



From the Highland Lake Watershed Association - A Nonprofit Organization Dedicated to the Preservation and Protection of Highland Lake and Its Watershed

Spring

2021

President's Message by Beth Papermaster

I love completing surveys! When the phone rings and it is someone calling to see if I have 20 minutes to answer questions about radio stations - I'm in! Cooking dinner can wait. Surveys give me the opportunity to help make a product, service or experience better. And I love to share my opinion! I realize most people are not as thrilled with taking surveys as I am. Therefore, it was very exciting to have more than 50% of our members complete HLWA's first ever online survey. The Board of Directors is grateful to the 128 respondents for taking the time to complete the survey.

The goals of the survey were to understand the impact of HLWA's communications - newsletter, website, Facebook, emails; understand areas of interest and concern; and gauge members' desire to be involved.

I would like to share some of the statistical results with you.

- 98% read the printed copy of this newsletter. Only 14% read the newsletter on our website, www.hlwa.org.
• 76% would read an electronic version if given that as their only option.
• You really like a broad range of articles - more than 90% for water quality as well as regulation and safety reminders; and 70% or higher for historical information, environmental articles, personal interest stories and pictures. The only topic that received below 50% interest is our recipe section - which we will remove going forward.
• As much as you love reading the newsletter, only 10% of you would consider writing an article for the newsletter. You can see how that presents a big challenge when it comes to publishing three issues annually. After switching from four issues to three issues in 2020, it soon may be necessary to move to two issues annually, a move that 84% of you supported.
• Two very important websites to visit to stay informed on topics related to Town regulations/ordinances and meetings, boating guidelines, environmental issues, etc., are townofwinchester.org and portal.ct.gov/DEEP - yet fewer than 24% of you visit these sites. I encourage you to explore these sites. On the Town's website, in the bottom right of the homepage, you can register at E-Subscriber Services to receive targeted emails.
• When it comes to social media, the majority of you either are not on Facebook or do not follow Highland Lake Watershed Association (HLWA). At the time of the survey, HLWA did not have an Instagram account, and, again, the majority of you do not have Instagram or indicated you wouldn't follow an account. However, social media can be a great tool for building community and for quickly disseminating important and urgent information. In December 2020 hlwainsta launched on Instagram. If you are on social media, please follow us!

It is now even easier to renew your HLWA membership for 2021! Enclosed in this newsletter is our new all-in-one application and remittance envelope. Thank you for your ongoing support.

(continued on next page)

What's Inside

Table with 2 columns: Article Title and Page Number. Includes items like 'Thank You to Our Advertisers', 'Lake Reflections: Where Do I Live? Winsted or Winchester?', and 'Thank You'.

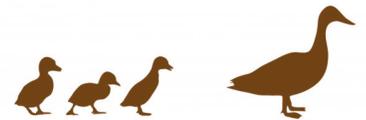
President's Message (cont.)

- One of the most important layers of protection for the lake is open, undeveloped land. HLWA owns and stewards 6 acres of land in the watershed as part of our Legacy program. 81% of you recognize the importance of keeping open, undeveloped land and 77% support HLWA's effort to protect open land. If you own land, you might be interested in donating to HLWA, or if you would like to join our team of volunteer "land stewards," please contact us at hlwa@hlwa.org.
- Finally, Membership dues were raised from \$25 to \$50 about 15 years ago. HLWA relies on membership dues and additional donations to do our work of protecting the health of the lake and watershed. We are considering asking our membership to approve an increase in dues to \$75 in the coming years at a future annual meeting. It was heartening to see 86% responded you would continue being a member if dues increase to \$75. This shows us you appreciate the hard work HLWA does.

Several questions required a narrative response. Here are some selections of the questions and responses:

Q What do you consider to be the greatest threat to the health of the lake?

- Risks of boats bringing in invasive species.
- Stormwater drains.
- Runoff - silt, stormwater, surface water. As one person wrote: "People's sand and gravel driveways washing into the lake every rain storm . . . every storm yards of sand go in the lake." Another wrote: "Probably the dirt, rock and debris that wash into the lake during heavy rainstorms. In some areas, it washes across the road into the lake."
- Fertilizers, lawns, yard/lawn clippings going into the lake, no buffer zone.
- Geese and ducks (excess nutrients caused by waterfowl droppings can result in water-quality problems such as summer algae blooms). Please, do not feed ducks and geese.
- Weeds.
- A general feeling was too many people do not respect the lake, don't care about how their actions impact the health of the lake and its environs, and have an attitude of not caring about the rules and regulations in place by the IWWC and ZBA to protect our lake.



Q This summer, HLWA received many questions and comments from members and other lake residents regarding safety on the water. HLWA does not control or enforce the laws. Boating laws are set by CT DEEP and enforced by Winsted's Marine Patrol and DEEP's ENCON patrol. However, if you have any comments regarding boating safety on the lake, please comment here. Responses will be shared anonymously with the appropriate parties.

- The police must ticket people who break the law. That is the only way to ensure a safe lake for all. They need to pay particular attention to the coves where boaters behave recklessly and to the individuals who break Sunday night "Quiet Time" rules.
- The Town must enforce regulations about buoys as people are putting them in dangerous locations for boaters.
- Wave action caused by ballast boats results in unsafe swimming, erosion into lake and damage to property.
- Many boaters are coming too close to docks.
- I have strong concerns there are so many people on the water who are not abiding by the safety restrictions, and it frightens me that somebody's going to get hurt.
- The authorities are welcome to sit on my dock on a Sunday afternoon and watch all the regulations being violated with regularity.
- Boats go too fast in the coves and too close to docks. Rules are not followed because too many boats come in at the launch and they don't know the rules of the lake.
- Increased marine patrols would be great.
- The 5:00 p.m. Sunday "Quiet Time" no-wake rule is increasingly trampled. I'm not sure if it's due to ignorance or indifference . . . At minimum, there should be a prominent sign at the ramp advising boaters of the rule and strict enforcement. And the Winsted police boat should be more vigorous about enforcing the rule.



Finally, we asked you to tell us why you choose to be a member and your responses were wonderful!

- I feel it is our responsibility as lake homeowners to do everything we can to protect the lake and create a sense of community on Highland Lake.
- I believe being a member is important to support efforts to preserve the lake.
- I appreciate the importance of the work that is being done by the HLWA.
- We continue to enjoy living at the lake and keeping the water as clean as possible.

- Thank you for protecting our lake and watershed.
- As a homeowner on the lake you would always want to protect your investment!
- I care about Highland Lake.
- As seasonal residents, HLWA allows us to feel connected to the lake community year-round. We also want to support the health and beauty of Highland Lake.
- My membership helps ensure the lake will be enjoyed by future generations.

You may be wondering now that HLWA has all of this information, what next?

Thanks to the survey:

- HLWA recruited two amazing new board members (read about them on page 8). These new board members bring skills and, more important, a desire to learn - and are working hard to improve HLWA's communication, monitor water quality, and welcome new members.
- HLWA is working with CT DEEP to install **two** signs at the State-owned boat launch. The signs will highlight some boating regulations and a reminder to "*Clean. Drain. Dry.*" As soon as the sign designs are finalized, we will share them with you, along with a campaign to raise money for HLWA to purchase and install the signs.
- A wonderful and informative Welcome to the Lake booklet was created and mailed to all new lake residents. Important information covered includes boating regulations, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission guidelines, How to Be a Good Lake Neighbor, and more. (Excerpts can be found in this newsletter.) The booklet is available electronically on our website, www.hlwa.org. An informed public will, we hope, be better stewards of the lake.
- Members' concerns about safety were shared with Winsted Police Chief Fitzgerald and CT DEEP.
- HLWA is supporting Town efforts to develop and implement a plan to repair and replace storm drains around the lake.
- A new storm drain filtration system comes on the market this spring, and HLWA may work with the Town to test the system out in a few locations.
- HLWA worked with the Town to engage Northeast Aquatic Resources (NEAR) to complete a Water Quality Monitoring Report and Management Plan and a Watershed Investigation.
 - NEAR is in the process of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the 10 years of water quality data collected between 2011 and 2020, as well as the 16 years of water clarity data, beginning in 2005. NEAR will estimate annual watershed nutrient loading and include an analysis of sediment, watershed nutrient loading, and the lake's drawdown record. The report will culminate with a list of primary concerns and actionable measures that can be implemented to improve the lake's water quality.
 - The main goal of the Watershed Investigation is to determine the various locations of nutrient inputs around the shoreline. The investigation includes a search for nonnatural nutrient pollution "hot spots" by identifying areas of high water flow, high nutrients, soil erosion, inadequate road-runoff areas, potential stormwater/culvert improvement project sites, etc. NEAR took water samples at all flowing inlets and any sites with significant erosion or runoff. The water samples will be tested for concentrations of total phosphorus and total nitrogen. The final report will examine the state of the Highland Lake watershed as a whole, along with individual discussions dedicated to each location. These discussions will include an explanation of the site and cause for concern, site photos, GIS waypoints, and specific recommendations for improvement.



I know this is a lot of information to digest, but I hope after reading this you have an even greater appreciation for HLWA and a renewed dedication to doing your part to protect the lake.

Look for updates on all of this and more in the coming months. If you did not respond to the survey but would like to share your thoughts or concerns, we are always happy to hear from you at hlwa@hlwa.org.

I look forward to seeing you on the water soon!

Beth Papermaster

Thank You to Our Advertisers!

We are grateful to all of our advertisers who help make the publication of the Highland Lake News possible. Please check out their ads in this issue and support them. Tell them HLWA sent you!

Welcome to our newest advertisers

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Exploring Our Lake

by Lynn Carter

Lurking underneath the icy water, snuggled in the sand is a small creature . . . perhaps you've heard of the Asiatic Clam? Oh, it goes by many aliases . . . the Asian Clam, the Golden Clam, the Prosperity Clam, the Good Luck Clam, and when it's feeling fancy . . . Corbicula Fluminea!

The size of a dime, these freshwater clams have surreptitiously invaded the world, self-fertilizing and spawning approximately 570 larvae per day and up to 68,000 eggs per year, per individual.

So, "Who cares?!", you say and "What does that have to do with me and with Highland Lake?!" Well, their excretion of inorganic nutrients, especially nitrogen, stimulates the growth of algae and fouls the water, so not only does the lake become mucky, it also turns green and yucky (very official term).

"Well, don't they have enemies? I mean what possibly eats this tiny clam?" Humans, some fish, some birds and some raccoons all delight in this tasty treat, yet they exist in nature to multiply so quickly that even the scavengers can't keep pace.

"I don't want a green lake!"

"What can be done?!"

These little guys like to go for boat rides, as evidenced by their plausible start in the shipping trade.

So . . . inspect your boat/trailer/PWC/paddleboard or kayak and remove any mud, weeds or other organisms that might have hitched a ride on your fun day out.

Also . . . drain all the water, including live wells and bait buckets, and **do not** use these clams as bait.

Search . . . your shoreline and just throw these clams out . . . remember they can be buried near the shore in the sand. Maybe it would be a fun game for the kids (or even adults these days) to make it a contest and see who can collect the most!

I'm not sure if these clams have feelings or not. Although it may feel a little weird to just say, "Throw them out!", we all want a clean lake. Who knows, maybe they'll just think they're going on a joyride!

(HLWA does not recommend the consumption of these clams or of any mussels found in the lake.)



Pat Masucci, Highland Lake's Angel

by Fran Delaney

Their house on East Wakefield was the embodiment of Patty's spirit and essence. My first acquaintance with Patty came about after joining the Highland Lake Watershed Association board of directors and attending my first meeting held at the Masucci residence. The house radiated warmth and a welcoming, unpretentious air as soon as one entered. The board members congregated in a comfortable den with a beautiful view overlooking the lake. The discussion that followed portended Patty's very active future. While her focus would always be first on her family, her energy and sense of purpose only needed an outlet allowing her to exhibit her talent and energy.



After having formed a membership services committee to increase membership and HLWA presence, Patty would soon assume ownership as chair. A plan was derived to deliver welcome gifts to every new lake resident. Patty created beautiful bags and baskets with information about lake preservation and the HLWA itself and always included a gift as a remembrance of our visit.

A critical element was for delivery to be in person, by three or more of us, when the new owners were home. Having researched our list of lake purchases, sometimes 40 or more, we would meet at Patty's house, divide the parcels and split lake routes. Memorial Day weekend became a favored time to make our runs, leading to many new members and a significant increase in the visibility of the Association.

Having new and potential new members of the Association feel welcome precipitated our social gatherings, many of which were hosted by the Masuccis. Their setting was perfect, with easy access, full kitchen, covered deck, large area for congregating and a spectacular view of the lake. The parties were a joy to the many new residents. Clearly Patty loved the role of host for the events, even though she and Don often bore the brunt of the work in organizing and cleanup. As Membership Services took on a more expansive role, Patty took command of multiple roles for the Association. These roles included the planning and orchestration of the many events that became signature for the Association - wine tastings, annual boat parade, lake cleanups, dances, parties, and enhancing our presence with the town.

She and Don participated with another HLWA committee, Government Relations, which interacted with the Town's commissions on water treatment and construction on and around the lake. She was a participant for a multitude of the hearings and public meetings to support the Association with regard to proposed construction activities that would impact the watershed

Besides being an activist for the betterment of the lake, the desire for lake-related merchandise drove the creation of "Patty's Shoppe." She assembled a full inventory of coffee mugs, wine glasses, and embossed clothing. She would have a full assortment available at annual meetings, new member welcome parties and other Association events, becoming a revenue source in support of the purpose of the HLWA, protecting the lake and its watershed.

When Patty was not working and entertaining on behalf of the Watershed Association, she served as matriarch of her family; a full venue of parties and gatherings for her family and friends for holidays, birthdays, graduations and retirements, just to name a few. It was a rarity to not see activity at the Masucci house.

Patty's energy could not be constrained, even in winter; deciding the Association should be active at Christmas, she enlisted a group to sing Christmas carols for the Highland Acres nursing home and residents around the lake. Having recruited me to load hay bales for seats on my rack body truck, the HLWA choir made its rounds each year, weather never a deterrent; after an impromptu rehearsal (illustrating why a singing career was not in my venue) and a bit of blackberry brandy for fortification, we made our yearly pilgrimage, first to the residents at Highland Acres and then to our "victims" who would be serenaded with our renditions of Silent Night, Jingle Bells and Frosty the Snowman. The carol trips were often perilous during winter weather. It is a minor miracle none of our intrepid entourage of carolers were lost due to the slipping and sliding of the rack body or getting in and out of the locations we traversed in our trips around the lake.

Off the lake, she was a regular volunteer for downtown activities - Christmas on Main Street (serving hot chocolate with marshmallows), serving hot dogs and chili at the Penguin Plunge, decorating our float for the Laurel Festival, or holding down a booth for the HLWA at the Fall Festival. If there was a community activity, one did not have to look very far to find Patty and Don in full regalia for whatever the cause was.

Patty is to Highland Lake and community what George Bailey is to Bedford Falls in "It's a Wonderful Life." It is hard to imagine the loss had she not been a presence. We can be grateful and thankful for the difference her lifetime has made to Highland Lake's residents, her family and everyone else she touched. Outside Cook's Funeral Home, awaiting entry to pay final respects to the family, the church bell tolled the hour, followed by a carillon of carols on the church bells. At the sound of the bells, one knew Patty, like Clarence, had just attained her wings, a fitting finale for an angel of Highland Lake.

Email: hlwa@hlwa.org
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Water Quality/Environmental Update

by Clare Stevens

Deep Drawdown Dynamics: Past and Present

Have you ever wondered about the deep drawdown of Highland Lake's water such as we are presently engaged in? Perhaps I can shed some light by drawing from the past in order to understand the present.

The 1940s was a time when the only residents at Highland Lake lived in seasonal cottages. The Union Pin Company manufactured common straight pins and was located on the northern shore of the lake near the spillway. The company owned the flowage rights to Highland Lake and withdrew water year-round to generate hydroelectric power for themselves and other manufacturers downstream. Seasonal residents were frequently left with little or no water at their shorefronts.

As the years passed and dissatisfaction grew, the Highland Lake Taxpayer's Association (HLTA) was organized in 1959 to represent the lake property owners to the Town regarding the control of the lake water level. The Association enlisted the aid of the Mayor and negotiated with the President of the Union Pin Company to reduce or suspend using water during the summer. Unfortunately, the company officials would not compromise and the lake property owners remained frustrated.

Time passed, circumstances changed and the Union Pin factory building deteriorated, so their executives decided to sell the property in 1977. This was our opportunity to strongly advocate for the Town to buy the property, secure the flowage rights and be the regulating agent for the water level of the lake. Success came in 1980 when the Town purchased the Union Pin property and subsequently sold it, but the Town retains control of the flowage rights to this day.

In 1997 the Winsted Board of Selectmen created an Ad Hoc Water Level Committee to research and propose water level policies to the Selectmen. The members of the Highland Lake Water Level Committee (WLC) include property owners from each bay and some coves (representing deep water and more shallow areas of waterfront) as well as the Public Works Director and a liaison from the Board of Selectmen as nonvoting members. This committee develops a five-year drawdown schedule following best lake management practices, seeking scientific information and fairness in what is proposed to the Selectmen. WLC meets annually to evaluate each year's drawdown.

Since 1959 when our precursor organization forged the path, the Highland Lake Watershed Association, Inc. (HLWA) has been an advocate for the preservation and protection of the lake. The introduction of the invasive aquatic plants, Eurasian and variable milfoil, created the realization that both were a threat to the water quality of Highland Lake and needed to be controlled. Their proliferation would cause the deterioration of the water quality, become a recreational nuisance and possibly diminish our property values. In the early years of the WLC and with HLWA support, the Town agreed to attempt to kill off the invasive aquatic

plants by freezing their roots. If there were sufficient extended freezing temperatures without snow cover, drawing the water level down could stunt the growth of plants in water up to 3 feet deep. The milfoil expanded into water as deep as 15 feet. Sunlight that plants need to grow penetrated into the water at that depth and allowed the invasive plants to flourish. This was before we were aware of the negative impacts to the lake as a result of deep drawdowns.

Dr. George Knoecklein, limnologist, owner of Northeast Aquatic Research, Inc. (NEAR) was hired to make recommendations for effective lake management practices. He explained that left uncontrolled, milfoil can spread rapidly and cause significant damage to the water quality. As plants die, they consume oxygen in the water to decompose and they produce more sludge that adds to the lakebed. Chemical treatment of the invasive aquatic plants began in 2004. The Town applies for the needed permits from the CT DEEP. The decision each year to chemically treat the invasive weeds is made after careful analysis of the lake water and plant surveys.



How does the deep drawdown of 8 feet differ from the 3-foot drawdown?

When the lake's water level is lowered 8 feet, approximately 1,042,880,000 gallons of water are released through the sluiceway gate. As is the case this year, a large amount of the perimeter lakebed is left dry. Small aquatic invertebrates such as snails and mollusks are forced to migrate into deeper water, and some fish are compressed into water too cold or too deep for them to thrive. Debris from storm drains is sucked into the lake and precipitation creates further erosion of the exposed soil. Also, 8-foot drawdowns reduce access to the lake in the shallow coves. Sometimes the frozen lakebed lifts up to create large "floating bogs" during the spring refill. The frozen mud, stumps and stones can be pushed by the wind and litter the shorefront properties as well as Resha and Holland Beaches. These factors make a negative impact on the water quality and are serious considerations of the Water Level Committee in making recommendations to the Selectmen and IWWC.

Finally, refilling the lake's water is a major factor. During years when we have had little precipitation, the watershed is dry and a

good deal of the snowmelt and initial spring rain is absorbed in the soil and vegetation, leaving less to refill the lake. Runoff from the watershed streams is likewise reduced. In years such as this one, there is abundant precipitation and we can expect the lake to fill reliably and quickly. During years when the lake level is lowered 3 feet, there is not as much concern about refill.

There are many variables to consider when making the decision to draw the level of the lake down 8 feet. Thus, Dr. Knoecklein has advised the Water Level Committee and Town officials to limit deep drawdowns to once every five years. Because of the due diligence of dedicated WLC volunteers and Town officials and the recommendations from Dr. Knoecklein, the water level drawdown dynamics and decisions are carefully crafted.

There is one year left of the most recent Highland Lake five-year water level policy. On November 1, 2021, the gate by the spillway will be opened to lower the lake to the 3-foot level and maintained at that level until the ice is sufficiently off the lake. Then the lake will be allowed to refill to the usual over-spillway level.



From Disaster to Recovery

by Kevin Winn

In the early 1990s, three years after my parents had signed over ownership of their cottage at 626 Wynne Road to me, the time had come for some seriously needed repairs, namely a foundation replacement. The foundation was made from concrete blocks and had deteriorated over the years so that major flooding occurred every spring in the basement.

As a little background, my father had built the cottage in 1948 as my parents' first home. From 1953 until 1973 the cottage was rented out. However, our family spent weekends at the lake camping out on property between the cottage and my grandparent's house. Shortly after the renters moved and we began using it as our cottage, we removed the wall between the living room and the only bedroom. Therefore, sleeping space became the small attic space (which had a four-foot-high ceiling at the peak). So, while replacing the foundation, it seemed an opportune time to add a bedroom, a new bathroom, and renovate the kitchen. Construction began the spring of 1992 starting with raising the house on jacks and replacing the foundation. Plans were the contractor would lower the house onto the new foundation the Tuesday after Memorial Day. At work that day, I anxiously awaited the phone call to inform me all was successful and my cottage was comfortably sitting on its new foundation. However, the call I did receive was from my contractor telling me a jack had slipped during the lowering, and the house had swayed and fallen into the new foundation, crushing it. His two crewmen who were under the building managed to survive, with the only bodily harm being one broken arm. The furnace, hot water and cold water tanks assisted by holding the house up a bit.

The trip to Winsted that evening to view the damage was like attending a funeral. The house was on an angle leaning into the foundation. Walking inside the house (afterwards deemed to be a foolish move) was like walking in a funhouse at a carnival. My mother was in tears as this was her first home (my parents had

lived there for five years) and was my father's first major project. The back porch, which was also destroyed, was my father's final major project. Dad had died in 1988, so he avoided seeing the disaster. We returned four days later to hastily pack up things as the construction workers emptied furniture and belongings from the inside. Many items were destroyed, and physical memories were lost forever. My aunts came to assist, which was great emotional assistance to my mother as well.

The cottage had to be demolished and the new foundation completely removed. Throughout the summer of 1992 a new cottage was built. Losing a summer of lake time was tough. Our lakefront is across the street, but without a house it was hard to spend any amount of time there. The silver lining was ending up with a beautiful new cottage (house, really) with all new amenities.

To add to all this, I had just begun seeing my wife, so her real introduction to the family was to go through this disaster and then the stress of building. The cottage was still "sort of" considered a family cottage, so there were a lot of opinions, suggestions, and desires from family members. I figured if we could survive something like this, we were ready for almost anything thrown at us. We did manage to survive it all and we married in 1993. Our daughter, born in 1995, was raised as a Highland Lake child, spending spring and summer weekends here.



Some 30 years later, we are both now retired and have made the decision to live at the lake full time. Admittedly, isolating here from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic convinced us it was doable. We finally reached the point when there was really no need any more to have two houses to keep up. However, to live here full time, we need more space. Both my wife and daughter love to cook (and are quite good, I might add), so a larger kitchen is much needed (it currently has a galley kitchen). Ten weeks of sharing the kitchen (my daughter isolated with us) worked fine but pointed to the need for a real kitchen. With a lot of planning, and some luck thrown in, this coming summer 2021, 29 years after the last summer of construction on this site, will see work progressing on an addition. To say that seeing this move happen is a dream come true for me, and for my daughter, would be an understatement – Highland Lake holds so much meaning and sentiment for us. My wife has always been steadfast in saying she would never move here full time, but after enjoying a full spring, summer, and autumn here, she is fully on board and perhaps the one most looking forward to spending our first winter here.

New Board Members

HLWA welcomes two new members to the Board of Directors, Jeanne Marchand and Lynn Carter. Both have jumped right in and already are hard at work on behalf of HLWA.



Jeanne moved to Highland Lake in 2014. She works at The Travelers and has 25+ years' experience with Project Management as well as working in Learning & Development, creating e-learning and training videos. In her spare time, she's an RRCA running coach and fitness instructor. While working from home during COVID, Jeanne had time to really enjoy Highland Lake and decided she wanted to help protect our beautiful lake. If you drive around the lake as

the sun rises, you just might see Jeanne and her husband, Kim, running around the lake, but you will have a hard time catching up with them! Jeanne is serving as cochair of both the Marketing and Membership committees.

Lynn moved to Highland Lake in 2004 by way of California, Florida and a few other places in between. She has been a year-round resident since then and enjoys the outdoor activities of the lake. Depending on the time of year and the weather, she will be biking, hiking, boating, paddleboarding, swimming, kayaking, gardening, snowshoeing or cross country skiing. Two years ago, she noticed a part of the watershed stream system that needed attention and was directed to speak to the Mayor, Candy Perez. She expressed her concerns about the lake with Candy and Candy suggested getting involved with HLWA. Lynn started volunteering with the HLWA water testing and this year was asked to be on the Board of Directors. Lynn is currently the cochair of the Water Quality Committee.



Highland Lake's Mystery Mermaid

by Fran Delaney

I doubt there is anyone who is not glad to see 2020 gone by and look forward to a better 2021. The forced isolation of the summer did provide the opportunity to spend time on the lake with my daughter. It is the time we spent this past summer that we learned of pervasive claims of a mystery fish in the lake. My daughter (who is part fish herself) and I spent many weekends swimming and floating, especially in the cove area of third bay. A number of boaters, particularly those with younger children on board, often were found to be staring intently at the water and shore. I, being

preoccupied with work and the reading of the Sunday newspaper or a new Baldacci novel, would be oblivious.

One afternoon, my attention was taken by the sound of a large fish breaking water followed immediately by pointing and oohs and aahs from the kids on the nearby boat. My daughter directed me to relocate the boat to a better angle. Before long I found myself also focused and staring. I was soon rewarded by what appeared to be a large fish (only it wasn't a fish) and large fin disappearing regally into the water. Having seen for myself, our new mission in life was to get a better image of what we had just seen.

Over time we learned Luna (our name) appeared more frequently in third bay than elsewhere on the lake and was most regularly seen in the cove area. She was most often visible in the early evening hours and was especially prevalent at night. Under a bright moonlit night, her presence could be almost counted on, hence her name. It was at night she would be heard playfully performing jumps and flips, just out of sight in a teasing manner. Careful scrutiny would allow her form to be dimly made out. Once I made the mistake of trying to view her with the boat's floodlight. She immediately dove and disappeared. I was soundly chastised and we were fearful we would never view her again. It would be many evenings before she reappeared; I was cautioned in no uncertain terms to suspend any future plans for better visuals and allow her to come as close as she chose.

As the summer waned, there was a clear attraction and bond developing between my daughter and this special creature of the water. As long as I pretended to be engrossed in my book or thoughts, Luna would come close enough to the boat for Keara to watch as she played and entertained the children on the more distant boats. We found her favorite location on one of the partially submerged boulders in the shallow area of the cove, where she would watch from seclusion. As picnickers and swimmers would come to the water from the roadside, Luna would slip silently into the water and magically disappear.

We had a special treat one Sunday evening. All the visitors to the lake had gone for the day, and we were the last boat in the shallow cove at rest on a virtually still and silent lake. Luna appeared, as she always did, out of nowhere and swam to the sandy part of the shore, just as a baby bear cub ambled through the trees to drink from the lake. The two were obviously friends, exchanging bear grunts complemented by Luna's lilting sing-song murmuring. The two spent several minutes on the shore together; I was so engrossed that taking a photograph was not even a thought. My daughter was enraptured; it was better than any story or fairy tale could portray. Finally, the two parted, the bear sauntering back to its mother, and Luna, after playfully flapping her fin in farewell, moving along the shore in the shallow until her form faded. The magic in the air was beyond words. We



were silent on the boat ride back to our dock; no words could add to what we had experienced.

As we go through the winter months, the excitement and tension are almost palatable awaiting the return of spring and our hope that Luna's appearance was not fleeting. Where she stays during the cold and foreboding winter weather is an unknown; perhaps she resides in the trolley car alleged to be at the bottom of the lake. Perhaps there is an unknown cave or passage where she finds refuge. My daughter has a child's faith she will be present when we take to the water again. I, for one, cannot wait to see and hopefully start a new chapter.

Hartford HealthCare Health Center

Article courtesy of Winchester EDC

Hartford HealthCare Health Center celebrated their grand opening in Winsted last month with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at their new, state-of-the-art building located at 80 South Main Street, at the corner of Routes 8 and 44.

The nearly 30,000-square-foot building is the new home of the hospital's Hungerford Emergency Medical Center. These services were formerly available at the Winsted Health Center. The HHC Primary Care offices of Drs. Roy Hitt, Andaleeb Shariff and Stephanie Morton will be occupying the upper level.

The center features a twelve-hour (9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.) Emergency Department as well as diagnostic imaging, mammography, outpatient blood draw, primary and specialty care, cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, occupational and physical therapy, and regional paramedic services. Newly added services include a CT scanner and additional provider offices. The property also has a LIFE STAR helicopter landing pad.

The proximity of the new Hartford HealthCare Health Center in Winsted to the new Northwestern Connecticut Community College Health and Science Center presents many collaborative opportunities between CHH and healthcare profession programs at the college.

The phone number for the Emergency Room is **860.738.6650**.

Lake Reflections: Where Do I Live? Winsted or Winchester?

by Jeannette Brodeur

Hello, neighbors! Our family came to this charming little hamlet just last month, but I'm still confused about where we live. At first, our new address came up as Winchester, but that's a town in the city of Winsted? Huh? Most locals have corrected me and say we live in Winsted. But how come all of the police cars say Winchester on them? I did find out that the name Winsted comes from the towns of "Winchester and Barkhamsted," but I'm not the only one who finds this mishmash confusing.

In a 2008 Letter to the Editor in the Register Citizen, Joseph Cadrain, who passed away in 2009, complained about the rising local town budget and also explained that "the legal name of an

area shown as Winchester and/or Winsted, Connecticut, on state and local maps is the Town of Winchester." He added that "local government is the Town Meeting and the Board of Selectmen. Taxes are paid to the Town of Winchester. Law enforcement is via the Winsted Police Department and we have a Volunteer Winsted Fire Department."

Cadrain went on to say that Winsted/Winchester can have this arrangement because "our Town Charter says we can" but reminded folks that nowhere in the charter is there any mention of the City of Winsted, because "legally the City of Winsted does not exist." Huh?

Finally, Cadrain added to the mystery of our newly adopted hometown by stating that, "somewhere in a previous time zone, parts of Barkhamsted, New Hartford and Colebrook must have been annexed to the Town of Winchester. No town records exist, yet the possibility exists that secret documents exist." Ooooh. Secret documents! I may have to talk to the Town Clerk about this! I wish I got to speak to the late Mr. Cadrain about this mystery.

This crazy mixup of towns must be something our family is drawn to because we just moved here from a place called Terryville, which is a village in the town of Plymouth. Our kids attended Plymouth schools, most of which are located in Terryville. Our Plymouth Town Hall was also located in Terryville, but our police cars had the name "Plymouth Police" on them.

Terryville is also the home of Buddy the Beefalo, a 1,200-pound cross between a bison and beef cattle, who escaped from a trailer at a local slaughterhouse on August 3 and has eluded the Plymouth Police Department ever since. Residents and people from all over the world have contributed to the police department's "GoFundMe" effort to purchase the wayward Buddy from his owner and let him live out the rest of his days in a Florida animal sanctuary. But they have to catch him first. Stay tuned!

Terryville and Winsted do have something other than confusing town names in common. They were both important places in the history of clockmaking, as was Waterbury, where my husband Todd and I grew up. But Terryville and Waterbury don't have a history of Bigfoot sightings as Winsted does! Yes. It's true!

According to damnedct.com, there's a "Legend of the Winsted Wildman!" The website reveals that in 1895, the Winsted Herald reported "a large man, stark naked and covered with hair all over his body, ran out of a clump of bushes" and startled Town Selectman Riley Smith who was out in the woods picking berries with his bulldog. Smith described Bigfoot as "a wild, hairy man of the woods, six feet in height," and added that "the man's hair was black and hung down long on his shoulders, and that his body was thickly covered with black hair. The man was remarkably agile, and to all appearance was a muscular, brawny man, a man against whom any ordinary man would stand little chance."

Wow, I better not go berry-picking alone in the woods or even with my aging 13-year-old little terrier mix dog, Nelson, although Nelson could give Bigfoot a good nip on his hairy ankles if he could catch him! Yes, I think I will just head over to the Winsted Farmers Market this spring. Can you tell me, is the address in Winsted or Winchester?

Taken from The Winsted Phoenix at winstedphoenix.org



Town of Winchester Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWWC)

In 1972, the Connecticut state legislature enacted the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act (IWWA). The Act creates a land-use regulatory process which considers the environmental impacts of proposed development activities. Regulated activities are broadly defined to mean "...*any operation or use of a wetland or watercourse involving removal or deposition of material, or any obstruction, construction, alteration or pollution, of such wetlands or watercourses.*..." In order to conduct a regulated activity, a person must first apply for and obtain a permit from the municipal inland wetland agency.

The Town of Winchester IWWC is responsible for regulating and permitting activities within 100 feet of Highland Lake and other wetlands and watercourses within the Town of Winchester. The IWWC Agent shares this message: ***Before you make any modification to the ground within 100' of the lake, you should have a conversation with the Town's IWWC Agent to understand if your activity requires a permit. You can contact the IWWC Agent at 860-738-6593 Monday through Friday.***

Some examples of regulated activities that require a permit are, but are not limited to:

- ◇ lake wall construction/modification/repair
- ◇ decks and fences
- ◇ stump removal
- ◇ construction/renovation of home, shed, porch, patio, steps or walkway

In addition, the IWWC is responsible for regulating and permitting activities that fall under the Town "Dock and Mooring Ordinance Sec 162." This ordinance regulates docks, swim floats, boat lifts, walkways, personal watercraft lift/floats, mooring buoys and markers at public bodies of water within the Town of Winchester. If you plan to make any changes including maintenance to items covered by this ordinance, contact the IWWC Agent. This ordinance helps to maintain consistency and safety for all owners of property abutting the lake as well as protect the water quality of Highland Lake. **Only authorized docks, swim floats, boat lifts, walkways, personal watercraft lift/floats, mooring buoys and markers may be installed and registered with IWWC.**

There is a fee for submitting an application to apply for a permit. Be sure to apply well in advance of your planned activity. The IWWC meets monthly to review applications and go over details with the applicants. The process can take two or more meetings. Sometimes a public hearing and/or a cash bond is required. Regulated activity conducted without a permit could result in a Cease and Desist Order and/or a fine.

The IWWC page on the Town of Winchester website provides helpful links to the ordinances and applications.

<https://www.townofwinchester.org/inland-wetlands-and-watercourses>

The water level of Highland Lake is controlled by the Town of Winchester. Every five years a new schedule is recommended by the Water Level Committee and voted on/approved by the IWWC and Board of Selectman

The IWWC is a key partner in the preservation and protection of Highland Lake for all to enjoy!

Be a Good Neighbor – On the 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, noise, conversations at a reasonable hour - remember sound travels!



Remember that Police enforce CT fireworks laws



Control your pets from excessive barking, respect leash laws



Clean up after your pets – it keeps bacteria out of the lake



Don't feed the geese or ducks – bread is unhealthy for them; their droppings are unhealthy for you and your property and the lake!



Use power tools and mowers 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Monday - Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Sunday and holidays (Town regulations)



Keep grass clippings, leaves, yard debris out of the water – they contribute to weed growth and will float to your neighbor's property!



Respect speed limits when driving your car – people are out for walks and bike rides

Diamonds on the Lake

by Jennifer Yolles

When my grandfather, Isadore "Red" Garbus, purchased a lake house at 440 East Wakefield Boulevard in 1945 for his family, I wonder if he knew the house would be such a special place for generations to come. My grandfather was a dentist in Torrington, and in the summers he and his wife, Edythe, and two daughters moved up to Highland Lake. The "Garbus girls" Andrea and Gail spent the summers on the lake watching soap operas, reading epic books, jumping in boats, sneaking cigarettes and spending endless summer days frolicking with their next-door neighbors, Timmy and Dixie Driscoll.

As the years passed, Andrea and Gail both married and started families of their own. Gail married Stuart Yaffee and the sisters settled in Avon next door to each other. For as long as I can remember, we all went to the lake house each weekend - the four grandchildren of Isadore and Edythe, who are Jennifer (me), my younger brother Jon, and Sara and Ben (Gail and Stuart's children). Each weekend there was a bustle of visitors coming and going to see our grandparents and get a view of or swim in the lake. The porch was busy with laughter, card games, stories and endless rocking in the white wicker chairs. My cousins and I jumped off the dock all day long - diving, swimming, floating, and screaming much to our parents' dismay. My uncle Stu always had a boat he would take us on. He had a Sunfish sailboat he taught me how to sail on. I spent so much time with him as a kid, I remember mistakenly calling him "dad" every once in a while! He took us tubing on speedboats and desperately tried to teach us to waterski with only moderate success. At lunchtime we would unpack the meticulously made sandwiches wrapped in wax paper and cut into four sections by our grandmother. We sat at the red picnic table and enjoyed endless dishes of cut-up fresh fruit for dessert. At dinner time, there was a huge buffet set up in the dining room, and any relative who happened to be visiting would be invited for dinner. We strung several large tables together on the screened-in porch and feasted, talked shared stories and smiled so hard we could feel our sun-kissed cheeks tingling all night long. When I was a young girl, I often stayed over on Saturday night with my grandparents, and my mother would come back on Sunday to spend the day. I always slept in what was my Aunt Gail's childhood bedroom. My grandmother would read me magical short stories before bed and make me a delicious breakfast of buttered toast cut into a million little pieces and coffee with mostly milk and very little actual coffee.

When I was in my twenties and living in Boston, my grandfather passed away. I would spend several weeks at the end of the summer after my job finished in Middletown living with my grandmother at the lake house. We would stay up late at the kitchen table having snacks, talking about life or playing cards or Rummikub. We would rent movies at the video store and get an early evening treat from the Dairy Queen. My grandmother was never afraid of staying at the lake for the summers on her own, which I admired, and I settled nicely in what was my Aunt Gail's childhood bedroom once more. Also, around that time my grandmother's younger sister Florence from New Jersey purchased the Driscolls' house next door. She had three

daughters and their families who visited often, and that made for some huge family gatherings and wonderful parties and memories.

My grandmother had her 90th and final birthday at the lake house. We all took a photo on the porch and enjoyed our familiar view of Highland Lake with her. Familiar family members were there to enjoy the lake and to see my grandmother, who at this point had trouble coming down the walkway and no longer made the trek down to the actual water, but she made it up the three stairs to that porch. During the party, I remember catching her close her eyes to listen to all the people around her and take a picture in her mind of her beautiful view of the lake. My mother calls the sunlight that hits the water at around 4:00 p.m. each day the "diamonds on the lake." They continue to take my breath away every afternoon I am there.

After my grandmother passed away, the lake house became a sad place to visit and was in a scary state of flux. The house had lost its heart and soul, and it was difficult for my mother and Gail to reimagine what it could be without her, and they weren't sure they even wanted to try. The sisters and Stuart also weren't sure they could maintain the home or would be able to continue the tradition of having huge feasts each weekend for endless relatives. The weekend of my wedding in Hartford, July 26, 2003, my future husband Jeff and I spent the weekend with our wedding party at the lake house. My husband and I decided my Aunt Gail's bedroom, the one I loved as a child, was the one we would settle in. We set up each room with fresh flowers, and our friends marveled at how beautiful the house was. I remember taking a quiet bath in my grandfather's claw-foot tub the day before my wedding and realizing I was starting a whole new life. When we were swimming, we couldn't help but remove the "for sale" sign for the weekend and hide it behind our tree. It was too heartbreaking for me to enjoy myself thinking the house, which had been in our family my whole life, was going to be sold. I wanted my "whole new life" to include this house. After a brush with an interested buyer, my mother, aunt and uncle pulled the house off the market. I can honestly say that was one of the best days of my life. The amazing part is the house was built in 1910, so it has been in my family for 75 years of its 110-year life span.

My son, Gus, was born June 23, 2008, and soon after we brought him to the lake house for his first weekend at Highland Lake. We have many photos of him with his hat on, being passed around to



Gus, Jen and Uncle Stuart Yaffee

his grandparents from Nebraska who were visiting their new grandson, my mother, Aunt Gail and Uncle Stu. Gus was the first of his generation, just like me.

All Because of the Lake

by Candace Marston

Upon reading the two articles several months ago by Kevin Winn and Marcia Winn, memories spewed forth. Highland Lake has been a special place in my life . . .

Jean B. and I went to school together. We knew each other since who knows when. Her family knew my family for a couple of generations. Jean was engaged to Tom Marston. Tom was funny and slightly crazy. I had met Tom's family (mother, father, grandmother and even Aunt Ruth from New Jersey) over the years. But I had not met his brother (I had the idea the brother was younger). Tom was currently the property of Uncle Sam's Navy. His ship, the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga, was cruising the Mediterranean and had been for some time.

Earlier in the year - shortly after Tom's ship left port, Jean and I had joined a group of over 200 people and went on our own trip that included Las Vegas, San Francisco and Hawaii. I was going to go no matter what, but Jean had to be convinced.

Summer approached. Jean's Mom (Mrs. B) owned a small cottage First Bay on East Wakefield (not "on the lake" - actually, one could not even see the lake). She invited a large group of people for a picnic Flag Day weekend. The day was rainy. This group included Tom's parents, his brother Dave and, of course - me. It turned out Dave was the older brother. Dave was quiet and, I guess, a bit shy . . . not at all like Tom. They told Dave that I would be there but did not tell me that he would be at the picnic. So, I brought a *date*.

I guess payback came sometime down the road. I had some wonderful pictures of our trip. Dave's mom invited Jean and me to dinner, as she wanted to see the photos. Dave was supposed to come too, but he never showed up. He forgot! Dave's Mom was upset, but it did not bother me. I think all along everyone, but me, saw us together as a couple. *Uhm!*

Before and after the picnic, I had been going to Mrs. B's cottage often. Dave had a boat which he kept at Bob and Barbara K.'s place on Shore Drive across from Bruno's.

On 4th of July weekend, Dave saw my car while driving by and stopped. I asked him for directions to go to the fireworks. The directions were wrong, and Jean and I got to the fireworks after they had begun. The next time I saw Dave at Bob and Barbara's place, I fussed at him. His response: "Can you waterski?" I had not been for a few years, but answered "yes." Well, over the next several Sundays, he took me skiing (with Jean riding shotgun some of the time). William W. Winn, Jr. (known to his family as Bick) was loosely related to Bob and Barbara. So, from time to time, he and his wife would be at Bob and Barbara's. He often rode shotgun and skied with us . . . thus my introduction to the Winn family.

I never considered these skiing days any sort of date. Dave and everyone else probably did. But after Dave had taken me skiing several times, he said, "Doin' anything Friday night?" This I considered our first date. We went to the movies and saw True Grit with John Wayne and Kim Darby.

It was six or seven weeks before we had a second date. This "romance" moved *very slowly*. Our "schedules" worked against us. Dave had been in the Army and was considered Inactive Reserve. Well, the Army decided that he was going to be Active Reserve. They sent him to Camp Drumm in New York for a time (two or three weeks). It was getting close to the time they could utilize him in that capacity, as his "time would up." When he came back, I was gone on a trip with Jean and Mrs. B.

Dave's folks rented two different cottages at the lake during a couple weeks in the next two summers. They invited family from New Jersey to stay with them for a few days during that time. Now I knew even more of his cousins.

A little more waterskiing and fall was upon us. Soon, the snow fell. Dave likes his toys. He had a snowmobile. And, he had friends with lots of acreage abutting a state forest. We joined them often. New Year's Eve was a must! Sometimes we went to Otis Reservoir with a group. Tom and Bill Winn, many times, were part of this group. (Tom and Bill had both completed their Navy hitches and were civilians again.) There were times I was the only female amongst this motley crew. I often tell people that our "courtin'" was mostly done from water skis and a snowmobile, with a few movies and dinners thrown in for good measure.

When Tom and Jean got married, I was in their wedding. I caught the bouquet. I heard whispers, "that's the girl David is going with." Ain't gonna happen. *Ha!* Two years later Tom and Jean were in our wedding.



Joshua Steele Kelly is the New Town Manager

After completion of an extensive recruitment search, the Town of Winchester Board of Selectmen announced the selection of Joshua Steele Kelly, MPA, as Winchester's next Town Manager.

Mr. Kelly currently serves as the Town Administrator and Bolton Lakes Sewer Administrator for the Town of Bolton. He is on the Board of Directors for the Connecticut Council of Small Towns.

Mr. Kelly has a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Wheaton College and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Connecticut. He is also certified as a Municipal Official through the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and has a Graduate Certificate in Public Financial Management from the University of Connecticut.

His past work in local government also includes serving on the Inland Wetland and Conservation Commission, a Board Representative in Waterford, and a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

His tentative start date of full-time work is in early April to honor the Town of Bolton's 60-day contract clause. Our current Town manager, Bob Geiger, has graciously agreed to work with Mr. Kelly during the transition.

Thank You!

Thank you to these individuals for contributing a total of \$7,650. Your generous support enables HLWA to do the important work of protecting our beautiful lake.

Please consider a donation of \$100 or more to HLWA before December 31, 2021 to be included in the listing for 2021 donors.

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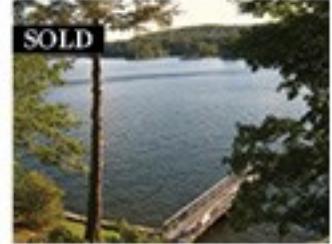
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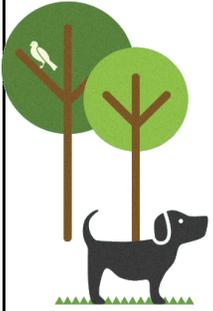
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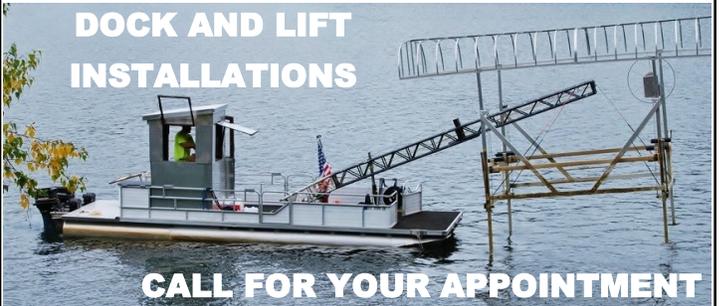
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