donations. In addition, with our partners, the Winchester Land Trust, we have participated in the purchase of more than 13 acres of open space in the watershed.

The HLWA Board of Directors is very grateful to all the donors of land as well as those providing very generous monetary donations to support the program. These donors are aware of our goals for preservation of the lake but realistically realize the tax benefits that are available for these donations.

However, there are other considerations in donating to the program. If you own land, what is it you want to protect? Do you want to retain the land and exclusive use in the future? Who do you want to own the land after you leave the lake?

Other reasons to contribute are the important benefits to the community. Preserving property as open space also preserves our wonderful community character. It helps to maintain and increase property values. It adds to the watershed's quality of life and, as mentioned earlier, benefits the water quality of Highland Lake.

So 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. Before considering any donation to the Legacy Program, you should consult your tax accountant or financial adviser. If you have any questions please call me at 860.738.0167.



Second place winner in the photo contest is Lonely Boat Ride by Michael Speziale. See other pictures on page 8.

Water Data Collection Update

by Sam Sciacca

The collection of data on temperature, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, and clarity is continuing through the summer months. Staff from Northeast Aquatic Research (NEAR) accompanied the collection team on one of the summer month collection trips and reviewed collection practices and techniques. It was discovered that one of the instruments we were using was in need of recalibration, so the equipment was given to NEAR for this important step. Thanks go out to George Knoecklein, owner of NEAR, for offering to assist both in the sample collection process review and the equipment recalibration.

We have been watching with interest the discovery of blue-green algae in both Bantam and Tyler Lakes. Blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) are present in low amounts in most streams and lakes. However, warm waters and nutrients (phosphorus) can cause the algae to grow into larger masses (blooms) and, under certain conditions, may produce harmful toxins. Concern over these toxins caused the closure of both Bantam and Tyler Lake to swimming at the recommendation of the Torrington Area Health Department. If you notice what appears to be green paint on the surface of the lake, or large green globs under the surface, we ask that you contact both the Town and HLWA.

Membership Services Report

by Patty Masucci

The membership services committee exists to bring education and knowledge to the lake and watershed residents. We address topics such as boating and water safety, fundraising events and fun activities to help fill your lives with good, fun events that help us be well-rounded individuals.

First, we want to mention safety and education. We have provided, and will do so again, a CPR course for lake residents. We plan to follow up with a Treatment of Minor Injuries course or a Wound Care Class. This is done in conjunction with the Winsted Area Ambulance Association. We also provide helpful information to all at the annual meeting. We inform our residents of the Diquat applications and hang pertinent information about them around the lake.

Membership Services tries to keep HLWA connected to organizations downtown in Winsted by working with Friends of Main Street to promote the Christmas spirit by helping with Santa on Main Street. We work with the Connecticut Special Olympics to help provide refreshments at the Penguin Plunge. We serve hot chocolate, hot dogs and rolls, and soup to spectators and participants at the Penguin Plunge. We help support a young man or woman seeking to be King or Queen of the Laurel Festival. We assist the Winsted Recreation Department as they put on the "ItsAllAboutFun" relay race at Highland Lake

HLWA usually runs one major fundraiser each year, and we usually provide one event to break up the winter doldrums with a fun dance or adult activity.

The committee has an extra added feature this year - the addition of a cochairperson - the remarkable Beth Papermaster! Anyone wishing to assist Membership Services should please call Patty Masucci at 860.379.2303 or Beth Papermaster at 860.379.8435 or 860.767.2340.

Proper Raking Techniques When Living Next to a Lake!

by Terry Platt

The number one item - **do not rake any leaves into the lake!!!** Enough leaves and pine needles fall in naturally and are another source of increased nutrients that feed aquatic weeds.



When raking or blowing leaves, use them as natural mulch if on wooded land or bag them for taking to landfill. (Mulching of leaves and grass clippings will also provide good organic nutrition for your lawn or garden.) Or consider creating a compost area far away from the shoreline to recycle natural vegetation.

When substantial amounts of leaves are blown or placed in the lake, they can produce anoxic (low oxygen) conditions as they decompose. The lack of oxygen and accumulation of leaves does not provide a beneficial environment for nest building or rearing young fish.

Blowing or raking leaves into the lake can cause some other problems. First, they add to the sediment by sinking to the bottom of the lake. *Leaves speed up the filling-in and aging process occurring in a lake.* They sink to the bottom, decompose in the water and rob our lake of vital oxygen, while adding nutrients to our waters which can promote other problems such as increases in algae.

Second, they could clog the lake outlet at the spillways, and third, they simply look bad in our beautiful lake.

If you hire someone to clear your leaves for you, please make them and their employees aware of this as well. Workers take shortcuts by blowing the leaves into the water without the homeowner or boss knowing.

It is also important not to burn leaves near the shoreline. When leaves are burned, it produces ash and carbon residues. When these residues are washed into the lake, it can cause temporary anoxic conditions. This low oxygen can stress fish and aquatic insects.

Even if you don't live directly on the lake, the leaves that are in your street gutter may wash into the storm drain. That storm drain likely leads into the lake, so please rake the leaves out of your street gutters.

So please follow these guidelines and help our lake!

An Evening on Highland Lake - Pizza and Pints

by Beth Papermaster

What a wonderful Evening on Highland Lake! The 12th annual HLWA fundraiser was a huge success. It was a hot night, but that didn't slow anyone down. Thanks to the generosity and hospitality of Karen and Stew Jones, more than 100 guests enjoyed spectacular views of our much-loved lake.

A wonderful committee worked hard to create a special summer night's event and tried out new ideas, all of which were very positively received. The biggest change this year was instead of having food provided by local restaurants, we had Verona Pizza's vintage brick oven fire truck. The pizza makers created gourmet pizza that was snapped up and enjoyed as quickly as it came out of the oven. A dessert of Italian ice was the perfect treat on such a hot summer night.

Ledgebrook Spirit Shop organized the wine tasting which included a larger selection of New England beer, including New Belgium, Two Roads Brewing Company, and Broad Brook Brewing Company. Representatives from wine and beer distributors spent time educating guests about the variety of beverages, and people compared notes on their favorite wine or beer. Once again, the Full Moonshine (produced and bottled by Hickory Ledges Farm in Canton, CT) table was particularly busy all night with the Apple Pie Moonshine a big fan favorite. A very big thank you to Chris Battista and Ledgebrook for their ongoing support to HLWA. Not only does Ledgebrook organize the tasting, but they generously donate 10% of proceeds from the evening's sales back to HLWA.

An expanded auction featured silent auction and teacup auction items donated from area restaurants and businesses: American Museum of Tort Law, Solo Pizza, T&T Perfect Nails, McGrane's On the Green, F&G Richards, Monaco's Ristorante, Flip 'N Grill, Laurel Lanes, The Health Food Corner, R.A.M.Contracting, True Value of Winchester, SPIN Monogram, Candy Perez, Texas Roadhouse, Morsel Munk, Chilli's, The Village, R&B Sports World, Mario's Tuscany Grill, Noli's Restaurant, Infinity Hall and Bistro, Chatterley's, Winsted Diner, KZK Jewelry, Limitless Proformance, Dairy Queen, Pet Supplies Plus, Ledgebrook, Bob Bailey from Town & Country Real Estate, and more. Sweet Pea's Restaurant in Riverton donated \$10 gift certificates to every guest, which was a wonderful treat for all.

Music from Keybar was a huge hit, with people raving about his voice and music selection for days after the event. Keybar kept guests entertained all evening with his talent.

An Evening on Highland Lake is HLWA's most important and biggest fundraising event, raising funds through ticket and auction sales to help HLWA in our efforts to protect the lake and watershed. We thank all of you for your continued support of our

efforts! We look forward to seeing you at next summer's "hot" event!

(If you would like to get involved in the planning of the 13th Annual Evening on Highland Lake, please contact me at bethpapermaster@gmail.com.)





Boat Parade

by Carol Zacchio

After two cancellations due to rain, the annual boat parade was held on August 6. While there were not as many participants as prior years, the enthusiasm was as strong as ever both on the lake and on the shore. The imagination and ingenuity of our boaters and "landlubbers" made the parade an event to remember.

The judges (Jan Becker, Patty Masucci and Carol Zacchio) never have an easy task choosing the prize winners, and this year was no exception. Fran Delaney's boat included Vikings and a smoke-breathing dragon. His creativity earned him both the "Most Original" and the "People's Choice" awards (1).

"Most Colorful" was a boat owned by Rob and Sabrina Aldridge of Torrington which was decked out in multicolored lights with a theme of Christmas in July (2). They were first timers, and I expect we will see them in the parade again next year!

Harris Daigle won "Best Lighting" with his pontoon boat adorned with a large, brightly lit palm tree, which could not be missed as he cruised along (3).

"Judge's Choice" was "Captain" Michael Bergamo who navigated his pirate boat through the dark waters of Highland Lake with a scary and noisy crew of pirates (4). The judge's boat approached the pirates with some trepidation to award the prize. Although the prize was not a treasure chest of gold, the pirates were happy - and the judges lived to tell about it!

The "Landlubbers" prize was awarded to Jeff Smith for his scheme of rating the boats by holding up numbers. The judge's boat received a low score but overall felt he was fair and enjoyed his originality!

The evening was a beautiful night with a crescent moon and a fun time for participants and observers alike. We thank all who cruised and those who decorated their shore or just enjoyed the sights. Hope to see you again next year. Check out our Facebook page or website www.hlwa.org for more pictures.



Dam Repair Work Proceeding

by Sam Sciacca

I am happy to report the dry dam repair work at Sucker Brook is progressing well and may in fact be completed by the time this newsletter reaches you. The "repair of the dam" is a bit of a misnomer, and the earthen dam structure itself is in fine shape. But the provisions to keep sediment from entering Sucker Brook were badly in need of repair, and this is where the work was being performed.

Step one was to replace a large (48-inch) conduit that channeled a seasonal (and rain event) stream from the top of the hill on the west side of the impoundment area. The existing metal conduit had become eroded on the bottom, and stream/rain runoff was washing silt from the bottom of the conduit bed directly into the retention pond. Over the years, this had filled up with silt and was no longer effective in keeping the silt from Sucker Brook. The new corrugated plastic conduit will provide an effective and durable channel for the water flow for future years.

Once the new conduit was in place, the second step was the excavation of the silt from the retention pond to restore its effectiveness to trap the majority of silt that enters the conduit at the top of the hill rather than entering Sucker Brook.

It was also greatly appreciated by the HLWA that Mayor Candy Perez and State Representative Jay Case alerted the State and the construction site foreman that erosion control for staged materials on the lake side of the dam was inadequate. This situation was quickly addressed before the heavy rains of late July and early August occurred.

There were some reports of silty flow from Sucker Brook, which was likely caused by the excavation of the retention pond. This was unfortunate, but for excavation of such a large area it is sometimes difficult to achieve 100% erosion control. However, the long-term effect of the project will be a significant reduction of silt flowing into Sucker Brook Cove for many years to come.

The dam repair is an excellent example of how HLWA works to monitor and improve the water quality of the lake. The diligent and persistent efforts of HLWA members to bring the situation to the attention of the State and the Army Corps of Engineers (owners of the dam) resulted in the repair of the property and significant reduction of silt flowing into the already shallow Sucker Brook Cove.

2017 HLWA Board Meetings

The schedule for the 2016-17 Board Meetings has been approved by the Board. Meetings will be held on the following dates:

September 12 and October 10, 2016

January 9, April 10, May 8, and June 12, 2017

Board meetings are open to guests. However, meetings are held in Board Members' homes, so we ask if guests plan to attend, they contact Carol Zacchio, Secretary, at 860.379.3267 in advance so plans for accommodation can be made.

Did You Know?

Eurasian milfoil, the invasive weed which threatens many New England lakes including Highland Lake, was brought to the United States as a decorative plant to be used in aquariums.



Second Annual HLWA-Morsel Munk Photo Competition

by Beth Papermaster

It is very clear that Highland Lake is a beautiful place, and we have the pictures to prove it. The 2nd Annual Morsel Munk/HLWA Photo Contest received more than 100 submissions from over 30 people. This year's photos featured many shots of the spectacular sky over the lake including early morning, sunsets, storm clouds and rainbows. The photos also captured all manner of lake life: tubing, fishing, paddle boarding, jumping into the water, and enjoying all our special lake has to offer. Thank you to everyone who submitted photos. Look for them on the HLWA website and Facebook page. Get your cameras ready for next year's contest!



First place is Stillness by Michele Miller.



Third place is a tie between Three Fishing Musketeers by Jordan Seaver (left) and Lake on Christmas Day by Krista Traub (below)



Here's a reprint of an article in the Fall 2003 Highland Lake News. Louella has passed on but left us with some wonderful memories.

Highland Lake Reflections

by Louella Parsons

At the turn of the century my grandfather, Gilbert L. Hart, built his first cottage at Highland Lake - a big green double-decker on West Wakefield in Third Bay opposite Club Island. I first visited "Heartsease" at six months of age, in 1909, and my summers for years thereafter revolved around "the lake." During the early years, we enjoyed riding around "the cove" with Grandpa in the old round bottom rowboat, pulling up a few pond lilies and viewing the pink lady slippers growing near the cottage: "Look, don't pick." I was the errand girl, sent with the pail to bring water from the spring, opposite where the dry dam is now. The Boulevard was a dirt road, easy on the hooves of our Betsy. Her stable was at road level and at one end was the outhouse, a necessity in those days.

The island was called Club Island because it housed the clubhouse where the ladies gathered (by canoe, or rowboat, of course - no causeway) for lunches, cards, afternoon teas and Saturdays for dances. The tennis court was in constant use, and even in the 20s I played on it frequently - resting between sets to eat wintergreen berries, which grew in abundance on the island.

Transportation included not only the Betsys, but also a fine motor launch, the Rosebud, which was moored at the head of the lake and made regular trips for residents, visitors and "city people" staying at the elegant Hiawatha Lodge, a fine summer hotel on Third Bay West. Emil von Elling (once named honorary USA track coach for the Olympics) and Ten Cann, both on New York University faculty, had summer camps dedicated to developing Olympic contestants, in the hills up from the west side of the lake. In 1929, a civil engineering class from NYU spent summer weeks at Hiawatha Lodge while doing their field study in the area.



One of the popular stops for the Rosebud was the Pavilion, a small amusement park on the east side of Third Bay. There were attractions such as "chute-the-chutes" and a shooting gallery. Also, later on, there was a large dance pavilion, and on the other side of the road, a large shed available to picnic groups.

Besides Betsy and Rosebud, we enjoyed the transportation of the trolley. A line ran between Torrington and Winsted, and a branch line ran from the mail line over to the Pavilion. We always had our church picnic at the Pavilion and we arrived there, often, by the trolley. The branch ran over a deep ravine and the teenage boys always hung from the sides of the "open-air" car, scaring the girls. We set up our feasts of food in the shed, filling up the benches quickly and putting away tons of food, gallons of lemonade (made

in milk cans) and gallons of Manchester Dairy ice cream. In the late 20s and 30s, the Pavilion hosted some of the well-known bands of the day, sometimes with a "battle of music," with a band at each end of the dance pavilion.

The motor boats brought a change of character - no more canoes and rowboats but ascendancy of the ski club. We remember, too, the beautiful sailing club races.

The "head" of the lake belonged to everyone - whoever had a suit and could walk up Lake Street. Boats and food were graciously served by the Loveteres. Woodland Park was a joy with high diving boards, which seemed specially made for Gene Sweeney. How could it have become a State Boat Launch?

Hopefully HLWA will be alert and protective of the beauty we still have, and youngsters enjoying the lake now will have joyous memories also.

The "Secret" Tunnel

by Sam Sciacca

Every so often, particularly in spring or late summer when the lake level is lower than we'd like it to be, HLWA will get a few inquiries about a "secret" tunnel that runs into the lake and could be used to bring in more water. So, for the record, here are some answers to the questions we typically get about the tunnel.

Yes, there is a tunnel, but it doesn't run into Highland Lake; it runs from Rugg Brook Reservoir to Crystal Lake and was part of the development of Crystal Lake as the Town's water supply system.

No, it's not very secret. In fact, you can see it on Google maps (map view). There are also some interesting historical articles and photos online about the construction of the tunnel in the 1890s. (Google "Rugg Brook Reservoir - Crystal Lake tunnel.")

No, it's not for control of Highland Lake water level. It is part of the system to divert water from the Mad River, through Rugg Brook Reservoir, and into Crystal Lake where it's used to supply the Town with water. In fact, it was built so the Town could shift water supply from Highland Lake to Crystal Lake. This was necessary due to the concern at the time of increased development (i.e., septic systems) on Highland Lake.

Yes, in theory, it could bring water to Highland Lake if (and only if) the Mad River was running strongly and both Rugg Brook Reservoir and Crystal Lake were in an overflow situation. Then water could be diverted from the river, through the tunnel, and would flow over the Crystal Lake dam and into Sucker Brook where it would end up in Highland Lake. However, the conditions that affect Highland Lake water level (when the gates are closed) also affect Rugg Brook and Crystal Lake as well. Our current low level, due to a dry summer, is paralleled in these two bodies of water. Crystal Lake is currently two feet below normal, and no water has flowed into Sucker Brook in nearly two months.

So while it sounds exciting that there is a secret passageway for us to outsmart Mother Nature and control the height of Highland Lake during dry spells, the truth is we are completely dependent on rainfall, streams and springs to maintain the level of the lake, and when dry spells cause the level to drop, there is really nothing to be done.

Recipe Corner

by *Marlene Rouleau*

With the new fall season knocking on our doors, the cooler days will be arriving shortly. It's a good time to come up with a great hot soup recipe. Terry Platt has offered her delicious potato soup recipe which some of us have enjoyed at one of our fall cleanup parties. Enjoy!

Swiss Cream-of-Potato Soup

4 pared, medium potatoes
 2 diced bacon slices
 1/4 cup minced onion
 2 tablespoon butter or margarine
 1 tablespoon snipped parsley
 2 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
 Dash cayenne pepper
 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
 3 cups milk
 1/2 cup grated Swiss or American cheese
 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

Cook potatoes till tender; drain. Meanwhile, saute bacon and onion over low heat, stirring, until brown and tender. Mash potatoes; add bacon, onion, butter, parsley, salt, nutmeg, cayenne, mustard, Worcestershire sauce. Stir in milk. Heat over low heat, stirring. Sprinkle with cheese. Serve at once. Makes 4 servings.



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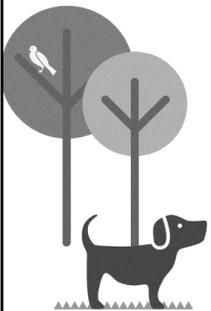


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P.O. Box 1022, Winsted, CT 06098

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.

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