

MELODY LAKE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE MELODY LAKE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

MARCH 2016

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

2015 was a good year for most of us. The weather was dry and warm, which gave most of us the opportunity to enjoy our place here at Melody Lake a little bit more. As you walked around the lake it was good to see some taking advantage of this weather to clean up.....and to fix up their property while still taking time to enjoy what our beautiful lake has to offer.

Winter is here. It arrived a little later than usual but now seems to be turning out to be typical for upstate NY. While winter is a time for many to slow down and unwind, the Association Board of Directors are staying busy looking ahead to the summer of 2016.

This newsletter will be shorter than usual but will continue to review what happened last summer, what is happening right now, and what we are hoping for in 2016.

Our one wish for 2016 is to have a better attendance at association meetings. We assure you that the meetings are courteous, informative and productive. We have also been very successful at keeping them to 1 hour (or less) unless there is something important enough to continue longer. We all have a large investment in the property we own here and it should be worth 1 hour a month to give your input. There seems to be a few members that don't have the time to attend the meetings but seem to think the officers should be able to be contacted any time, day or night, throughout the year to hear their complaints or suggestions. We are here to attempt to respond to and resolve any emergency situation, but anything else should be brought up at a meeting so all attendees can have their say towards a solution. The meeting dates, along with other real important stuff can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

Finally, we ask you to support the sponsors of this newsletter. Many of them have supported us for several years and some are even association members. Please tell them you saw their ad in the *Melody Lake News* and thank them for their support.

*****HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE ASSOCIATION FAMILY PICNIC*****

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Melody Lake Association was formed on June 22nd, 1964 to: 1) Aid and promote the preservation and protection of Melody Lake and the land around it. 2) To aid in the protection of fish and game in such lake and area. 3) To promote and cultivate social relationships among its members; and 4) To undertake programs and activities calculated to advance the above purposes

IMPORTANT PHONE #'S, EMAILS, DATES AND INFORMATION

Melody Lake Association

PO Box 95

Willet, NY 13863

www.stny.info/melodylake

or visit us on Facebook

HOW TO CONTACT:

Association Officers:

President – Bob Rosati (607)863-4425 rcrosati@frontiernet.net

Vice President – John Opp (607)821-2697 j.opp47@yahoo.com

Secretary – Tami Zebrowski-Darrow (607)722-5994 (home), (607)863-4319 (lake) tzebrowski@stny.rr.com

Treasurer- Steve Smith (607)729-8823, sjstev@gmail.com

Member at Large – Dan Armstrong (607)775-3137,

DARMSTRONG11@stny.rr.com

Webmaster – Jim Pratt – (607)775-4925 jpratt@stny.rr.com

Emergency Response

NY State Police – (607)756-5604 or 911

Cortland County Sheriff – (607)753-3311 or 911

Fire & Ambulance – 911

NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation:

Conservation Officer – (607)836-6595, (607)749-0163 or 1-844-332-3267 (24 hr)

Permits – 1-800-388-8244 or (607)753-3095 ext. 235

Dam Safety – (518)402-8150

Town Government Officials:

Willet Town Hall – 863-4877 (for building permits)

Town Supervisor – Alvin (Sandy) Doty – 863-3252

Town Clerk – Annie Wilcox – 863-4329

Highway Superintendent – Geno Turshman 863-3265

Code Enforcement – 749-8299 or 345-0759

Tax Assessor – Frances J Butler 849-6966

Other:

Cortland County Health – 753-5035 (permits for wells & septic)

DOGS AROUND THE LAKE:

Remember that your dog must be under your control at all times. If the dog is loose, they must remain on your property. Every year we receive complaints from people walking around the lake that they are confronted by loose dogs. Excessive barking is also a nuisance and is in violation of the Town ordinance. All complaints should be referred to the Town of Willet Dog Warden. (Country Acres Animal Shelter – 749-2734)

There are new operating hours for the Willet Post Office:

Mon – Fri : 10 AM – 12 noon & 1 PM – 3 PM

Sat – 9 AM – 11:45 AM

THE MEETINGS FOR MELODY LAKE ASSOCIATION FOR 2016 WILL BE HELD AT 12:00 NOON ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF JUNE, JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER. ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD AT THE WILLET TOWN HALL (unless decided otherwise). THE MEETING DATES FOR 2015 ARE:

JUNE 12th

JULY 10th

AUGUST 14th

SEPTEMBER 11th

YOUR IDEAS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE ASSOCIATION. PLEASE TRY TO ATTEND WHENEVER POSSIBLE. WE WILL ATTEMPT TO LIMIT THE MEETING TO ABOUT 1 HOUR HOWEVER WILL CONTINUE UNTIL ALL IMPORTANT TOPICS ARE DISCUSSED.

The Town Of Willet Town Board Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 PM. The meetings for 2016 are:

January 20th

February 17th

March 16th

April 20th

May 18th

June 15th

July 20th

August 17th

September 21st

October 19th

November 16th

December 21st

WE WOULD LIKE TO REMIND ALL PROPERTY OWNERS AND THEIR GUESTS THAT EVEN THOUGH MELODY LAKE IS A PRIVATE LAKE, ALL NYS LAWS APPLY. THIS INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO FISHING, HUNTING, BOATING AND MOTOR VEHICLE LAWS. ALSO REMEMBER THAT ALL BOATS THAT ARE POWERED BY AN ELECTRIC MOTOR (INCLUDING PONTOON BOATS) MUST BE REGISTERED. ALL NON-NYS RESIDENTS MUST HAVE A NONRESIDENT FISHING/HUNTING LICENSE.

CORTLAND/CHENANGO RURAL SERVICES

NEARLY NEW SHOP (gently used clothing)

2704 Lower Cincinnatus Rd, Cincinnatus, NY

Located at the Catholic Church (607)863-3828

Mon & Fri - 9:30 am – 11 am

Tues & Thurs – 9:30 am – 11:00 am & 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Wed – 9:30 am – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Sat–9 am –12 noon (also Local Farmers Market in season)

Remember that the speed limit on Melody Lake Rd. is 30 mph and on Melody Lane is 10 mph. Also parking on Melody Lake Road is prohibited unless you are completely off the road. Please remind your visitors and everyone that you may be doing business with such as contractors, fuel delivery companies, etc.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter by Melody Lake Association's diverse group of volunteers may not necessarily reflect the views held by the Association, its members, or its sponsors.



Association President Bob Rosati:

As many of you know, I didn't expect to be writing this column this year. After more than 20 years as president of the association, last fall I announced that I would not be running for reelection. I must admit that I was not expecting the visits, the phone calls and emails from many members, and even a suggestion from my wife Carol that I reconsider. I then agreed that if nobody else stepped up, I would be willing to hang around for 2 more years.

I sometimes doubt that many realize what is expected when you are an officer of an association like ours. It is nearly impossible to please 80+ property owners although we must try to please the majority that chooses to be involved. With the new government regulations, trying to comply takes more time than you think. Just the Dam Regulations alone have taken up more than 100 hours of our time over the past 3 years. Then there are other mandatory reports, preparing this newsletter and who knows what else might come up. I'm lucky to have such a patient wife that understands the obligations that come along with the position.

I continue to be thankful for serving with fellow board members that are willing to assist whenever asked. If it weren't for John Opp helping to lead workgroups to work on the road, ditches, cutting brush at the dam and anything else he's asked to do, Steve Smith trying to keep the treasurer books straight and Tami Zebrowski-Darrow working to fill holes in the road and trying to keep our meeting minutes complete and up to date we could not accomplish many of the things we have.

Since our last newsletter we have been made aware of the deaths of 3 of our long time association members. In late 2014, Dr. Jon Harrington passed away. Jon and his wife Linda purchased property at the lake in the mid 1990's. Jon and Linda were one of the few that enjoyed the lake late into the fall by canoeing up until the first snowfall. He was instrumental in stopping the practice of lowering the lake level in the fall which turned out to be a wise decision. Jon was also an important voice when we developed our State of the Lake Report and Lake Management Plan in 2002. Jon also served as Association Vice President for two years. Linda continues to own the property here at the lake.

In April, 2015, long time member John (Jack) Risko, Jr. passed away. Rain or shine, summer or winter, Jack could be seen slowly trolling around the lake, fishing.....
...trying to catch anything and everything that came near his

hook. I'll never forget the day that I heard a knock on my door only to find him with 3 sets of treble hooks from "the worm" buried deep in his hand. After a response from the Cincinnati Emergency Squad who recommended that he be taken to Cortland Hospital ER, Jack asked for a pair of pliers and ripped the hooks out. Within a half hour he was back on the lake fishing. His property at the lake has been transferred to his children.

Just a few days ago, we were notified of the passing of George Matola. George and his wife Linda have been here since the late 1990's. George usually stayed in the background but when he had an idea or something to say, we were made aware of it. Usually what he said made sense. He was the first to suggest that the association establish a "Dam Fund" to be used exclusively for dam maintenance and regulation compliance. All property owners were assessed a onetime fee. Without this fund we would have never had the money to comply with the newly adopted DEC Dam Regulations. George also suggested that the association have a detailed annual budget. Since this budget was established we have been able to get some important work done while still having enough left over to add a little to our bank accounts. As of right now, it's too early to say what Linda's plans are for the future.

These members will all be missed. We wish their families well and hope they know that their "association families" are here to support them as the attempt to move forward.

**ARE YOU EXPECTING COMPANY WITH NO PLACE
FOR THEM TO STAY?**

COTTAGE FOR RENT

1362 Melody Lane

Two bedroom w/ additional sofa bed.

Full bath. New Septic System.

Recently remodeled with all new appliances

Available by the day, weekend or full week

A short walk for full lake access.

No Pets and No Smoking

For more information contact Bob & Carol Rosati

(607)863-4425 or rcrosati@frontiernet.net



REPORT FROM THE DAM

We have finally received the results of our Engineering Assessment on the dam. This assessment was required by NYSDEC and was completed by Urda Engineering, PLLC at a cost of \$12,800. This report shows that we are extremely close to being downgraded from a Class C, High Hazard Dam to a Class B, Moderate Hazard Dam. Early thoughts were that if a complete dam failure would occur, close to 50 downstream structures would suffer severe damage. This report conducted by a Professional Engineer shows that a dam failure would affect about 19 homes with less than 1' foot of water. This, along with other results of the assessment brings us to believe that we could be downgraded to a Class B. The entire report is over 200 pages and has been submitted to DEC for their consideration. If approved, there may be some small modifications to the dam or spillway to be done. If denied we may be looking at some substantial modifications to the dam and spillway. It is important that all members attend the association meeting in order to stay updated on the status of this request.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN REWRITTEN

One of the requirements of Dam Ownership is that an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) be completed and submitted to DEC and other State and Local government agencies. This plan is to show how a dam emergency or failure could affect downstream property owners and how these agencies should plan to respond. This EAP must be updated annually. Due to the above mentioned assessment, this EAP had to be completely rewritten by the association Board of Directors. This report is close to 30 pages long and has been submitted to DEC, NYS Office of Emergency Management, Cortland County Emergency Management, Town of Willet and the Town of Willet Fire Dept. State law requires that each dam owner have a sufficient number of volunteers that are trained to monitor and respond to any dam emergency. If you would like to look over this document and join our list of trained volunteers please contact one of the board members. Their contact information can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

DAM INSPECTION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (I&M)

Another requirement of Dam Ownership is that the owner maintains a safe dam. In order to carry out this requirement, the board had to develop a written I&M Plan. This plan not only sets a schedule on when an inspection should be done by the owner, it also describes when and how ordinary maintenance will be completed. This includes opening the valves, mowing, cutting brush, cleaning the spillway, etc.. Every year, volunteer members pick a date to carry out most of this ordinary maintenance. Thanks to all the members that have volunteered in the past to help make this a quick and easy task. If you would like to volunteer for 2016 please let us know.

The Dam Committee is one of the most important committees required by the association. If you would like to consider joining the committee please plan to attend an association meeting for details. After the initial training volunteering would only amount to a couple hours of actual work each year.

SOME THOUGHTS FROM ASSOCIATION TREASURER STEVE SMITH:

Financially, 2015 was another good year;

1. 100% dues were collected, even though again it took some prodding.
2. The required dam report was completed and paid for.
3. Some ditch remediation and piping was done and some money collected from impacted property owners.
4. SWCD again paid for our CSLAP and NYSFOLA membership.
5. Our meeting raffles and picnic again brought in some monies.
6. No lawyer's fees
7. Donations for the annual newsletter offset costs
8. We stayed within our adopted regular and dam budgets for the year.

Looking to 2016;

1. We are receiving dues for 2016 at a steady pace.
2. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all dues by the mid-February due date?
3. 2009 was the last increase in annual MLA dues. That is fantastic since costs (taxes, insurance, maintenance, state mandates, etc.) continually increase.
4. Currently working on a 2016 budget and will present it at the first meeting on June 12th.

ROADWORK – John Opp, Association Vice-President

This is a word that some people keep on the tip of their tongue and repeat at every meeting so we can be constantly reminded there is road work to be done. We are happy to report that finally some work was done in the fall of 2015 and hopefully it will improve conditions for winter runoff and rainy season drainage. From the power line right of way down to the culvert under Melody Lane adjacent to the meeting right of way, the ditch has been deepened and cleaned and sloped to allow for water to flow and keep moving. It will be important to keep the ditch cleared of leaves and debris to keep things flowing. We also replaced a couple of severely blocked or damaged culverts that were restricting flow, or which were too high to enable upstream water to flow on out through them. Hopefully the frog pond is gone from in front of the Wilbur's and I'm sure they won't miss the snake we uncovered behind their otherwise new culvert.

Based on excess water running in the middle of the lane at two strategic places, drainage diversion dikes were placed across the lane to divert water away from the center of the road and into drainage ditches or across rights of way and away from traffic. Some people believe these were placed as speed bumps, but that is not the intent. At the 10 MPH speed limit they are not an inconvenience. Snow plowing may take them out but if they prove effective, they can be replaced as needed.

The entrance to the lane from Melody Lake Road was also built up with oversized stone to establish a base and then some crusher run was placed to build it up further. This will hopefully keep the lane from sinking and become a mud pit as heavier traffic comes along in wet weather. The NYSEG trucks really give it a pounding. More crusher run can be added when we see how it is holding up. Building it up and crowning the lane also enables better runoff to the sides.

When spring arrives we will take stock of road conditions, holes, bucking, heaving, any movement, and determine what we will need to do for another year. We want to minimize expenditures on the lane to the extent we can, but we also want to ensure safe and unrestricted access to all the properties on that side of the lake. We will also examine any needed work along Melody Lake Road and share conditions and concerns with the Town for maintenance or improvements. They work hard and endure long hours to keep Melody Lake Road and all the Town roads "up and running".



SECURITY AT THE LAKE

How secure is your place at the lake? With the new technologies, the choices are endless. Motion detector lights, dusk to dawn lights, even cameras that can monitor movement and send a signal to your home, computer or smartphone. We all know that Melody Lake is a quiet place without much activity in the winter months. The few members that do live here year round try to keep an eye on who is coming and going. This may be easy on Melody Lane since it is a dead end and all traffic has to come in and go out past the same properties. Also, since Melody Lane is unmaintained during the winter months, access is even more difficult. Melody Lake Road is a town road and accessible all winter. This makes it even more difficult to monitor. A recent study done by a group of insurance companies studied various types of security systems. Some of the results are:

Lighting – While it may sound confusing, keeping your place dark seems to be the most beneficial. If a neighbor or passerby sees someone with a flashlight wandering around, they are more apt to report it or investigate it. Motion detector lights do raise awareness for awhile but due to the abundance of wildlife around here, the lights going on and off become to be expected and ignored. Surprisingly, dusk to dawn lights are the least beneficial since once someone gains entrance onto or into your property you are providing enough light to go from room to room without additional lighting. These dusk to dawn lights are also the most likely to be ignored by neighbors.

Security Systems /Cameras – The quality of the systems today continue to improve. The main concern with these is the miles between you and the property and the response time by the police and security company. Many systems only store the images and are not retrieved until weeks or months later. Also, unless the trespasser is recognized, the quality of the images in the dark makes them difficult to identify. Also, the efforts by authorities to attempt to identify them are minimal. No place can be made completely secure. The best way is to make sure that desired items are not left lying around in plain view. Also for the winter months, all valuables should be removed from the property and taken home.



Why All the Snails????

In 2015 we had a record number of large snails throughout the lake. When we inquired to both DEC and NYSFOLA we found out that this seemed to be a concern at many lakes throughout the state. The photo above was about ½ of what association member Kelly Cerroni was able to collect just from her shoreline in a very short time. These were identified as “Chinese Mystery Snails” *Cipangopaludina chinensis malleata*, an invasive species that, according to the US Geological Survey, were sold in Chinese Food Markets in San Francisco in the late 1800’s. They were found in the Boston area in 1914, found in the Niagara River in the early 1940’s and Oneida Lake in 1977 and have since spread across the state. It is said that they got the name “Mystery Snail” because they give birth to young, fully developed snails that are said to “just mysteriously appear”. There are no known control methods since the so called “snailicides” found on the market will also kill our native snails which are important to our lake ecology.



A JUDGE DECIDES AND A HIGHER COURT AGREES.....

In 2014, a motion was heard before the NYS Supreme Court. The Plaintiff was a Lake Association and the Defendant was a property owner who refused to pay the dues required by the by-laws of the association. In this case, the association was the owner of the lake, the dam, and the road and several rights of ways around the lake. The Association's By-Laws stated that the amount of dues required from all property owners would be the same amount regardless of the number of lots or the amount of property owned.

In this case, the defendant attempted to make the argument that since many members owned more property than he did and that many of the benefits and improvements provided by the association were not used by him so therefore he should not be forced to pay for these benefits.

The association stated several past court decisions in NYS stating why they thought that the defendant should be obligated to pay the entire amount required by the by-laws.

After listening to these arguments, in November of 2014, NYS Supreme Court Justice Thomas Buchanan ruled in favor of the association and the property owner was ordered to pay all past dues as well as a reasonable amount of interest. As expected, the Defendant appealed.

The case was then brought before NYS Supreme Court Appellate Division and in January, 2016 the court agreed with Judge Buchanan's decision and the property owner was again ordered to pay all back dues with interest.

In this case, the decision was made due to several facts such as:

- Purchase of the property was made with the knowledge that the association existed

thereby creating an "implied contract" requiring payment of dues

- Dues had been paid in the past by either the property owner and/or members of the property owners family
- Past court decisions stated that it is a well-established law that when an owner has acquired property with "knowledge that a private community homeowners' association provides facilities and services for the benefit of community residents, the purchase of property there may manifest acceptance of conditions of ownership, among them payment for the facilities and all services offered"
- The court also agreed that the fact that the amount of dues are the same regardless of the number of lots or the amount of property owned was consistent with both the Association's By-Laws and the NYS Not-For-Profit Law.

DUES ARE NOW PAST DUE

Our by-laws state that annual dues are due by Feb. 15 in order to maintain active membership. Early this year, email reminders were sent out to all members that share their email address and post card reminders were sent to the rest. Dues for 2016 started coming in at a record pace. Then they stopped. Each year the same few need to be sent several reminders even though they have owned property on Melody Lake for several years. These reminders not only cost money for paper and postage, they also waste the time of the board members who would rather be doing something else like maybe even enjoying the lake. Last year we again reached 100% membership as we have for the past dozen or more years, but not until the board threatened to take the final unpaid 3 members to town court. An appointment was made to meet with the town judge and this date was announced to the 3 unpaid property owners. The final 3 then paid. It shouldn't have to go this far. The dues are a necessary responsibility and should be taken seriously by all property owners. If yours are not yet paid we ask that you send Steve Smith a check for \$100. If they are paid.....THANK YOU!!

"Eat healthy - live healthy - be healthy."

By Association Member Doris Wilbur

You'd have to be hanging out in a cave to not have heard that latest mantra and, being at the lake fits right in to the doctor's prescription. Take a hike around the lake; it's about a mile of exercise. Swim in its cool waters, catch a fish or soak up some sunshine. It's all good. While we are thinking about our own health we also need to consider how to keep our beautiful, private lake healthy too. We can't just take it for granted; we need to be good stewards of it also if we want to continue enjoying it.

Melody Lake is downhill from everyone's property. Think about that. It means every time there is a rainy runoff it crosses yards and roads and goes to the lake. Fast moving water carries chemical pollutants such as herbicides and pesticides, also harmful nutrients like fertilizers and transports silt. All of these can settle at our shoreline zone and destroy that critical habitat area for aquatic insects, natural vegetation, fish breeding and nursery areas. Walk the shore early in spring and you can see the shallow bowl like depressions or "nests" with a fish nearby defending it. That lake edge zone is so critical to a healthy lake environment and the life within it.

As properties around Melody Lake get improved and developed, beneficial native trees, bushes and plants are often removed, replaced with cultivated varieties or simply become a mowed area. Nature has a way of finding its own balance if we leave it alone. The natural vegetation and biodiversity we have in some areas here are not only desirable, they are necessary to the health of our lake.

Native plants require no care, no fertilizer, and no pesticides. They know how to survive and flourish here. You can spot Red Osier Dogwood that loves wet areas, by its colorful branches at the powerline swimming area. In that area also Pussy Willow, with its furry catkins greets us in the spring. Both of these shrubs act as buffers to slow runoff and silt from reaching the lake and provide shelter and nesting for numerous birds. Along the lake's edge Blue Flag Iris, creamy white blooms of Turtlehead, Cattails and pink blooming Joe Pye Weed sink in their deep roots, beautify and protect the shoreline. Numerous tall, native Blueberry Bushes, that love our acidic, poor soil, grow and give us those immune boosting antioxidants with their yummy fruit. Another water loving small tree is the Speckled Alder. You can recognize that one by its dark speckled bark and the small cones on its branches. It's a tree that's especially adapted to periodic flooding and runoffs and has a nitrogen fixing bacteria in its roots.

Unlike the roots of grass, the natives that grow here send their roots down deep to protect and hold the soil. We also have a beautiful flowering native called Swamp Candles that bears a tall stem of yellow star shaped flowers and is another wet area plant. Swamp Milkweed, a plant that Native American's used for making rope, grows out in the big blueberry patch. I could list many, many more native species that grow here for free and not only act as buffer plants, they also beautify and provide food to birds and endangered butterflies. We need to save these buffer plants plus promote and plant more natives along our shorelines. They don't have to be tall and spoil your view. There are many low ones available.

Do we really need to have large areas of grass along the shoreline or would a path through native vegetation be better? It would certainly be better for the lake. Can't we coexist with what should be here naturally and not try and make it look like a manicured suburbs? We've lost so much of our natives already. As our lake population, our environment and our certainly unpredictable weather changes we need to adjust our practices to keep our lake and shoreline at its best.

The saying "no man is an island" applies to our environmental practices too. Clearing one area affects another. The powerline that runs above our property was brush hogged, graded flat and seeded. All those native shrubs that slowed runoff from heavy rains along that long, wide strip are gone. Now, we have a river of flash flooding across our side yard and on. The electric company comes through and cuts and removes a lot of trees and bushes. A new house goes in an empty wooded lot. Heavy trucks run up and down our dirt road. Colorful fireworks burst and remnants fall into the water. Melody Lake Road gets stone and oiled.

(continued on page 9)

(cont. from previous page)

Invasive species take hold and drive out good plants. Someone dumps miscellaneous junk in a brushy area, tosses an aluminum can or plastic bottle. It all has an impact, it all changes our ecology.

Melody Lake is shallow, only 17 feet at the deepest and a small lake of only 43+ acres. It was actually called Ellis Pond at one time. It's not a huge volume of moving water and is sensitive to changes. The electric company comes through, cuts and removes a lot of trees and bushes and sprays herbicides. Toxins reaching the water lowers its quality, triggers algal growth, kills fish and causes weeds to grow. Jerry and I have removed plastic pots, cans, bottles, glass, remodeling garbage, nylon fish line tangles with hooks, a chair, a toilet tank and even a broken barbecue grill from the swimming area. We're getting too old for that people! There are no dumping areas at Melody Lake! Please carry your garbage out or call Otselic Valley Sanitation for larger items.

As I write this it is only 8 degrees outside, the wind is howling and the ground is covered with snow. Birds and animals are seeking out small, dried up fruit from the thorn apples, service berries, blueberries and chokecherries to survive or are looking for shelter among the tangles of brush. Even a thorny shrub, or an astringent tiny cherry we consider a nuisance has an important part in our lake ecology and needs to be left to fulfill nature's balance and diversity.

If you would like help identifying native plants, shrubs and trees I would be glad to be of assistance. Email me a picture at wilburd@citlink.net or see me when you are at the lake. Best wishes for staying healthy for 2016 and enjoying this beautiful lake we all share.

LAKE TESTING 2015

Although we do not yet have the results of last year's testing, there are a few things we do know. Water temperature started out pretty much average but by the end of the summer they were well above the average of the past 20 or more years. Water clarity and recreation perception were both better than average. Both native and exotic aquatic plants were still almost non-existent. Although Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB's) were confirmed in 126 locations throughout NYS, none were reported here at Melody Lake. Even though we have not had a confirmed bloom since 2013, does not mean that we haven't had any; it only means that none were reported. Please remember HAB's are highly toxic to humans and deadly to animals. Normal lake testing is done every 2 weeks throughout the summer months but we do have the means of testing for HAB's at any time and receive the result back within a couple days. If results of the tests confirm the presence of HAB's we will immediately notify all members that have provided us with their email addresses. All others will be notified if and when we happen to cross paths. We should be getting the results of last year's testing any day now and will make sure that a brief summary will be presented to all attendees at the first association meeting of 2016.

We are still looking for additional volunteers to assist with the testing. If you are not sure, you are welcome to tag along just to observe. All samplers are required to take a 2 – 3 hour training that will be arraigned and paid for by the association. If you think you might be interested please contact Bob Rosati.

***The best time to protect your shoreline was 20 years ago.
The second best time is today.***



**On the ground, or down the sink,
it possibly ends up in the lake....**

Many of our places were built back in the days when our sinks were allowed to just drain into the ground. Since that time most properties have changed ownership and many have no idea where things go once they are "DOWN THE DRAIN". You might be surprised that it just doesn't disappear. Any chemical that goes into or onto the ground has the potential to leach into both the groundwater and the lake. When you come back to the lake this spring, take a good inventory of what you have in your shed or under your sink. Many of you might find Roundup, or a similar product. Read the label and you might see that it should not be used around water since it is deadly to fish. Keep looking and I'm sure you will find a bushel full of glass cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner, furniture polish, coffee pot cleaner.....the list goes on and on. Add the price of all these products and you probably have more than enough to pay your association dues. Did you know that all of these products can be replaced with:

- White vinegar
- Baking soda
- Lemon Juice
- Salt
- Dish Soap without bleach
- Borax
- Washing Soda

Let's start with the coffee maker. Fill the reservoir with white vinegar and run through the system. When the cycle is complete, you can put a heaping teaspoon of baking soda down your sink or bathroom drain, followed by the hot vinegar. Run 3 cycles of clean water thru the coffee maker and dump that hot water down the same drain. Your drain and your coffee maker are clean for the next month. Some other ideas are:

Toilet Bowl Cleaner: turn off water supply and flush to partially empty bowl. Sprinkle in 1 cup of baking soda trying to cover as much of the bowl as possible. Slowly pour in 1 cup of vinegar. Use a toilet brush to scrub bowl. Turn water back on and flush.

Glass Cleaner: mix 1 ½ cups of vinegar with 1 ½ cups of water. Use as you would any glass cleaner.

All Purpose Cleaner: combine 1 Tbs. borax, 1 Tbs. washing soda, 1 tsp. dish soap, 1 cup vinegar and 4 cups hot water. Mix well. Spray and then wipe surface clean with a damp cloth. Can be used on any surface.

Weed Killer: Did you know that weeds can be cooked to death by just dumping boiling water on them? For longer lasting results, combine 1/4 cup table salt, 2 tsp. dish soap and 1 quart vinegar. Spray when needed. These same few ingredients can be used to make almost any type of cleaner. While they still may be harmful if put into the lake, they are much more environmentally friendly, and a lot cheaper, than any commercial product on the market today.

DON'T FLUSH YOUR MEDS – Flushing your medications down the sink or toilet, or even putting them in the garbage, can harm the environment. Many local police or Sheriff Departments have a "drop box" where meds can be disposed of safely. For more information contact your local health dept. or police agency.



WHY NOT A 4TH "R"?

Over the years, we have all learned the importance of the 3 R's, **REUSE**, **REDUCE** and **RECYCLE**. Perhaps it's time to add a 4th R.....**REFUSE**. We all know the facts; it takes an aluminum can or plastic jug 6 weeks to be reused vs. 500 years to decompose. Glass bottles could take over a million years. Plastic bags could take close to a thousand years where a paper bag takes only a couple months. By refusing a bag altogether and using a reusable cloth bag you can save the cost of the bag and the pollution it creates to produce and decompose. Even this newsletter, if printed on paper could take a month or so to decompose. If you are in the majority of the members who are allowing us to send this newsletter electronically, it can decompose in an instant with just one push of the DELETE button. Not only does this help prevent the filling of the landfills or the cost of recycling, it saves the association members much more than that. The mailing of the meeting minutes and dues notices cost us even more. When dues are not paid on time, late notices are also mailed.

Let's look at the cost of just this newsletter over the years. The size of our newsletter has stayed constant over the years. Let's go back to 2011 when all members received a printed copy which was mailed to them. Not only did this take over 1000 sheets of paper, printing was about \$150 and postage was about \$60. In 2012 printing increased to about \$160 and postage to \$75. During the summer of 2012, member Kelly Cerroni suggested that we try a pilot project to send an electronic copy of the 2013 newsletter to a few volunteer members. This not only decreased the cost of the newsletter, we were able to add color photos and "click on" links for our sponsor's websites. This also allowed us to share our newsletter with other associations and other interested parties. If the property was owned by multiple owners, we were able to send a copy to each without an additional cost. Our members were also able to share the newsletter with family and friends. In 2014 our newsletter was sent

electronically to all members with email and required only about 200 sheets of paper and cost for printing dropped to \$42 and postage about \$20. In 2015, the project was expanded and the printing cost dropped to \$31 but due to the increase of postage this went up to about \$25.

If you are receiving a hard copy of this newsletter and do have an email address, we ask that you share that address with us. We promise we will never share this information and will only use it to send you "official" association information.

In 2016, we are planning to stop mailing hard copies of the meeting minutes and only sending an electronic copy to those members with email. When possible, dues notices and late notices will also be sent electronically. By taking advantage of the electronic age, we can save the association more than \$300 annually as well as having a record of what was sent and who it was sent to. You will also find other benefits to sharing your email address throughout this newsletter.

Check out how long each of these products take to decompose in the environment...

- Banana Peel: **3-4 weeks**
- Paper Bag: **2 months**
- Cardboard: **2 months**
- Wool Sock: **1 year**
- Tinned Steel Can: **50 years**
- Aluminum Can: **500+ years (But if recycled, it can be reused within 6 weeks!)**
- Disposable Diapers: **500 years**
- Plastic Bags: **20-1000 years**
- Plastic Jug: **500+ years**
- Glass: **1-2 million years**
- Styrofoam: **1+ million years**

ASSOCIATION FAMILY PICNIC

In the past, the association picnics were held the same day as the June meeting. In 2014 it was suggested that the picnic be held on a separate day with no association business discussed. That turned out to be a good choice and resulted in better attendance and a lot more fun to be had by all. Try your luck at one of the many raffles or the 50/50. Sample some homemade wine, beer or who knows what. For just a 25 cent chance you might take home a delicious cake or other baked item.

Set up is usually around 12:00 noon and eating starts around 1:00. **No meeting will be held.** As always the association will furnish the meat, soda and water. Everyone will be asked to bring a dish to pass along with their place settings. Also we will need some of you to donate a baked item for the cake wheel. Remember to bring a few bucks for the raffles and other fund raisers. The date for the 2016 Picnic will be decided at the first 2016 Association Meeting on June 12th.

PS: Special Thanks to Association Members Jeff and Renee Turner for the donation of a delicious BBQ Brisket and Sausages which he had delivered from Texas for 2 years in a row. Hopefully they will be able to join us this year.

Respect the lake (and fellow members) – by John Opp

Everyone that purchases a property at Melody Lake does so with the excitement of being able to enjoy the water, the natural environment, a place to relax and get away from it all for a period of time, bring friends and family for fun get-togethers, and a multitude of other reasons. We are fortunate that we have such a beautiful place to come to and be surrounded by others with the same interests and love of the outdoors. Granted, there are varying levels of commitment to the environment and preservation of natural conditions and combining that with modern technologies and comfortable living at the lake. However, for the most part, all our members have a respect for what the lake and its surroundings have to offer. One thing we all need to be reminded of from time to time is preserving the fish population in the lake and ensuring there are enough for all that desire to fish have to enjoy. The lake is stocked periodically as allowed to hopefully maintain the level of fish population and allow for growth of each species without crowding out others. Counting the fish in the lake or otherwise measuring the quantity of each species that are alive and well is next to impossible. A catch and release policy is a means to return fish to the water and help maintain current levels for others to enjoy the sport.

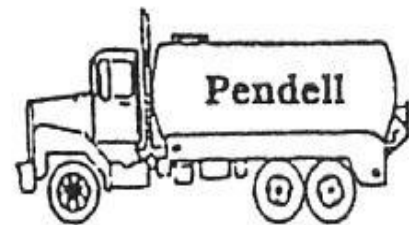
With all that said, there are some that are keeping all the fish they catch and do not return them into the lake. That is not fair to others and I cannot imagine that anyone needs to keep a large quantity of fish to prepare to eat. New York State fishing regulations set limits on the season for catching specific species and the number of fish that can be taken over a period of time. Those regulations apply to fishing at Melody Lake and require that a valid New York State fishing license is issued to the fisherman, based on age. Visitors and guests are to be informed by their member host that these regulations are to be followed while at the lake.

Anyone observing disrespect for the rules and regulations is expected to question those activities and first attempt to inform the member/property owner to resolve. The member should understand that complying with state fishing regulations and the Melody Lake By-Laws as applicable are a responsibility of ownership and are to be observed. Guest pass holders using a members' property are to also be made aware and act accordingly. We should also all be on our guard and aware that not everyone fishing on Melody Lake is necessarily an invited guest or family member and could be outsiders not allowed on the private property. If you suspect an outsider approach with caution and contact a board member if they are uncooperative. They are trespassing and the appropriate authorities will be called.

If we all work together these issues will be minimized and there will be plenty of fish to go around for a long time to come. We will examine needs to restock the lake at appropriate times and continue to be good stewards of all the lake has to offer.

**THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS HELP TO MAKE THIS NEWSLETTER POSSIBLE
LET'S SUPPORT THEM IN RETURN**

These same sponsors have supported us for years. A couple are even Association Members. Need a place for overflow guests? Try **Rosati's Cabin** for rent. Need some work done around your place, **Chuck Tennant's** the man to call. Specializing in concrete and mason work, you'll also find he's a jack of all trades. Both **Bob Pendell Septic** and **Kurt Vogel Septic** are seen here at the lake throughout the year, sometimes even on holidays providing a service that helps to protect our lake. These guys really know theirSTUFF. Need some tree work done? There is no one better than **Ron Dingman**. He has many satisfied customers around the lake. Whether it's just a trimming or complete chipping and stump removal, he's the one to call. Expecting some company? Make sure you have some "adult cocktails" available from **Country Wine and Sprints**. Not sure what wine goes with what meal, owner John Brominski and staff can help you decide. If you want to really impress those guests, try a beautiful floral centerpiece or fruit basket from **Rita Mae's Flowers and Gifts**. Is it time to upgrade your boat on the lake? Most of the small paddle boats and many of the kayaks you see on the lake were purchased from **96 Power and Paddle**. If you are not sure what you want, owner Jim Signs even has a pond next to his showroom so you can try before you buy. They also sell boating supplies, chainsaws and safety equipment, work boot and much more. Last but not least is the **Cincinnatus Home Center** or what I like to call the "Cincinnatus Mall". Nowhere else can you find lumber, hardware, paint, fresh flowers, beer, fresh made subs, groceries, and more all under one roof. Owner Bill Cobb, daughter Kristin, son Mark and staff have always supported us in more ways than this newsletter. Each association meeting includes a donated item from Bill which brings several \$\$\$ into our available funds. Last year Bill donated a patio set for the association family picnic which made us over \$200. Please support these sponsors whenever you can and let them know you saw their ad in the *Melody Lake Newsletter*.



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