

# MELODY LAKE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE MELODY LAKE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

JANUARY 2014



On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1964, Melody Lake Association was incorporated. This year we will be celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. During these 50 years many things have changed. We, along with many other lakes in New York and throughout the US have been attacked by invasive species. The requirements of being a Not For Profit Corporation have become more difficult especially when being run by volunteers. Society in general has become more and more self-centered and aggressive and if things are not done the way they want, it is apt to become an issue resulting in thousands of dollars in legal fees to the association and its members. The liability and obligations of being a “High Hazard Dam Owner” have become stricter and much more expensive. Over the past few years, the concerns regarding Harmful

Algal Blooms have become more frequent and widespread. While most of us have purchased our property to relax and enjoy the lake, we must still realize that we do have the obligation to adjust our habits in order to protect Melody Lake. In this newsletter we will look at how these concerns have influenced Melody Lake and how they have been addressed. We will also share some ideas as to how we plan to celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We will also attempt to look into our crystal ball and try to look ahead to see what the future will bring. All and all, things are going pretty good at the lake thanks to the cooperation of most of the property owners around the lake. We must all realize that the lake and the association belong to all of us. If we all do just a little bit to protect and improve the lake, we will all have more time to enjoy the lake.

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Melody Lake Association was formed on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1964 to:  
Aid and promote the preservation and protection of Melody Lake and the land around it  
To aid in the protection of fish and game in such lake and area  
To promote and cultivate social relationships among its members  
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](http://www.stny.info/melodylake) or VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

### HOW TO CONTACT:

#### Association Officers:

**President** – Bob Rosati (607)863-4425 [rcrosati@frontiernet.net](mailto:rcrosati@frontiernet.net)

**Vice President** – John Opp (607)821-2697 [j.opp47@yahoo.com](mailto:j.opp47@yahoo.com)

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

**Treasurer** – Steve Smith (607)729-8823, [sjstev@gmail.com](mailto:sjstev@gmail.com)

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

[DARMSTRONG11@stny.rr.com](mailto:DARMSTRONG11@stny.rr.com)

**Webmaster** – Jim Pratt – (607)775-4925 [jpratt@stny.rr.com](mailto:jpratt@stny.rr.com)

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### 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 or 1-877-457-5680 (24 hr)

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

Dam Safety – (518)402-8150

Turn in Poachers or Polluters – 1-800-TIPPDEC

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### 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 863-3283

Code Enforcement – 749-8299 or 345-0759

Tax Assessor – Dave Briggs – 753-1232

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### Other:

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

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### 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. Many times last year we have heard 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)*

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### 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 2014 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 2014 ARE:

JUNE 8<sup>th</sup>

JUNE 22<sup>nd</sup> - Melody Lake Association 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration & Family Picnic (information inside newsletter)

JULY 13<sup>th</sup>

AUGUST 10<sup>th</sup>

SEPTEMBER 14<sup>th</sup>

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.

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The Town Of Willet Town Board Meetings are held on the third Monday of every month at 7:30 PM. The meetings for 2014 are:

January 20<sup>th</sup>

February 17<sup>th</sup>

March 17<sup>th</sup>

April 21<sup>st</sup>

May 19<sup>th</sup>

June 16<sup>th</sup>

July 21<sup>st</sup>

August 18<sup>th</sup>

September 15<sup>th</sup>

October 20<sup>th</sup>

November 17<sup>th</sup>

December 15<sup>th</sup>

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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.

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### 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. Please remind your visitors and everyone that you may be doing business with such as contractors, fuel delivery companies, etc.

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*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.*

## SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Bob Rosati

Well, here we are in 2014, ready to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Melody Lake Association. We've been through a lot together and I do believe that for the most part, most of our members are happy with the way things are going. It's tough enough belonging to an association but even tougher trying to serve as a Board member since there is no way possible to make everyone happy. We are a Not For Profit Corporation and there are laws we need to obey, however since we are all volunteers, these laws are not easy to understand. There have probably been some honest mistakes made by every past and present Board member but by working together as an association we have worked things out. Some think that it is best to prove "I Told You So" while spending thousands on legal fees. The best way is to work together so we can survive another 50 years. I am lucky to be working with such a dedicated Board of Directors that put their personal goals aside to try to please a majority of the members while taking some grief from the few that are not happy with the way things turn out. I have had a few members accuse me of having my "pet projects" when suggesting that we do whatever it takes to monitor the quality of Melody Lake. To those I plead guilty. While I attempt to get others involved in these projects the board also volunteers hundreds of hours each year to be involved. Many studies have shown that the quality of the lake has a major impact on the value of property around the lake. Not only do we all have several thousands of dollars invested in our property, we must also be assured that the water in the lake is safe for our family and friends. This past year, we have had confirmed Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) that prove harmful to humans and fatal to pets. While there are many unknowns about the causes and effects of these HAB's there are some things we can do to lessen the effects and maybe even prevent them in the first place.

2013 was a good year at the lake. Meetings were well attended while also being very peaceful. While attendance at the association picnic was small, everyone had a great time and the celebration continued late into the night sitting around a bonfire back at the lakeshore. It was suggested that the future picnics be held earlier in the year with no meeting held. This year we will give it a try and have the picnic on Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> which is also the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Association.

We do continue to have some concerns. This year our dam will undergo the strictest inspection ever, which is required by the latest NYS Dam Safety regulations. Dam maintenance has been a #1 priority and hopefully this investment will pay off. As you may know, in the mid 1980's we spent close to \$60,000 bringing our dam up to current (at the time) requirements. In 2013, I was asked to give a presentation at the NYSFOLA Conference describing how all association members pulled together to complete the project. This presentation is available for you to view on the association website.

Also in this newsletter you will see that we only reached 99.8% of paid membership since one property owner believed that his share should only be \$82. Fortunately, thanks to the generosity of several of our members, this was made up for by more than \$1000 with extra donations being sent in with their dues. Additional income was also received from raffles (Rudy Bernard & Cincinnatus Home Center) bottle and can deposits (the Zebrowski Family) and family picnic attendees. Additional funds were saved since the Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District once again paid our NYSFOLA and CSLAP fees.

There are a few more concerns that you will read about in this newsletter but for the most part things are going pretty good. With the support from all property owners we will work our way through the concerns. All in all, 2013 was a wonderful year and hopefully 2014 will even be better.

**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 at**

**(607)863-4425 or [rcrosati@frontiernet.net](mailto:rcrosati@frontiernet.net)**



**A PROUD MEMBER OF MELODY LAKE ASSOCIATION**

**MELODY LAKE....** from what started out as just a small stream, a dam was built to become Ellis Pond and has been here for at least 150 years. At first it was just private farmer's pond and then a small lake that was open to the community for swimming, fishing or just enjoying any way anyone wanted. Then the owner decided to divide the property and sell the lots and hopefully make a few bucks in the process. While the properties were being sold, public access continued to be allowed for the community. When all the lots were sold, it became obvious that due to the large number of property owners, an Association was necessary to set some rules and regulations to protect the lake and also the investment of all property owners around the lake. On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1964 Melody Lake Association was formed and incorporated. The Corporation was founded on the following principles:

**To aid and promote the preservation and protection of Melody Lake and the land around it**

**To aid in the protection of fish and game in such lake and area**

**To promote and cultivate social relationships among its members**

**To undertake programs and activities calculated to advance the above purposes**

Since there were so many ways to determine how membership should be decided due to the many different characteristics of each lot (size, lake front vs. non lake front; town road with year around access vs. private road with no winter access; town road with Town of Willet maintenance vs. Melody Lane with property owner maintenance) it was decided that the By-Laws would state:

#### **I. MEMBERSHIP**

**A. Eligibility** - *Membership in the Melody Lake Association is limited to those persons owning one or more of the lots as originally laid out in the subdivision of Melody Lake by William E. Barnes, dated April 4, 1958 and the re-subdivision No. 1 of Melody Lake by William E. Barnes, dated February 10, 1959 and Melody Lake Subdivision No. 2 by Clyde V. Angivine, dated June 30, 1964. Continued membership is also contingent upon payment of dues as hereafter provided. The owner or owners of each lot or combination of lots in said subdivision, whether ownership be sole, joint or in common, shall constitute one member of the Corporation.*

On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1965, the lake, dam, private road (Melody Lane) and several rights of way were deeded to the association and at this time the lake became a private lake with no public access. The original owner also retained a few parcels with forever lake rights for their family and heirs.

Here we are in 2014, 50 years after Melody Lake Association was incorporated. We all have our reasons for owning property here. For most, it is a quiet place, good fishing, beautiful to look at, good neighbors, no jet skis or gas motor boats, etc.. While sometimes we do look at other lakes, or maybe even other property owners on Melody Lake, and wish that we had a sandy beach, more property, better lake access, better fishing, the list goes on and on. We have to look at the reason we bought our property in the first place. If we honestly thought that if we bought property here we could change it into something else, we probably should have looked elsewhere. There are more than 7,500 lakes and reservoirs in New York State and there are surely several others that meet, or are closer to, the characteristics of what we require for our "lake property" ownership.

Now here we are, 50 years later. We do have a few problems at the lake. It's easy to think that we are only one property owner and what we do, whether positive or negative, can really make an impact on the lake. While what an individual does may not make a difference, we must think "what if everyone does what I do?" What you do really could make a difference.

As you read this newsletter you might see that for the most part, Melody Lake is in pretty good shape. There are a few concerns that if everyone makes a few minor changes in their lifestyle, it can make a few major positive changes into the health and future of Melody Lake.

Let's all join together to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Melody Lake Association and also do what we can to protect and improve the quality of our beautiful lake.

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**PLEASE SUPPORT THE SPONSORS THAT HAVE PAID FOR THE ADS THAT ARE  
THROUGHOUT THIS NEWSLETTER. MOST OF THEM ARE LONGTIME SUPPORTERS AND  
MANY ARE EVEN ASSOCIATION MEMBERS. WHEN YOU DO USE THEIR SERVICES PLEASE  
REMEMBER TO SAY "THANKS" AND LET THEM KNOW YOU SAW THEIR AD IN THE  
"MELODY LAKE NEWSLETTER"**

## DUES POLICY

By John Opp – Association Vice-President

The board has on more than one occasion stated it supports decisions and directions for the association based on that which the majority of members approve through the vote process. This is in accordance with the association by-laws, general business practices and law. At the September 9, 2012 meeting, a vote was taken on four choices for the application of dues assessment, including three recommended by committee plus one prepared by other members. The item receiving the majority of votes was the choice stating: "From this day forward any property that now produces dues will continue to produce dues forever, regardless of who owns it". This became the member approved dues policy at that time.

The board is pleased to report that the implementation of the dues policy approved by the membership in September 2012, with the current dues amount, has resulted in sustained revenue collection and is working to ensure we can meet our financial obligations going forward. This policy addressed the challenge we were facing of possible loss of dues revenue when an existing dues producing property was purchased by a member. We now have sufficient funds to meet budgeted items including the mandated engineering studies and analysis of the dam, as well as a modest reserve for unexpected needs that may arise over and above the annual budgeted items. This policy will also enable prudent savings to meet known future dam engineering requirements on a regular basis at ten year intervals. Of course, it all depends on each member continuing to pay dues as set by the corporation in accordance with the association by-laws. Collecting dues in this manner is much better than an assessment to all owners on short notice to meet commitments and obligations, or unanticipated emergencies.

This option serves to stop loss of dues by requiring that dues continue to be applicable to each parcel in the association subdivision that was and is currently paying dues. While the language of this option may require further refinement by the members or subject to member review and approval as unique situations arise, it established a foundation upon which to move forward and curtail a reduction of dues generating properties. The approved policy placed responsibility on those members that have been paying dues, plus making donations for their dues producing properties acquisitions, to continue to pay accordingly, in as much as a precedent has been set. The association benefits from parcels that, since that date, are subdivided and sold or transferred to new owners and add to the number of dues paying properties. This has already happened.

The board is committed to managing association obligations and finances responsibly while making the experience of ownership at the lake and membership in the association a positive one for each and every member, their families and guests. We all need to work together and maintain a common direction to make that happen. The implementation of this dues policy and the positive results generated is evidence that, for the most part, we are rowing in the same direction. We appreciate your support.

Patios - Stone Work – Chimneys – Basements  
Owner/Operator Free Estimates  
607-656-7074

### Charles Tennant

34 Years of Experience  
Contractor Specialist

2594 County Road 2  
McDonough, NY 13801

**A PROUD MEMBER OF MELODY LAKE ASSOCIATION**







## PAID DUES ARE 99.8%

After 6 years of 100% dues paid, this year we have only had 99.8% of our members paying their dues for 2013. This may sound confusing since we have 84 property owners at Melody Lake. It seems that one property owner feels that the value or the amount of their property is less than others they should only have to pay 82% of the \$100 dues. The bylaws clearly state:

***D. Dues*** - Each member of the Corporation will pay annual dues as set by the Corporation, and they shall apply to the calendar year, January 1st thru December 31st. Dues are to be paid not later than February 15. (As amended 9/11/11). The membership of any member who has not paid his annual dues on or before this date will be terminated but will be reinstated upon payment of current dues.

The current dues were set at a general membership meeting on August 10, 2008 and the minutes clearly state that:

*As reported in previous 2008 meeting minutes, significant discussions have centered on increasing future annual membership dues to meet increasing operating and maintenance expenses for the Melody Lake Association. A motion was made by George Matola to increase the annual membership dues starting with 2009, and the motion was seconded by Thomas Margrave and unanimously approved.*

So where do we go from here? The amount of dues are what they are and will continue to be that amount until the majority of the members of the Corporation decide otherwise. Until that time, all members will be expected to pay the full amount. We have had unpaid members in the past but I believe this is the only time we have had a member make a partial payment but expect it to be considered "Paid in Full". In the past we have had to wait for the unpaid amount to be enough to be worth taking a property owner to court.

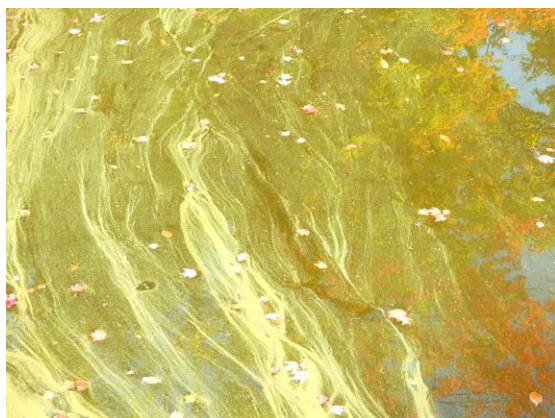
The law allows us to include court costs and up to 8% interest on any amounts due, along with other costs such as certified mailings. While it might take a few years to be worth pursuing, we have no intention of letting this practice to be allowed.

In the meantime we would like to know what the general membership wishes us to do. The bylaws clearly state that any unpaid member will lose their rights to any benefits of the association including use of Association property (the lake, Melody Lane, comment at a meeting, etc.). While some of these are difficult to enforce, we will attempt to do what we can. In August 2009 the Acting Association President suggested that we "pound stakes along the shoreline of the property owners and put up a ribbon and a posted sign. If they cross it, have them arrested for trespassing onto Lake Association Property, which is only accessible by members of the association (people who pay dues)". That's a good suggestion.

Please plan to attend the meetings next year and give us your thoughts. Written comments from the members to the Board are always welcome. Their contact information can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. You can also use the comments section on the membership application when you pay your dues.

## LIGHT AT THE DAM

For both safety and security concerns DEC recommends that a light be installed at the dam when possible. At an association meeting in 2013 it was voted on and approved to look into the cost of such a light. Cost was estimated to be around \$350 to install and operate a light. The board then approached the Town of Willet to ask that they consider having a street light installed on the NYSEG pole at the dam. At a Town Board meeting a motion was made and approved by a 4-1 vote to have the street light installed. The installation will be made by the end of January, weather permitting. This spring, we may have to trim some trees to allow more light to illuminate the dam. The entire cost of the light will be paid for by the Town. We would like to thank the entire town board for this approval. The light will make the dam more secure from vandalism and trespass and also make the dam a safer place for both the association and first responders in the event of an actual emergency.



## HARMFUL BLUE-GREEN ALGAE IN MELODY LAKE

Throughout 2013, more than 75 lakes from across NY reported a blue-green algal bloom. In mid-September, a suspected blue-green algal bloom appeared near the dam at Melody Lake. A program sponsored by NYSDEC allowed us to send a water sample to a lab in Syracuse where test results confirmed that “they showed high levels of blue green algae and a microscopics analysis of “Woronichina bloom, with Anabaena and Microcystis. The former is not a toxin producer, but the others are. Lake residents and pets are advised to avoid direct exposure to surface scums or heavily discolored water, seek medical assistance for any related health effects, and otherwise follow the advice on our web page (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77118.html>)” The results of this concern were immediately sent to all property owners that we have an email address for. Over the next several weeks, additional water samples were sent in for analysis with similar results. Throughout this time, lake residents were kept up to date via email.

For the most part, most algae are plants which produce oxygen and are an important part of the food chain. Blue green algae is however a bacteria which may produce toxins. In lower doses, they may cause problems to humans such as skin rashes or upset stomachs. In greater doses, these toxins may harm the liver or neurological systems. Many suspected human illnesses have been reported throughout the US along with many fatal animal deaths. These cases of animal deaths are mostly to dogs since they are

the most likely to go into the lake and then groom themselves. So why are these blue green algae appearing at Melody Lake? Even though this type of algae is a bacteria, they still require the same things as a plant in order to survive such as light, warm temperatures, seed, food and no grazing. In the case of algae, they also need wind for movement. Many of these things are out of our control. The one element we do have control over is food. Blue green algae seem to be showing up in higher nutrient lakes such as Melody Lake. Water sampling since 1987 has shown that we usually have a lower phosphorus level in late spring and early summer and then levels rise as people return and lake usage increases. This may be considered “cultural eutrophication”. Exact sources of nutrients are difficult to pinpoint, but as we look around the lake, there are some obvious concerns we may have some control of.

- 1) **Shoreline Development** – A large number of shoreline properties are being groomed right up to the water’s edge. By establishing a small buffer zone between your lawn and the lake will slow down runoff which will then reduce sediment from entering the lake. Structures such as permanent docks and breakwalls have been built. These structures not only disrupt the needs of aquatic habitat, they also replace the naturally sloping shoreline which then alters the shoreline water depth and water quality. These structures will increase wave action which may increase settleable solids, turbidity, nutrients and contaminants by the disruption of shoreline sediment transport process.
- 2) **Outhouses** – These are still fairly common around Melody Lake. While in some cases they are still allowed in Cortland County, they are required to be “watertight” and placed at least 50’ from the water’s edge.
- 3) **Fill in the Lake** – Over the years, several lakeside property owners have added fill, sand or gravel and in the process native plants have been removed. By removing these plants, they have removed some of Mother Natures’ ability to prevent shoreline erosion and filter nutrients, contaminants and sediment from entering the lake.

(continued on page 8)

4) **Septic Systems** – due to the small size of the individual lots around the lake all septic tanks are required to be sealed tanks unless a waiver has been issued by the Cortland County Health Dept. Also, under NYS Code, all wastewater must be directed to this tank. This code does not allow for a separate grey water system for sinks, shower, etc. however there are still many systems around the lake which still have a drywell or similar grey water system. These systems most probably are a large contributor of nutrients into the lake. It is also suspected that close to half of the septic systems have been installed without any oversight or permit from the Cortland County Health Dept.

5) **Geese** – Over the years, the number of geese making Melody Lake their summer home has been increasing. These geese are surely a major nutrient producer. For the past several years the association has been granted a “**Goose Nest & Egg Depredation Permit**” which allows us to disrupt the goose breeding cycle by destroying the nest or preventing the egg from hatching by shaking, oiling or other means. Unfortunately this process must be done before the egg hatches so must occur in early to mid-spring when there are not many people at the lake to assist. Once the egg hatches, the adult and babies are off limits and cannot be harmed. As an individual you cannot disrupt the egg or nest on your own. Your name must be on the permit. If you would like to assist please contact one of the board members.

These are just some of the ways you can do your part in helping to possibly decrease this harmful algae in the lake. If you see something that you think may be a bloom please bring it to the attention of a board member. In the meantime, we will continue to monitor and send samples in for analysis when suspected. If we have your email address, we will keep you notified of any concern. Due to the urgency of the concern, no phone or mail notification will be made.

## 100's of Kayaks



### Pedal Kayaks

**Hands free! Perfect for fishing!**



### Kayaks

**Touring – Tandem – Whitewater  
Canoes – Fishing Boats  
Stand-Up Paddle Boards  
Floating Docks – Paddleboats –  
Pontoon Boats**

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on our  
**test paddle pond!**



**Rack Systems**



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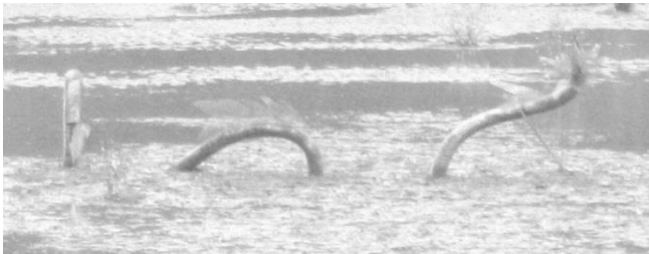
[www.powerandpaddle.com](http://www.powerandpaddle.com)

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## ASSOCIATION'S 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY:

In the past, the association family picnic has always been held at the August meeting. After the picnic last year it was suggested that we have the picnic earlier in the year in an attempt to renew old friendships and create new friendships that may be enjoyed throughout the summer. With that in mind, the 2014 association picnic will be held at 12 noon on Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> which is also the date of the Association's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. All attendees will be asked to bring their table settings and a dish to pass. The association will provide the meat, condiments and soda. If you wish something stronger than soda, feel free to bring your own. There will also be a "cake wheel" as a fund raiser so please bring a cake or other baked good to be raffled along with a pocket full of quarters. Also, due to popular demand, there will be a wine tasting for a minimal fee. As of right now, the picnic will be held at the pavillion at the Town Hall in Willet. More information will be provided at the meeting on Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup>.



## MELODY THE LAKE MONSTER SIGHTED

It's been several years since she has been seen, but we believe that "Melody" has risen from the deeper waters of Melody Lake. It's said that most lakes have a monster and most go for years without being seen. Such is the case of Melody. We are told that the lake monster is the steward of the lake, and as long as she is happy, she will remain hidden until the day comes that she returns in protest of the way her lake is being treated. It is believed that when a lake monster senses that the quality of the lake and the land around it worsens, they will appear to reward the good and punish the bad.

We are not quite sure why Melody has returned. It might be because over the years we have changed the landscape, diverted our stormwater runoff, introduced invasive species, and increased nutrients in the lake. We have dumped sand and

gravel into the lake in an attempt to create a beach type setting rather than the natural lake that was once our lake monsters' breeding ground. Even a gentle lake monster such as Melody is not immune to the damage that we have done to her lake.

As you look out on the lake on a foggy morning you just might see the flip of a tail or some other sighting of Melody. So far the return has been affable, but after the havoc we have wrecked, don't expect this warm welcome to continue.

## SHORELINE ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

In 2013, we finally completed our Shoreline Assessment which is an important part of our lake testing program. The National Lake Assessment Program has identified a strong connection between the biological communities in the lake (fish, rooted plants, benthic (bottom) communities near the shoreline) and the shoreline disturbance and development.

We were provided with a map with 10 randomly selected sites along with GPS coordinates of these sites. Instructions were to visit these sites to take photos and complete a survey form describing surface film, shoreline disturbance and development, shoreline debris and cover, existing pipes, along with land slope, bottom substrate, bottom cover and fish cover. Periphyton (algae on rocks) was also measured.

On Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup> the assessment was completed with the help of Jim Kuligowski, Theresa Tyner, Nicholas Tyner (Theresa's 2 year old Grandson), Ken Krna, Bob Eastman, Norm LaMontagne, John Opp and Bob Rosati. The weather was sunny and clear with temperatures in the upper 60's and low 70's.

At each location, we assessed about 50' of shoreline, 50' of land back from the shoreline and 30' of lake bottom out into the lake. At many of these locations we noticed a number of "hard construction" along the shoreline such as wooden or concrete breakwalls. These structures are not only illegal, since they were constructed without a DEC permit, they are possibly harmful to the lake. There were also several areas where the property owner has dumped sand and/or gravel into the lake, again without a permit. We will discuss these and other concerns elsewhere in this newsletter. The assessment forms were sent to DEC Division of Water where they will be evaluated and become part of our lake testing program.



## DAM ASSESSMENT DUE BY AUGUST 19th

Part 673.13 of the DEC Dam Safety Regulations require all "Small Class C" dams must have an Engineering Assessment completed by a Licensed Professional Engineer (PE) no later than August 19, 2014. In early 2013 the Association sent a Request for Proposal to several firms. The contract for \$12,800 was awarded to Urda Engineering in Windsor. This contract includes:

- Topographical survey of the entire dam and surrounding dam site
- Review of all records available regarding Melody Lake Dam
- Evaluation of the overall dam conditions, structural stability, spillway capacity, drain capacity, etc.
- Review of the current Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
- Provide a professional conclusion as to whether the dam meets minimum regulation requirements.
- Provide recommendations of steps needed to bring dam into compliance if necessary.
- Prepare an inundation map of the downstream area.
- Any other items required by the DEC regulations.

The topographical survey was completed in the fall of 2013. Some of the work that can be done in the office will be worked on this winter. Updates will be provided by the PE as work is completed. These updates will be available to association members at the June and July association meetings. The regulations require this assessment is done every 10 years. Periodically a Safety Inspection must be performed by a PE (Part 673.12). An annual certification (Part 673.8) is currently being completed by the Association Board. Each year \$2500 of the dues are put aside to cover the cost of this inspection and other requirements of the regulations.

## SURFING THE WEB

When was the last time you visited the Melody Lake Association website ([www.stny.info/melodylake](http://www.stny.info/melodylake))? We know that many of you keep in touch thru Facebook, but the website has so much more to offer. Did you know that in 2002, the association was given an \$8000 grant to prepare a "State of the Lake Report" to see what the condition of the lake was and then prepare a "Lake Management Plan" to show what actions should be taken to improve the water quality of the lake? Also, annual water testing has been done by association volunteers since 1987 through a program called CSLAP. Do you know that our association belongs to a statewide organization called NYSFOLA along with more than 250 other lake associations throughout NYS which allows us to share information and concerns regarding lakes throughout New York State and the entire US? Did you know that in the mid 1980's the association spent close to \$60,000 bringing our dam into compliance with current DEC regulations? Last year at a statewide conference, Association President Rosati presented a power point presentation with details and pictures of the entire project. This and much more information is available on our website. Special THANKS to association member Jim Pratt who suggested, designed and continues to update the website at no cost to the association. If you would like to see any additional information on the website please let the Board or the Webmaster know. Contact information can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.



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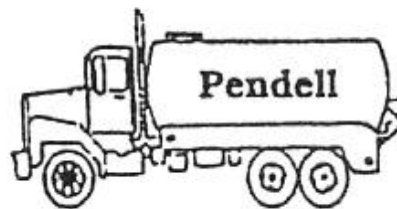
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## ENCROACHMENT ON ASSOCIATION PROPERTY

In June 2008, a concern regarding a possible encroachment on Association property was discussed by the current board members at that time. Since the board was busy with many legal concerns, the encroachment was not taken care of. In August 2009, an outgoing board member emailed this newly elected board, again suggesting that the concern be resolved. It seems that somewhere around 2006, a shed and possibly other improvements, were built on association property by an adjacent landowner. The incoming board members looked into it by using existing boundary markers and it seemed obvious that the encroachment existed. When the concern was addressed, the property owner requested that they have some time to consider all options and then offer a proposed resolution to the association members. Now, almost 2 years later, and several written notices, we are no closer to solving the problem. While the encroachment may seem minor, the following concerns must be considered:

- The building was built about 2006. Current NYS Law states that if a person openly uses a piece of property for more than 10 years, they may be granted a "prescriptive easement" allowing them to continue to use it forever.
- This structure is located on property that the association has been paying both school and property taxes on.
- This property is assessed as "unimproved" and by allowing the structure to remain may be grounds for reassessment
  - The association has liability insurance on all its property. The current policy states that "no structures exist on association property". If the building is allowed to remain the insurance premiums may rise or policy may even be cancelled.

The board will continue to work with the property owner in hopes of resolving the concern in a way that is fair to all association members. We would also like some ideas from you. When you pay your dues, there is a space on the dues notice to voice your opinion. As always, feel free to contact any board member on this, or any other topic.



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## THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Last year, the association was contacted by the Nature Conservancy ( <http://www.nature.org>) regarding an invasive species sampling project that they are conducting in the northeast US. They asked for permission to include Melody Lake in their sampling. The topic was brought up and the members in attendance approved the request. The sampling will take place sometime during the summer of 2014. More information will be made when available at an association meeting.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

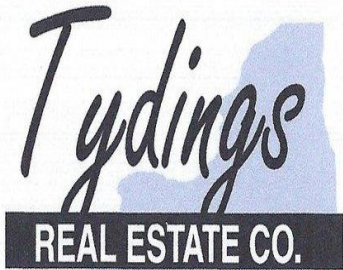
We would like to welcome the following new property owners to Melody Lake:

Tim & Valarie Stafford of Unadilla, NY are the new owners of 1336 Melody Lane  
Tom & Judy Natoli of Endicott, NY are the new owners of 1299 Melody Lane  
Jeff Turner of Round Rock, TX is the new owner of 1343 Melody Lane. We would also like to mention that Jeff applied for, and was granted, a waiver from the Cortland County Health Dept. to install an Enhanced Treatment Unit (ETU) septic system. This system is quite costly but will probably be the most environmentally friendly septic system on Melody Lake..... THANKS JEFF !!!!!!!



## POLAR BEAR CLUB IS GROWING

This year the Melody Lake Polar Bear Club gained a few more participants. Even though the weather was a balmy 16° and the water was around 38° Association President Bob Rosati was joined by his grandson Marcus, Association Treasurer Steve Smith, Bob's daughters' fiancée Jason Montabone and Debbie Goga (Debbie was a past co-owner of 6053 Melody Lake Rd). This is an almost annual event that takes place every New Years' Day at 12 noon. **The event is not sponsored or endorsed by Melody Lake Association and all participants are required to sign a release relieving the association and any other property owners from any liability.**




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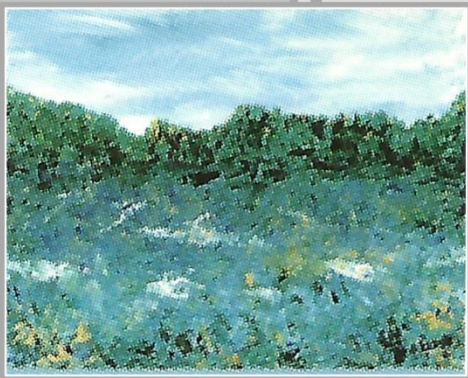
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## WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN...AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MELODY LAKE???

Over the years, we continue to hear terms describing the quality of Melody Lake. What do our testing programs show, where are we now, and where do we hope to be? Let's look at some of the information we do have so far.

**Eutrophication** is a natural aging process where water bodies receive excess nutrients that stimulate excessive plant and algae growth. Lakes are divided into three trophic categories: oligotrophic, mesotrophic, and eutrophic. The oligotrophic lake is a large deep lake with crystal clear waters and a rocky or sandy shoreline. Both planktonic and rooted plant growth are sparse and the lake can support a coldwater fishery. A eutrophic lake is typically shallow with a soft and mucky bottom. Rooted plant growth is abundant along the shore and out into the lake, and algal blooms are not unusual. Water clarity is not good and the water often has a tea color. If deep enough to thermally stratify, the bottom waters are devoid of oxygen. Mesotrophic is an intermediate trophic state with characteristics between the other two. In order to satisfy the wishes of most lake users we should probably attempt to aim for the mesotrophic state. Eutrophication poses a problem not only to ecosystems, but to humans as well. Reducing eutrophication should be a key concern when considering future lake management and a sustainable solution for everyone. Unfortunately Melody Lake continues to have a higher than desired nutrient level making it a eutrophic lake.

**Cultural eutrophication** is the process that speeds up natural eutrophication because of human activity such as clearing of land and building of structures which affect land runoff to be accelerated and more nutrients such as phosphates and nitrate being supplied to the lake.

**Phosphorus** is an important nutrient that controls the growth of algae and plant growth. Too much phosphorus can harm aquatic life and recreational use by causing excessive algae growth. To be classified in mesotrophic category phosphorus should be in the .010 - .020 mg/l range however in recent years the level starts out in the .017-.019 range in the mid-spring and rises to .026 -.033 range as the human activity of the lake rises.

**Chlorophyll a** is measured to estimate the amount of algae in a lake. The amount of chlorophyll a is usually closely related to the amount of phosphorus and can also affect water clarity. The chlorophyll a level of a mesotrophic lake would be between 2 - 8 µg/l. In early summer, Melody Lake may be as low as 6.4 µg/l but by late summer may rise as high as 28.2 µg/l.

**Transparency or Clarity** is measured by lowering a secchi disk, which is a black and white disk, into the water and measuring the depth at which the disk disappears from sight. The deeper the depth, the clearer the water and the less algal productivity is present. The level of a mesotrophic lake would be between 2 – 5 meters. Early in the season at Melody Lake, the secchi disk reading will measure at about 2.45 meters but by late summer will decrease to less than 1.10 meters.

**Dissolved Oxygen (DO)** is critical for the ecological balance of a lake. Low DO in bottom waters can affect the survival of fish and lake organisms and cause chemical changes in the lakes. Although DO is not a part of our regular sampling program due to the specialized equipment necessary, with the help of the Cortland County Soil and Water staff we are able to take this reading periodically. Tests show that the surface waters contain 9.6 mg/l of DO but continue to decrease to .6 mg/l at the depth of 15'

All of the above may have a large impact on the high algae levels in Melody Lake. Anything we can do to decrease the numbers will have a positive result in the quality of our lake. The readings above are based on the 2012 sampling season since the results of the 2013 season are not yet available. We will look at the results from 2013 at one of the association meetings in 2014.

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## DON'T EMBARRASS YOUR INVITED GUESTS

Every winter, we see people we don't recognize ice fishing on the lake. When asked to see a guest pass, they don't have one but mention the name of a property owner some place on the lake. Many times, their vehicle and the lot that they gained access to the lake are different from the property owner that they said gave them permission to fish the lake. If they cannot produce a guest pass, they will be asked to leave and if they refuse a law enforcement officer will be called. Several years ago, a guest pass system was approved by the association members. These guest passes were to be used to extend your rights to your invited guests when you were not able to be present. They were not meant to allow them to park on the property of others, or gain access to the lake through the property of others, without the permission of that property owner. Every association member should have a limited number of these guest passes to give to their invited guests. Access to the lake should be through your property or right of way and the vehicle should be parked on your property or the property of another member that has given you permission. Remember, parking on Melody Lake Rd is strictly prohibited and enforced. Also, please tell your guests to take all their garbage, including unused bait, beer and soda cans, and even cigarette butts home with them. Right now, there are 2 or 3 versions of guest passes which will be honored. During 2014 we will attempt to develop a new version of the guest pass which will be distributed to all property owners. At that time, all other versions will become void. These guest passes are not meant to lessen your rights to the lake but should decrease the liability to the association and its members in the event of an accident. Thanks for your understanding.



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HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

*(phone and email will be used for official association business and will not be shared)*

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Please use the space below to let us know your thoughts on the following topics:

- 1) What should the association do when a member refuses to pay dues or only pays partial dues?  
(see page 6 )
  
- 2) What should the association do when a member extends their property by placing a structure or other improvement on association property? (see page 11)
  
- 3) Do you have any concerns that you think the Board should be addressing?

THANKS !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!