

The Lake Reporter



OCTOBER 2012 • VOLUME 10 • ISSUE 4

Update on Kershaw Beach Cleanup Plan

By Kevin Olvany, Watershed Program Manager

We have previously updated the public in July that we worked with Dr. John Dr. John Hassett; a well respected Professor of Chemistry at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, to determine what the tar like substance was at Kershaw Beach. Based on the chemical makeup of the material, the documented history of filling at Kershaw Park during the 1920s and early 1930s, and the degraded nature of the material, Dr. Hassett has estimated that the material is probably a very old used crankcase oil or lubricating oil from vehicles of this vintage. Over the approximately 80 years this material has been buried, it has degraded into a more tar like substance. As importantly, Dr. Hassett has also stated that the samples were definitely not creosote, coal tar or PCBs.

Clean up plan:

The City, DEC, Dept of Health and Watershed Program are working together to finalize a clean-up plan for Kershaw

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KERSHAW BEACH CLEAN UP TO BEGIN

Clean up of the oily substance that surfaced at Kershaw Park in July and resulted in the closing of the beach is slated to begin in mid-October and be finished by mid-November. The effected area will be sequestered from the lake by a heavy curtain, pumped dry, and then excavated and vacuumed to capture the oily substance (probably waste motor oil from the 30s). The City of Canandaigua and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation will share the cost of the clean up. A successful clean up operation should result in Kershaw beach's re-opening on Memorial Day, 2013.

Annual Meeting Report

Annual Meeting of the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association
Steamboat Landing Restaurant
August 18, 2012

President Brenda Keith convened the meeting at 9 am, welcoming the members and enumerating accomplishments of the organization during the past year. These included improvements to the website, and membership database; creation of a Facebook page; educational programs in the watershed schools, participation in deliberations of Docks and Moorings and steep slope regulations and sponsorship of a seminar on horizontal gas well drilling. Participation in the Finger Lakes Regional Watersheds Association and the secchi disk "Take a Dip" program have been maintained.

Dr Hilary Lambert, Cayuga lake Watershed Steward, spoke about efforts to eradicate hydrilla found in the Cayuga Lake inlet. Herbicide treatment has been necessary and vigilance will be maintained to keep this invasive plant from spreading throughout the Finger Lakes and Great Lakes.

Fran Reese, soil scientist, presented information about steep slopes, focusing on sedimentation created by development and disturbance on such slopes. 27% of watershed land features slopes greater than 25%. Vegetation removal and

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From the Chair

By Jack Dailey

We are commencing our fourth year following the consolidation of our two lake organizations into the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association. Much has been accomplished as highlighted by Brenda Keith, our immediate past president, in the last newsletter (archived on our website). Those accomplishments were the direct result of goals established and applied when our strategic plan was generated at the inception of the organization.

Over the past several months the board has been updating the strategic plan to insure that it is reflective of the current/future issues and opportunities affecting the watershed. Although our strategic plan was adopted only three years ago, much has changed. Are we geared to meet those changes?

We found that our general initiatives continued to be pointed in the right direction. However, a number of items needed to be updated to reflect the explosion of the internet, the advent of hydrofracking in our watershed, and the ever-continuing pressure to develop the land and slopes adjacent to the lake and in the watershed.

The review of our initiatives leads us to the following conclusions:

Education

We maintain a comprehensive youth education program with

elementary school children in the Canandaigua, Naples and Marcus Whitman School Districts. Additionally, we maintain strong ties with Finger Lakes Community College including a student representative on our board. However, we believe there is a need to better educate our local leaders and residents about actions that can affect the lake. Steep slopes, green development alternatives and the value of undeveloped land in the watershed are topics local officials deal with routinely. Our plan is to introduce programs to town, zoning and planning boards aimed at helping members understand possible consequences of their actions more fully.

Expansion

There is a need to bring more lakeside and watershed residents into our organization. Currently, approximately 700 family units are members. A total of 1700 dwellings are on the lake including 400 units at Bristol Harbor. In addition to our normal Fall solicitation of existing members, plans call for a membership drive early next year aimed at those who are currently non-members. We are also broadening efforts to meet with individual neighborhood associations to solicit their support.

You may have noticed that our membership levels have changed, for the first time in over a decade. The major revision was to increase the base level from \$35 to \$45. We are a volunteer organization and those efforts are wonderful and much appreciated, but many of the tasks we take on (such as acquisition of watershed property and legal defense) are costly. We hope that you understand that your membership in CLWA is a good investment in maintaining the value of your property on the lake.

Communications

We are working to insure our membership data base is

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CANANDAIGUA LAKE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jack Dailey	President
Brenda Keith	Past-President
Wade Sarkis	Treasurer
Thomas Harradine	Secretary
Stephen Lewandowski	Consultant
Edith Davey	Technical Assistant
Carol Benner, Bob Brancato, Ted Carman, Marty DeVinney, John Fayko, Rob Gray, Katrina Busch, Nadia Harvieux, Don Sheive, Rod Smith, Tom Zimmerman	

Watershed Education Program: Nadia Harvieux, Sharon Radak

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Our Thanks!

**OUR THANKS TO
CANANDAIGUA NATIONAL BANK
& TRUST CO.
FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF OUR
ANNUAL MEETING.**

Letter to the Editor

Our Eco-Legacy

A hundred years ago, or so, Canandaigua city leaders moved forward with their plan to create more useable shoreline at the north end of Canandaigua Lake. The potential economic and public use benefits were worth the expenditure. Creating the new land brought immediate benefits, but the substance of the fill was poorly controlled.

The long term costs of filling that land (now Kershaw Park) are now coming to the surface, so to speak, in the form of an ecological legacy of the original project. Kershaw Park was closed most of the summer due to contaminants from the century old fill material leaching into the Lake. Unintended consequences can appear generations later in a sensitive watershed like ours.

We now face a strong push from the natural gas industry to tap the reservoir trapped beneath us in the Marcellus Shale. Their claims of regional economic benefits and U.S. energy independence are, initially, attractive. However, as our neighbors in Pennsylvania can attest, the benefits are temporary and not widely distributed. While U.S. energy independence is vital for our future, we currently do not have the infrastructure or demand for natural gas use at that level. For example, the big auto makers are not promoting natural gas powered engines, nor are there any "natural gas stations" available. The price of natural gas hovers near historic lows as supply far exceeds demand. The gas companies are shipping excess supply overseas where high prices command big profits.

While the utility of high volume hydraulic fracturing is measurable, the consequences for subsequent generations are not. The eco-legacy of hydro-fracking is a frightening unknown. Reports of environmental damage from fracking continue to mount and gas companies deny responsibility.

Preserving the pristine nature of our Finger Lakes provides hundreds of millions of dollars annually in economic benefits and will provide much greater returns in the long run than exploiting it now. Protecting our region will be exponentially less costly than dealing with the legacy issues of hydro-fracking. Newer, smarter technologies for gas extraction will present themselves in the future.

We must not let exaggerated promises cloud our good judgment. There is no hurry to frack in our region and send gas overseas. What do we want our eco-legacy to be one hundred years from now?

Wade Sarkis
Canandaigua

Kershaw Beach Cleanup

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Beach. The clean up approach will be to use a temporary dam structure to keep the lake water out of the project area (pumps will be used as needed) and dig out any remaining contaminated soil or soil that has fill material (bricks metal etc...that is not considered contaminated but should still be removed). The project area will include the entire swim area out to approximately 60 feet from shore and a buffer zone on the east and west end of the beach area. Excavation will occur down to non-contaminated native soil to make sure all contaminated soil and other fill material have been removed from the swim area. The contaminated soil depth is approximately 3-4 feet at shore based on the previous excavation work in July and should decrease as we move further into the lake. However, the exact extent of the excavation and final remediation will be based on what is encountered during the project. The DEC will be taking the lead on this project and will utilize the Spills fund to pay for the removal of the contaminated soil. The City will be responsible for paying for the removal of the non-contaminated fill material. The project should begin in mid-October.

Based on our current level of knowledge, it is inconceivable as to why this material was dumped at the water's edge. During the 1920s and 1930s this practice was routine and there are sites across the state and country that are dealing with similar issues. The cause and effect of environmental contamination was not well understood in the early 1900s.

CLWA

From the Chair

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accurate and up-to-date. Additionally, we will have the ability to notify members via email (if member opts in) of local governmental actions in their town or area. Such data will allow our members to respond to issues as they occur in real time rather than be "surprised" as the bulldozers pull up next door. We are also making extra efforts to insure the website is updated with current news and information about the lake that our members may find of interest. This is particularly important for those who may be seasonal residents or out of town for extended periods.

As you can see, busy times and important issues are ahead for CLWA. I can assure you that your board remains committed to the preservation, protection and promotion of the lake and its watershed. Your questions and suggestions are most welcome. Please communicate your inputs to any board member (see the website for email addresses) or call the office at (585) 394-5030. CLWA

Annual Meeting Report

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excavation at the toe of a slope are among several issues connected with development on steep slopes that threaten water quality and municipal infrastructure.

Dr. Lambert updated the members on the current status of horizontal gas well drilling proposal within New York. Currently, the courts have upheld the power of local zoning laws to restrict drilling within municipalities. The preponderance of the population of the state favors moratoria or outright bans on hydro fracturing at this time. Some Southern Tier counties with lesser populations have favored drilling.

Kevin Olvany, Canandaigua Lake Watershed manager discussed updates to the Canandaigua Lake Watershed management Plan, and briefly addressed concerns with contaminants found at Kershaw Park in the City of Canandaigua that have occasioned closing of the bathing beach.

Frank Kerwin presented the Treasurer's report, which was approved unanimously by those present.

John Fayko presented the slate of officers chosen by the nominating committee. No nominations were offered from the floor. Secretary Tom Harradine cast a single ballot for the

following officers for the 2012-2013 year:

President: Jack Dailey

Treasurer: Wade Sarkis

Secretary: Tom Harradine

Board Members:

Rod Smith

Nadia Harvieux

Robert Gray

Carol Benner

Don Sheive

Jack Daily outlined plans and goals for 2013. These included collaboration with municipalities and the Finger Lakes Land Trust, developing marketing, educational programs and financial planning to support extended activities.

Steve Lewandowski presented Stewardship awards to Carol Benner for her work with the Take A Dip program and to Chris Luley who gave a conservation easement to the Finger Lakes Land Trust for property in the Town of South Bristol connecting two other tracts of protected land. The Wyffels Family was given the Rohrer Stewardship Award for protection of their farm for agriculture and wildlife with a Purchase of Development Rights through the Town of Canandaigua and State of New York. The process of securing the PDR was lengthy and required much patience to accomplish.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30am. **CLWA**

Special CLWA Awards in 2012

The Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association presents awards every year at its annual meeting. The awards fall into four main areas of achievement: those providing a high level of service to the watershed community, those whose volunteer efforts to the watershed are extraordinary, those excelling in watershed education, and those who have made major gifts of land and other resources to protect the watershed and lake.

Watershed Stewardship Award-

Christopher Luley

Chris Luley is a modest guy. He says, "Oh, it's not such a big deal."

We say, "It is a first step and a big deal, and first steps always appear small against all the other possibilities and all the land in the Finger Lakes region." You see, Chris Luley has given a conservation easement on his 22 acres in South Bristol (and the Canandaigua Lake watershed) to the Finger Lakes Land Trust. That means he can maintain his house, work his garden and even, with a good plan, harvest some trees from his forest, but further development of the parcel won't happen.

Chris Luley is concerned that people don't understand what he has done, let alone why he did it. He has to explain over and over what a conservation easement is and why his donation of an easement to the Land Trust doesn't mean he's given away his land. Because none of us know what the future holds, all he knows, Chris says, is "that this piece of land will stay the way it is" because of his donation.

The donation cost him a lot of paperwork and a survey. He is aware of the land rights he has chosen to give up. He thinks that we undervalue land in the Finger Lakes, as compared to other parts of the country. But he uses the word "appropriate" when he speaks of the future of his land protected by a

Special CLWA Awards in 2012

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conservation easement. He thanks Land Trust Regional representative Betsy Landre for her assistance with the paperwork.

Chris Luley is highly educated, with Bachelors and Masters degrees from SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse and a PhD. in Plant Pathology from Iowa State University. He was born in Saugerties, NY near where, he says, the Esopus enters the Hudson.

The protection of Chris Luley's 22 acres is appropriate because it occurs in an area of steep slopes, with several streams on the property and developing access roads and house lots would damage the property, the streams and the

lake. Luley has looked at the situation of his land and decided to take the legal step of donating a conservation easement to the land trust, to keep things just that way. He likes them for their usefulness and beauty and imagines them being discovered in the future to the delight of the discoverers. He repeats the maxim of Aldo Leopold that we belong more to the land than the land belongs to us.

The Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association honors Chris Luley for his appropriate decision to protect the natural beauty of his property and for the value of such protection to Canandaigua Lake.

*

Watershed Stewardship Award- Carol Benner

Carol Benner says that she and her husband Don decided to relocate to Canandaigua in 2006 because of Canandaigua Lake. After more than thirty years in Pennsylvania, Canandaigua Lake called to this Phelps native.

After working as a Computer Systems Analyst and project manager for Lehigh Valley businesses such as Lucent and Aetna Insurance, she has had no problem finding both paid work and volunteer work in our area. She volunteers at Sonnenburg and for A.F.S.

She has a B. S. from SUNY Oswego and a M. S. from Clayton College.

Carol Benner is adamant about the value of Canandaigua Lake for providing quality of life to local residents. She lived on Lake Harmony in the Poconos and was active in a group seeking its restoration. She emphasizes that the aesthetic value of the lake allows local residents to "unwind" from other cares and concerns.

She says, "I love Canandaigua Lake. We boat, swim, admire the lake and enjoy having the grandchildren at the cottage."

Her own preference is to "work behind the scenes" as a support person, and she has taken on the coordination of CLWA's expanding Take-a-Dip program. We appreciate and honor her organizational skills that allow her to record much data, keep the program running and in-touch, and make reports.

By her own estimate, she feels that "Canandaigua Lake water quality seems very good, judging by clarity and taste." She understands that protecting that water quality requires educating local residents and may require changing their

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CLWA Award Winners

2012

*Gary and Joan Wyffels & Family
Chris Luley
Carol Benner*

2011

*Constellation Brands
Nadia Harvieux*

2010

Maureen Russell and Kathleen Infantino

2009

*Tamberlane Farms- the Martin Family
James Fralick*

2008

*Robert "Bud" Frame
Lisk Corporation
Irwin and Mary Hicks and Family
Ken Naples*

2007

*William Wright, Ontario County DPW
Richard Calabrese, Town of Gorham
James Hecker, Town of Canandaigua*

2006

*Mark Adams
Bob Stryker*

Special CLWA Awards in 2012

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behavior in some cases.

She is also aware that the excellent quality of Canandaigua Lake water has a major financial impact on the economic development of the area. But, she reminds us, "quality of life is the lake's major impact, and our job is to preserve that high quality of life for future generations to enjoy."

CLWA honors Carol Benner for using her organizational skills and applying her concern to the future conditions of Canandaigua Lake. During her tenure with Take-a-Dip, the program has consistently expanded and plays an important role in monitoring the condition of the lake.

Rohrer Family Stewardship Award*- Wyffels Family

The Wyffels Family has farmed in the south end of the Town of Canandaigua for more than hundred years. At one time, Gary Wyffels says, "Uncles, cousins, grandfather farmed most of the land up and down Middle Cheshire Road. We farmed the whole road."

In 2005, Albert Wyffels and his son Gary decided to keep one of the family farms in agricultural use in the future. They began what became a long process to sell the development rights on 128 acres to the State of New York's Farmland Protection Program.

Albert died in 2010, but Gary continued the process. Now that the land is officially protected, Gary's wife Joan says, "I only wish that his father was here to see this." She reminds Gary how happy his father was to think of his land being preserved both for agricultural use and for the wildlife.

The protection process was a long and arduous one, with much paperwork and many ups and downs. Joan Wyffels says, "I'm so happy it finally went through. It's a big relief." The Wyffels point out several people who helped the process along: Supervisor Sam Casella, County Planner Maria Rudzinski, and Town Planner Tim Jensen.


Gary Wyffels runs cattle on the home farm and cuts hay from his own land and rented acres, totaling 300 acres. Gary and Joan sell the steers (male calves) butchered and frozen as "natural, grass-fed beef." They say only paperwork keeps them from marketing it as "organic." They sell all they have and could sell more from word-of-mouth direct sales.

Gary and Joan are thinking of the future and may take special steps to pass the land down to their daughters, as they did for the Farmland Protection Program. They say it's hard to predict the future, but Christmas trees, maple syrup and goats, along with beef, may play a part in the future Wyffels Farm.

Gary says, "We were approached by several people to sell, but I just couldn't." Gary and Joan say that friends urged them to sell and move, but "they didn't understand that this is our home and how important to us our home and family is." They chose the Farmland Protection Program as a way to stay put.

The Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association honors the Wyffels Family for its excellent farming practices, its decision to remain a part of the Canandaigua community, and its vision to keep its land open, natural and contributing to the overall health and beauty of Canandaigua Lake.

*The Rohrer Family Stewardship Award was established in the summer of 2008 to honor Henry "Bud" Rohrer whose contribution to CLWA forms the basis of an endowment fund, the Lake Legacy Fund, to benefit CLWA, Canandaigua Lake and its watershed. Contributions to this special endowment are welcome and can be made by contacting the CLWA Treasurer Wade Sarkis.

To all who have assisted and participated in these accomplishments, We offer our thanks. It is important that CLWA continue to fulfill its mission: "To preserve and protect our lake and surrounding watershed for future generations by supporting scientific research, sound public policy and community education." 



Watershed Education Program • Fall 2012 Water Monitoring Update

By Nadia Harvieux

The Watershed Education Program kicked off the 6th year of outreach programs with a very busy fall. The Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District's 'Conservation Field Days' kicked off the year with two days of outdoor education opportunities for local middle school students. CLWA educator, Sharon Radak, taught kids about the importance of aquatic insects in fresh water ecosystems and Steve Lewandowski presented information on edible (and non-edible!) native plants found in Western New York.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten students at Naples Little Bunch preschool got an up-close look at aquatic insects from Naples Creek, practicing the proper technique for using hand-held magnifiers and learning about the life cycle of macroinvertebrates.



Naples Universal Pre-Kindergarten students learn about aquatic insects

The Canandaigua Cadet Girl Scout Troop 1216 worked with CLWA on a second storm drain marking project at the end of September. In the spring, the girls had placed storm drain markers along the walking trail next to Middle Cheshire Road and into the Fox Ridge neighborhood. We returned to Fox Ridge to finish marking storm drains in the lower part of the neighborhood and then worked through the near-by Waterford Point neighborhood. In total, the girls placed over 200 storm drain markers in the Town of Canandaigua! The storm drain marking project is funded through a Blue Water grant awarded to CLWA by the Royal Bank of Canada. **CLWA**



Canandaigua Cadet Girl Scout Troop 1216 having fun while completing an important community service project



Dry, Dry, Dry

October 3, 2012

The Canandaigua Lake watershed is in the midst of a long dry spell. You can tell because the lake level is down more than a foot from summer levels despite the main gates at the north end (behind Wegmans) being closed for months.

There are several draws on the lake. One is the Feeder Canal that was constructed in the early 20th century to carry away the effluent from Canandaigua's sewage treatment plant. In order to effectively dilute that effluent, the NYS DEC requires that a flow of 35 cubic feet per second be maintained in that channel (it's the western channel that crosses Routes 5 & 20 between the old Wegman's Plaza and Parkway Plaza). Flows through this channel not only dilute the effluent from the Canandaigua Sewage Treatment Plant but others plants down stream such as the Manchester plant

The second draw on the lake is drinking water, which is taken by the City of Canandaigua, Town of Gorham, Village of Rushville, Village of Palmyra and Village of Newark. Through a regional distribution system, water treated by these purveyors also goes to the Towns of Canandaigua, Victor, Farmington, Arcadia, Manchester, Hopewell and others. Though they are permitted to take up to 15.5 million gallons per day from the lake, their actual "take" seldom exceeds half that, so drinking water's impact on lake levels is about 11 inches per year.

Canandaigua Lake's current low level is largely a matter of evaporation. Evaporative losses from the lake especially during the summer months can be huge, totaling 7.2 billion gallons per year and affecting lake levels by two and half feet.

Heat drives evaporation. Lack of ice cover in the winter will increase evaporative losses from the lake. About 75% of evaporation happens in the summer months. The month of July was one of the hottest in history.

We have had sporadic and highly localized rainfalls on the Canandaigua Lake watershed this summer, which have caused some minor, local runoff. However, these small events must be seen against the perspective of last winter's lack of ice and snow. Ice and snow in the wooded lands of the watershed tend to melt slowly, to percolate into the soil and add to the flows of groundwater headed toward local streams and the lake. Last winter, very little water entered the groundwater flows, so the watershed is very dry, deep down where it's usually wet. Even the watershed's largest streams such as Naples Creek and the West River have been at extremely low levels for months.

Natural conditions such as lack of rainfall and evaporation play a major role in determining Canandaigua Lake's level. Our use of Canandaigua Lake for drinking water and dilution of waste also play a role in the current low levels. **CLWA**

Regional Drought Impacts Canandaigua Lake Water Levels

The extended drought in our region has resulted in Canandaigua Lake water levels dropping to winter lows by late September. The current lake level is 687.1 feet, about 0.85 feet below average for this time of year. Many people have asked whether the City of Canandaigua is artificially lowering the lake level in anticipation of the Kershaw Beach clean up project; the answer is no. Watershed Manager, Kevin Olvany, states "The City has been releasing the minimum flow required through the feeder canal since late June. Mother Nature is in control of lake level during these extended droughts. The USGS gage on the outlet can verify that the City has been releasing the minimum flows."

Although water levels have been low, most local residents have probably not noticed a change in water availability when turning on the tap. "We are fortunate to live in a region with so much access to freshwater- Canandaigua Lake is a subwatershed of the Great Lakes basin, which contains 21% of all surface freshwater on Earth," CLWA educator, Nadia Harvieux shares. At the same time, it is important to conserve this vital natural resource, both during times of drought and when water levels return to normal. Kevin Olvany states: "If the lake level drops to 1 foot below the guide curve, the City will begin to institute water conservation measures to try and reduce the drop in lake level to protect the other uses of the lake. Even though water withdrawal has a small influence on lake level- every little bit helps during a drought". **CLWA**

2012 Recreational Season (May - September) • Ontario County Sheriff's Report with thanks to Lt. William Gallagher, Jr. for information

During the months of May through August 2012, members of the OCSO Marine & Recreation Division (MRV) reported the following activity:

- Provided patrols on Canandaigua Lake, including the Ring of Fire
- Provided boater safety class in Geneva for 24 students
- Provided safety talk for school children and Boy Scouts at Onanda Park
- Removed limbs, swimming buoys and debris from Canandaigua lake
- Answered 228 navigation complaints
- Inspected a total of 445 vessels
- Inspected ten trailers at launch sites
- Issued 148 warnings: no life jackets, bow riding, improper lights, speed too close to shore and in channel, no lights
- Issued 3 HIN # for boats
- Responded to a drowning on Canandaigua Lake in the Town of Gorham
- Issued 8 tickets: Canandaigua Lake-Boating While Intoxicated, Improper flag for scuba diver, failure to display numbers on boat. Canadice Lake-Operating a Personal Water Craft without Boater Safety Certificate, No Valid Registration
- Aided 36 disabled boats, towed 14 boats to safety
- Assisted EMS four times
- Responded to 8 reported boat fires
- Responded to 5 after hour call outs
- Assisted with 4 fireworks displays
- Assisted with patrols (ATV & Gator) at CMAC concerts
- Assisted with the Trout Derby
- Responded to an overturned canoe and overturned sailboat, assisted 2 victims each
- Recovered one sailboat
- Responded to a reported drowning (unfounded) at Bristol Harbor
- Responded to a call for a death in a wooded area off CR # 33 with ATV & Gator for search & recovery
- Trained with sheriff's scuba team
- Reported 2 boating accidents on Canandaigua Lake: Jet Ski struck a wall resulting in fatal injuries to one and serious injury to another, and a scuba diver was struck by a passing boat. Diver suffered injuries, no diving flag was present.
- Assisted with 2 swim events on Canandaigua Lake
- Routine service on boats, trucks, and other equipment and Onanda Park office space.
- Provided routine patrols of the following: Vine Valley, Onanda Park, Sandy Bottom Park, City Pier, Kershaw Park, Deep Run Park, Ontario Beach Park, Grimes Glen, State Launches, Butler Road Park, Cheshire Park, 4H Camp, Harriet Hollister Park, Canadice Lake, Hemlock Lake, Boughton Park, Levi Corser Park, Ontario County Park, Crystal Beach, Holiday Harbor, Bristol Harbor & Woodville. **CLWA**



One Family's History At the Lake

By Yvonne Chavez

John Higinbotham's dad began summer renting at Fisher's Point in the late 1800s. When his parents married, yearly renting continued, this time at Hawkins' Cottage near Goodings Point, just south of Sunaqua. These were simpler and more practical times. The short rental period did not warrant taking a crib so John Higinbotham's first cottage bed was a dresser drawer with a pillow mattress. So began the love affair in a little boy's heart, strengthened by each succeeding year.

The growing family found their 'dream cottage' and on August 5, 1926 Alson ("Ally") Fisher deeded the property to the Rev. Robert G. and Dorothea S. Higinbotham. The 100 foot lot was purchased for the paltry sum of \$1500 (at the time "A Model T went for approximately \$490," John said).

Though the cottage was two stories high, additions were needed as the family expanded with 6 children. With the assistance of a good carpenter, Rev. Higinbotham and the older boys began the major renovations and additions - a wing with a new kitchen and bedroom directly above it; a sleeping porch and downstairs front porch extending the width of the main part of the house and overlooking the lake.

In 1932, work on a chimney was overseen by Jim Sinclair, a Caledonia farmer/mason. Older boys were sent to scrounge area gullies and ravines in search of 'perfect' stones. Bigger rocks required a stick of dynamite that, once blown open, showed mineral and mica.

When it came time to paint, John Higinbotham was 9 years old and always 'in the way.' Wiser older brothers voiced their need for a 'sky hook' that would enable the scaffold to a higher location. Little John was only too glad to help and was sent to see Barry Monks, the Rushville Pump House stoker (located at the beginning of the dirt lane). Astute Barry, realizing the reason of the visit, said he didn't have one, but perhaps Ally Fisher had one. Ally lived in the farmhouse on top of the steep hill that led up to Townline Road, a good mile's steep climb. No, Ally didn't have one either. The errand had taken about two hours.

Once construction was completed, Rev. Higinbotham, (ever mindful of local history, lore and Indian tongue) decided the cottage needed a name and chose the Seneca word Nundawaona, meaning people (waona) of the big hill (nunda).

More land was purchased to house John's grandmother and aunt. Rev. Higinbotham had seen a large and older Victorian house being taken down on East Ave. in Rochester. After

talking to contractors, he was given some of the doors, windows and a staircase. An original 'recycled' home was built!

Toilet facilities, in deference to the lake, were placed in back of the cottage. Mail order catalogues were never used - they took longer to decompose than the toilet paper they bought by the case from the Mumford mill.

Younger children were assigned the task of carrying water from the lake. Galvanized buckets were used at the lakeshore for dishwashing, cooking, etc. The white enamel pail was always used for drinking water and required a boat's row further from the shore. The pail had a communal cup next to it. If the city folk didn't like this cup, they went to the shelf to get their own.

Water transport was by personal rowboats or steamboats that carried produce and a limited amount of passengers between the City Pier and Woodville. John recalled a great ride at age 9, he thought probably on the Eastern Star, from Fisher's Point to Black Point and back.

Once chores were done, the hours of fun began. Great hiking trails - Bare Hill and one path in particular was used by 4 generations. In Fisher Gully there was an area where gas bubbled out of the ground. Coffee and tomato cans with holes nailed in the bottom were inverted over the bubbling area and lit up, much like a gas stove. Beach bonfires required a rowboat ride south to areas known to collect driftwood. Beach fires encouraged song and on quiet nights the young adults would sing 'rounds' with the YWCA camp (now Camp Onanda), located straight across the lake. Roasting marshmallows complemented songs sung in harmony. Overturned rowboats became floating rafts to jump from. Docks provided room enough for races to get in the lake first.

Life on the lake was idyllic but there were moments when life's hard realities intruded. On July 28, 1937, while the kids were playing in the lake, they received news their father had died just after being released and exiting Strong Hospital parking lot. Word was received at the cottage that John's brother, Philip, had been killed in action on Aug. 5, 1944. He had just completed a family visit at the lake before being deployed.

In spite of these earth-shattering moments John would tell me many times that "The Cottage was a part of my whole life." Although he never got over his brother's or father's death, the lake brought many warm memories. Instant

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One Family's History At the Lake

By Yvonne Chavez

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comfort was his when the lake reflected the blue of the sky, when the lake was still and the water whispered on the shore. Often on trips to the cottage or back, he'd stop at the top of the hill on Co. Rd. 11 and Rt. 364. This was 'his spot' and a favorite place to look out over the lake. From this spot we watched Donald Campbell's jet-powered speedboat, "Bluebird" try to break the world's speed record.

The lake brought mellowness, even when there was concern about bank erosion at the smaller cottage, and it was decided by John and his brothers (William and Robert) to bring railroad ties in to build a retaining wall. The driveways were too steep to bring the ties down so they were dumped at the dirt lane. The children, with younger muscles, were instructed to drag them down to the hill overlooking the lake (I don't recall we had another option!). Once completed it was named after his brother William (the driving force and engineer) and called "Willie's Wailing Wall." Its construction provided many memories and laughs through the years.

Eventually the family cottage was sold when taxes became prohibitive. When we left for the last time the lake was still, lapping softly on the shore. There were distant sounds from birds and a duck or two, bidding a sad farewell. What was in John's mind when he said to me, "The lake gets in your blood.?"

A contribution has been made to CLWA in memory of John Higinbotham (1923-2003). **CLWA**

Middlesex Steep Slope Law Update

The Town of Middlesex's proposed Steep Slope Law is proceeding through the process of review and revision. The Yates County Planning Board recently recommended that the law's appeal process be reviewed and clarified, that an increased effort be made to notify residents about the proposed law, and that the Town hold a public meeting at which an expert in steep slope development present information pertinent to the topic.

Middlesex has just mailed a newsletter to its residents informing them of the proposed law, the issues involved, and the availability of maps of the Town detailing its steep slope areas and encouraging them to comment on the proposed law and to attend the public meetings that the Town Board will hold.

The Town Planning Board has contacted the NYS Department of State for assistance in formulating a valid, clearly stated appeal process for the law. There will also be available at the Town Hall copies of existing Town and County development guidelines and prepared development studies containing recommendations for steep slope development which the Middlesex Planning Board considered in the proposed law's regulations, including materials developed by the Canandaigua Lake Watershed agencies and organizations.

In addition, the Town Planning Board has contacted The Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association and Watershed Council requesting assistance in preparing an educational steep slope development presentation as requested by the Yates County Planning Board. It is hoped that Middlesex will be able utilize the presenter and the information on this topic that was well received at CLWA's annual meeting in August.

Every development plan and study that the Town Planning Board reviewed for the preparation of the proposed Steep Slope Law recommends increased oversight and regulation of development on steep slopes. This necessarily requires a complex law and this complexity has required many revisions as gaps and inconsistencies have become apparent. This effort has taken years of work and has elicited many comments and much feedback. The Town of Middlesex will take as much time as is necessary to develop a fair and effective law. The Town continues to encourage comments from interested residents and their participation in the upcoming public discussion of the proposed law.

A copy of the proposed law can be found on the Town of Middlesex website (www.middlesexny.org).

Comments and questions can be sent to Town of Middlesex, 1216 Main St, Box 147, Middlesex, NY 14507, phone 585 554 3607 or email XXX@middlesex.org. **CLWA**

Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association
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Be a Friend of Canandaigua Lake

The Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association has a strong base of supporters and a significant history of Protecting Canandaigua Lake and its watershed. Because of numerous and complex challenges, we need YOUR support.

Please return this form (or a copy of it) with your contribution. Remember your contribution is TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

Your 2013 membership benefits include a quarterly newsletter, committee participation and reports, special alerts on crucial issues, invitations to events and the Annual Meeting, but most important, you will know you're doing YOUR PART to protect this precious resource.

Yes, please process my 2013 tax-deductible membership in the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association.

- \$45 **Guardian**
- \$60 **Partners**
- \$100 **Lake Leader** (your gift at this level helps to pay for water testing)
- \$250 **Watershed Steward** (says it all)
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Name _____

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