

MELODY LAKE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE MELODY LAKE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

FEBRUARY 2021

You may remember that the theme of last year's newsletter was "*LOOKING AHEAD WITH 20/20 VISION*". Seemed like a good topic at the time, but within a week or so after the newsletter went out, the whole world went to hell. We were made aware of a virus, or pandemic, that would turn our whole life upside down. The health of our lake was put on a back burner while we attempted to worry and concentrate on the health of our family. We were told to stay home as much as possible. From the beginning the major concern was a hoarding of toilet paper. Mega stores such as Walmart and Target remained open while many of the local small businesses, churches and even schools were told to close. Several of our members made the decision that if they were going to quarantine, they would be moving to Melody Lake for some peace and quiet while doing whatever was necessary via the internet to remain educated or employed. They would also attempt to enjoy the lake and friends while maintaining the suggested "Social Distancing". As far as we know, things went well and none of our members or their immediate families was diagnosed with the virus.

In this newsletter we will continue to look at what we can all do to improve the quality of Melody Lake and the association in general. We continue to have problems and this past year was no different, but by making some minor adjustments to our way of life, Melody Lake will continue to be a place to enjoy and relax for generations to come. You might not agree with everything that has been going on but our final goal must be to fulfill the wishes of the majority of our members while still maintaining, or improving, the quality of our lake.

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Remember that the 2021 dues are due no later than February 15th. If yours are not yet paid please send a check for \$100 made payable to "Melody Lake Association" to Steve Smith, 824 Tyler St, Johnson City NY 13790. You will be sent your 2021 guest passes when your dues are paid in full.

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 – Theresa Tyner (352)597-1211

exitviprealty@gmail.com

Secretary – Kelly Cerroni (607)760-2311 kellycccc7@gmail.com

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

Member at Large – Bob Eastman (607)722-3294,

bob@ceserve.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 – 1-844-332-3267 (24 hr)

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

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)

Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation – 756-5991

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 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.

THE MEETINGS FOR MELODY LAKE ASSOCIATION FOR 2021 WILL BE HELD AT 12:00 NOON ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST. ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD AT THE WILLET TOWN HALL (unless decided otherwise). MEETING DATES FOR 2020 ARE:

JUNE 13th

JULY 11th

AUGUST 8th

ASSOCIATION PICNIC –to be decided

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 2nd Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM. The meetings for 2021 are:

January 14th

February 11th

March 11th

April 8th

May 13th

June 10th

July 8th

August 12th

September 9th

October 14th

November 11th

December 9th

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. Also remember that “off road” vehicles (ATV's, UTV's, etc.) are not allowed on any association property including Melody Lane and the pasture property and other rights of way.

A Few Words From The Presidents's Desk:

By Bob Rosati

WOW, 2020 will be a year that most of us will never forget. Before the ink on the 2020 newsletter had a chance to dry, our whole world started to fall apart and took life as we knew it at Melody Lake along with it. Association meetings were held outside so "social distancing" could be practiced. The annual association picnic was canceled. Just seeing people walking around the lake with masks seemed more like a zombie movie and we all realized that the life we had known was now on hold and certain things would have to be done to protect us from others and others from us. While I can't speak for others, I am convinced that life will return to normal and life at Melody Lake will continue to improve.

In this newsletter we will continue to look back on what we have done to improve Melody Lake and what we have allowed to be done that might have hurt it. We will also look ahead to see what changes should be done or should not be done to protect the lake we have all invested in. While I do admit that I have my own agenda to protect the lake I also realize that we do have many new owners that may have some different and maybe even better ideas as to how to improve our lake and the association. Keep in mind that by the end of this year, you will have a chance to elect a new board of directors to lead the association as we move forward to 2022 and beyond. Every 2 years, I announce that I am not running for reelection. Also, every 2 years I am contacted by many members asking me to reconsider. Many feel that with my 36 years of working with NYS Conservation Dept. I was the most qualified to lead the association forward. I confess that while I had very little knowledge to help us move forward, I did know personally the experts to guide us. Now that most of my contacts have retired, or maybe even died, most of this "knowledge" is available online for anyone willing to take on the responsibility.

So....many ask....what is the benefit of taking on the responsibility of the position of Association President? Personally, I feel the #1 benefit is this newsletter to explain, or maybe even vent, my ideas or concerns regarding the future of our lake. I must admit that 2020 was a year that I am glad to see end. Some things occurred during 2020 that kept life for a few in turmoil. For the first time in many years we had to spend money on attorney fees. In fact we have put aside \$1000 in our 2021 budget for attorney services and may need more. We have been lucky in the past without this type of expenditures but last year we were challenged by members and non members, invited and uninvited guests throughout the entire summer. Throughout this newsletter we will look at some of the challenges we have faced and what may be coming up in the future.

I must admit that being on the board is not as easy, or rewarding, as it was in the past. It seems that we have a few "Monday Morning Quarterbacks" that question or challenge us every step of the way. Even though the NYS Not For Profit Corporation law is taken into consideration whenever we make a questionable decision, those that are not happy with the decision want us to seek legal advice to explain why we did what we did. It seems more and more frequent that people buy into the Melody Lake sub-division knowing what the rules are but then get upset when we try to stop them from breaking the rules.

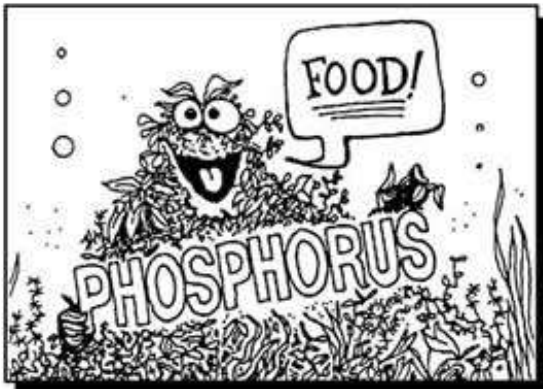
Try to understand that it is impossible to please all 86 members. We must attempt to make our decisions based on protecting the lake PERIOD. Earlier in 2020 I received an email ***stating "MLA wants to control the property owners with "Lake Police". I use my cottage to get away from everyday living and I don't go there to be "Supervised or someone looking over my shoulder 24/7" by the MLA."*** My reply was ***"Not sure what you mean by "Lake Police". All we are trying to do is keep out the people that don't belong here and also keep the people that do belong here from doing something that is harmful to the lake. Believe me, there are many lakes around that have no one in charge and no rules and the water isn't fit to swim in. If you can give me some examples of your concerns perhaps I can address them."*** I never did hear back.

Over the years, I have noticed that my groups of "true" friends seem to be getting smaller. But when I take a good look at who they are, I must admit that QUALITY IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN QUANTITY.

In the meantime, please remember: **"As property owners on Melody Lake, we have the obligation to alter our way of life to protect Melody Lake, rather than to alter Melody Lake to protect our way of life."**

CAN YOU HAVE “TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING”???

The definite answer is....MAYBE. Let's take a look at phosphorus levels in Melody Lake. Phosphorus is an essential nutrient for plants, animals and humans. It is one of the 20 most abundant of known elements in the solar system. Under most conditions phosphorus in freshwater is typically scarce and is considered a “limiting nutrient”. Less than 10 parts per billion (ppb) is considered nutrient poor and will not support necessary quantities of algae or aquatic plants. In water however, even a small increase in phosphorus concentrations can increase to unacceptable level of algae, including cyanobacteria resulting in dangerous and maybe even deadly harmful algal blooms (HAB). These increases could come from both natural sources such as waterfowl waste, atmospheric deposition, runoff from land from somewhere else in our watershed, etc. and human activities such as faulty septic systems, pet waste, sediment from yard runoff, grass clippings, etc..



So, what is the level of phosphorus in Melody Lake? Although it changes throughout the summer, starting around 16 ppb in late May or early June and rising thru the summer to the mid to upper 20's by the end of August. Several years ago we tried to blame the people upstream of our lake. We paid extra to the CSLAP program which allowed us to sample the lake at the main inlet. The results showed that the water coming into the lake was better than the water leaving the lake at our normal test site down by the dam. That leads us to believe that our problem is being caused by us.

Remember, More **phosphorus = less fish**

Excess phosphorus increases algal growth. As algae die and decay, the water is robbed of dissolved oxygen. This can devastate fish populations if it occurs for a long period of time or the fish have nowhere else to go.

Another concern regarding phosphorus is the lack of vegetation in Melody Lake. Several years ago an over stocking of grass carp depleted almost 100% of both our native and our exotic aquatic vegetation. Since there was no longer vegetation to use up the excess phosphorus it increased to unacceptable levels. If nothing is done to lower them, our next concern may very well be more frequent harmful algal blooms. By just encouraging more desired vegetation we could lower our phosphorus, lower our algae population and also increase our dissolved oxygen level.

So how do we do that? It is difficult to do anything regarding the “natural” sources, there are many simple things you can do to lower the “manmade” sources.

- Plant native shrubs or vegetation to reduce erosion along your shoreline.
- Slow down stormwater runoff by allowing it to soak into the lawn to allow the sediment to filter out before entering the lake
- Inspect, maintain or upgrade your septic system
- Mow your lawn to a higher height to slow down runoff into the lake
- Leave a buffer zone between your maintained lawn and the waters edge
- Clean up pet waste
- Do not allow leaves or yard waste from entering the lake
- Don't burn brush close to the waters edge
- Avoid lawn fertilizer when possible. If necessary, then only use phosphate free fertilizer.
- Consider building a rain garden where runoff from your land is channeled to a low spot where plants that thrive on wet habitat allowing sediment to settle before draining into the lake.

I know you've heard it before and you will probably hear again. The actions of one or two property owners might not be a big deal but think about what Melody Lake would be if everyone did what you are doing. While we don't have much control over what you do on your own property, once that practice starts affecting the quality of the lake, there is plenty we can and will do to protect Melody Lake.

Sand in the lake

While we've used sand for decades to build beaches, it is now recognized that sand can have a negative impact on the water quality and overall health of the lake. We are already seeing some of these undesirable effects such as algae blooms, decrease in lake depth, loss of fish habitat and apparent decline in fish population. While sand is not the only cause of these problems, it is the easiest one for us to control – simply by not adding any more of it. Here are some of the ways that sand degrades the lake

Silting.

Sand does not stay put. Every footstep on the beach pushes it downhill towards the water and it drifts with the current and wind.. A study by the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife has shown that exposed sand blows from one spot to another, moves with rain and snow melt and ends up where it's not intended. Sand that doesn't drift away eventually works its way into the lake bottom, and even though we may not see it, it's still in the lake.

Water clarity.

Sand is different from native lakebed soil. A study by the Town of New Hartford, CT showed that because sand drifts easily in water, it clouds it, preventing UV light from disinfecting bacteria in the lake, a natural process that is necessary for maintaining good water quality. As rainwater and snowmelt run over the sand they pick up this silt, it goes into suspension in the lake, and can be transported significant distances. The smallest/lightest particles are the last to settle, and thus the first to be stirred up by aquatic animals, humans or even wind fetch induced currents or the annual temperature induced turnover.

Biological Impact.

According to the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council in northern Michigan, deposited sand has major biological impacts on the lake ecology. Sand deposited and drifted along the shore and lake bottom can smother bottom-dwelling algae and invertebrates, reduce the amount of aquatic and shoreline habitat for fish and crayfish, destroy spawning and nesting sites for reptiles and amphibians, and disrupt the food chain. Fine sand particles suspended in clouded water may clog the gills of our lake fish that are not adapted to a sandy environment. This threatens our fish.

Chemical Impact.

Sand may contain a number of contaminants that will wash into the lake water changing its natural chemistry. As an example, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services reports that sand can encourage the growth of iron bacteria that create rust-colored slime deposits and oil-like films as they oxidize the iron." Sand usually contains phosphorus which is a major contributor to the decline of lake quality; It washes into the lake essentially fertilizing it. According to a study funded by the Maine and US Departments of Environmental Protection, one pound of phosphorus can produce tens of thousands of pounds of algae! As the lake becomes shallower from erosion and silting, there is less volume of water in which these toxins and other contaminants can be diluted. Sand is not the only source of contamination in the lake (bigger culprits are run-off from our septic systems, roads and lawns), but it contributes and it is something we can control easily.

By controlling the use of sand along our shoreline we can reduce the amount of phosphorus we add to the lake, help to prevent additional silting and maintain water depth, temperature, clarity and quality. This will help control algae as well as help restore the natural chemistry of the lake, something that is important for fish and other invertebrates that call our lake their home. The lake is our community's greatest asset, let's keep it healthy.



Photo by association member Barb Wortman

OUR OWN POT OF GOLD AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW

By Bob Rosati

Ask anyone that has ever been to Melody Lake and most will agree that we are quite fortunate to have such a quiet and peaceful spot to sit and relax and watch the world go by. After attending statewide lake association conferences I have heard how lucky we are by not allowing motorboats or jet skis on the lake. The COVID 19 quarantine made it even more obvious that the world would be a better place if more people had a place like this to run away to. In 2021, let's forget how we are all different and concentrate on what we have in common. The main thing we do have in common is property ownership at our beautiful lake which is truly our POT OF GOLD!

WHY DO WE NEED YOUR UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION?

NYS Not For Profit Law requires that all not for profit corporations maintain a membership list complete with contact information. Although the law does not specifically state what information is necessary we try to have email addresses and phone #'s of all members. These help us to keep you informed, contact you in an emergency and even share the minutes of the meetings. Even this newsletter can be shared without the time and cost of making copies and paying postage. By having this information we can instantly inform you in the event of a suspected, or confirmed, harmful algal bloom. Maybe even a reminder when the dues are due or sending additional guest passes. Over the past several years we were able to notify a property owner of a serious fire at their cottage, a tree down on their roof, a possible break in and even a several day road closure due to road maintenance. The board should not be expected to make 86 phone calls or send out 86 letters when the same message could be sent with 1 push of a button. This information will not be shared or sold and will only be used for association business. If you are not receiving this newsletter electronically but have received it in the mail, that probably means we do not have your email address. Also, please remember to inform us if any of this information changes. Send any corrections to our Association Secretary Kelly Cerroni. Her contact information can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. THANKS!!

Melody Lake Artwalk 2020

By Kelly Cerroni & Andrea Eastman

The first Melody Lake Artwalk was held on Saturday, August 15, 2020 from 10-1 p.m. When Andrea Eastman and I first talked about this, we were unsure how successful it would be as we did not have a good sense of who would be interested in this type of event or how to safely hold it during the Covid pandemic. We decided to proceed with it because it was an outdoor event and people could maintain a 6 foot distance from each other as well as wear masks.



The association was also leaning towards canceling the MLA annual picnic due to protecting the safety of our members during Covid so we thought that the Artwalk could be an acceptable alternative. To our surprise and excitement, we had many people participate and we sincerely thank them for their amazing contribution to this event. We had crafters, bakers, artists, candy makers, yoga class, jewelers, ceramics, lemonade and vegetable stands, products for sale, etc. The weather was perfect for walking around the lake to visit the various stations and learning about the incredible talent we have in our beautiful lake community.

Also, this was a fantastic opportunity to meet and speak to so many members that we knew very little about prior to this event. It was a great way to bond our wonderful association together, share our talents, and even make new friends. We received many positive comments on the Artwalk and we would love to hear your ideas for other future events for MLA.

Due to the success of this event, we anticipate bringing it back in 2021. We encourage all members to participate in any way they would like and we will look to include new things for the next Artwalk.

Stay safe, happy, and healthy. Looking forward to a great 2021 for our Melody Lake Association; we are truly blessed and fortunate to be property owners at such an incredible NYS lake!



YOGA @ MELODY LAKE

By Jen Dayton

Summer 2020 at Melody Lake was memorable, magical and brought so much joy. From the start of the Summer seeing friendly faces at the lake to the Art Walk that brought the community closer together and Saturday Yoga classes that formed a new tradition.

I was honored to offer an open level Yoga class as part of the Art Walk that transitioned into a weekend class. It brings a smile to think of the blue skies up above, the sound of nature and seeing us looking out at the glimmering lake. There was a peace and a special magic in these moments and for that I am grateful. Below are a few photos from our classes. I hope to continue a new tradition of weekend classes and will see you next Summer!

TESTING FOR INVASIVES - I'm sure most of you are aware of the working relationship between Melody Lake Association and the Cortland County Soil & Water Conservation District (CCSWCD). In early 2020 they applied for and received a \$20,000 grant to survey certain Cortland County lakes, including Melody Lake, to identify invasive plants and other invasive species to find ways to lessen, or eradicate their presence. For Melody Lake, this would include our Chinese Mystery Snail. It would also help us to identify the vegetation that is slowly returning into our lake so we can try to encourage the good while we try to eliminate the bad. On August 14th I met with Kathy McGrath and Hanna Whalen from CCSWCD and association member Sara Warner and in a pontoon boat donated by Ken and Jan Krna we set out on the lake to sample several sites throughout the lake. Bill Matola stood close by in his pontoon boat just in case more volunteers might show up. We spent several hours out on the lake and by using what is known as the rake toss method we sampled the bottom of the lake.

<https://nysfola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Rake-Toss-NYSFOLA2010.pdf> It was no surprise that the entire bottom of the lake showed almost no vegetation. All we came up with was leaves, branches and mud. We then moved to the shoreline in a few places and did take some samples of vegetation starting to return to Melody Lake. Pictures and/or samples of each were collected to be identified. Everywhere we went we saw a huge population presence of the Chinese Mystery Snails and Bryzoans which maybe the target of an additional study. We will share the results of this study when it becomes available.

The Chinese Mystery Snail

(*Cipangopaludina chinensis malleata*) is the latest concern to Melody Lake. The snails are native to East Asia, but were brought into the U.S. in the late 19th century as a possible food source, and appeared in New York a few decades later. They are called “mystery” snails because in spring, they give birth to young, fully developed snails that suddenly and mysteriously appear.

The Threat

Chinese Mystery Snails achieve very high densities and adversely affects aquatic food webs. It competes with native snails for food and habitat and may contribute to their decline. They may also transmit parasites and diseases. One of the main identification features of the mystery snails is their size. Adult snails are over 1 ½ inches in length (snail shell length is measured from the lip of the shell to the tip of the whorl). Shell color varies from olive green to brown to reddish brown. The shell has 6-7 whorls and no banding. They have an operculum (trapdoor), which seals off the snail from adverse water conditions.



We did contact DEC to see what information they had regarding the Mystery Snail. Their reply was: *Thank you for your inquiry. Mystery (Chinese and Japanese) snails are currently listed as Prohibited under our invasive species regulations known as 6 NYCRR Part 575. This means that they can no longer be legally sold or purchased in NYS. Other than that, we do not have a lot of material available on the species. I am cc'ing our AIS coordinator Cathy in case she has more to offer.*

We also came across the following from Sierra Club.

The Chinese mystery snail has taken up residence in waterways all over the United States, including the Pacific coast, the Northeast's rivers, and the Great Lakes. The snails grow to about the size of a golf ball, reproduce rapidly, and compete with imperiled native snails. During the warmer months, they're easy to find and collect. Keep them in a water-filled bucket for a few days to purge them of pollutants, then boil them, extract their meat, and use them as you would clams.

Snail chowder, anyone????



**AFTER 21 YEARS AND 8949 PERFORMANCES
THE BROADWAY MUSICAL "CATS" HAS
CLOSED DUE TO THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC**

BUT DON'T WORRY.....CATS ARE STILL PLAYING EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK AROUND MELODY LAKE

Call them what you want, feral, untamed, stray, abandoned, you have probably noticed an overabundance of cats roaming all around the Melody Lake neighborhood. While many of you thought they were cute and needed to be fed, when summer was over they were abandoned and left to fend for themselves. No problem, there are still a handful of members that have stayed for the winter. These cats have found us and decided to make our home their home. Since much of their food source such as mice are safely and comfortably tucked away in your cottage for the winter their survival is getting tougher. Many of the people that are here, along with help from a few of you that have left have been attempting to help them. Early in the winter, the Wortmans tried caring for them and with the help of Jessica Grr and Chris Scales to make sure that they were fed whenever they showed up. They also provided a shelter for them to sleep in. Then 4 of the cats started wandering and ended up at the Rosati's. Animal shelters were called, ASPCA was contacted, the town animal control officer was contacted but we got the same answer "quit feeding them and they will just go away and die somewhere or learn to fend for themselves". That might sound ok to many, but not for us. While these roaming cats are neat to have around when you are visiting in the summer, one thing for sure is that cats that are not spayed or neutered are good for one thing and that is to make MORE CATS. We have built them some warm beds, made sure they have food and water, and are making it a priority to help them survive the winter. One found a permanent home with Sean and Amy Clark and has been given the shots and "fixed" and we hear that it is adjusting quite well. We are attempting to humanely trap the other 4 and take them to the Spay, Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP) in Cortland where they will be examined, given their shots, spay or neutered and then brought back to the lake and released. While some of them will never trust humans enough to be a pet, those that seem to be somewhat manageable will be also microchipped and available for adoption. This is not cheap but is being done with donations to SNAP and is much cheaper than taking them to a vet. So far the project has been funded by Bob and Carol Rosati, Bob and Andrea Eastman, Sara Warner and Mary Jo Watts. After their visit to SNAP there is a short rest period required. Thanks to the generosity of Scott Harris we have turned his shed into a "recovery room" where they need to be kept resting for a few days. If you would like to help with the project, please give us a call. In the meantime, when you are visiting your cottage and see a cat wandering around, please don't try to encourage it to stay around unless you are willing to provide it TOTAL care.

UPDATE (January 16, 2021): Early this morning the youngest...a 3 or 4 month female kitten was captured by Bob & Carol and taken to SNAP at 7 AM. The kitten remained there for the day and was picked up at 8 PM and is resting in the "recovery room". She has received all her shots, was spayed, wormed and microchipped and is ready for adoption. Her name is "**Melody**" and she seems to like some attention and she hopes that this will be her last winter to live out in the cold. Anyone interested????? If you can make the commitment to keep her as an inside pet, please give Bob & Carol a call (607)863-4425.



WELCOME AND GOOD-BYE:

By Bob Rosati

In 2020 we had to say good-bye to a few long time neighbors, while saying hello to some new ones. We also had an opportunity to say hello to some new, old friends. Sounds confusing? Well let's take a closer look.

2020 was a busy year for many members. Due to the COVID pandemic many had an opportunity to work from home. A few even decided that "home" could be right here at Melody Lake. You couldn't ask for a better place to be quarantined. In mid-March we lost a long time member when Joe Polosky passed away. Joe's son Ken and other family members are keeping the cottage at 1323 Melody Lane in the family. Early 2020, the Scott Harris property at 1361 Melody Lane was sold to Sean and Amy Clark. The Kipp property at 1312 Melody Lane was bought by Adel Alnuairat & Nisreen Yonis. Long time member Marianne Margrave passed away in 2020 and her husband Tom is in the process of selling the cottage @ 1308 Melody Lane. Sherry Zwierzynski decided to sell her empty lot @ 1294 Melody Lane to Randi Troscher. Tim and Terry Rendo is in the process of closing on the sale @ 1311 Melody Lane to Glenn & Jennifer Ackerman. I believe that the Tom Ambrose property @ 1372 Melody Lane is prepared soon to sell to current member Scott Harris. Rudy and Diane Bernard have sold their property at 1290 Melody Lane to Jody & Mary Hines. We have recently found out that Donna Locke has sold the cottage by the dam at 6036 Melody Lake Rd. to Matt and Joanne Sweeny. Matt and Joanne are no strangers to Melody Lake since they have been the users/caretakers of the cottage for the past 16 years. Joanne is also a sponsor of this newsletter.

I hope we haven't forgotten anyone. We welcome our new members and hope that they become active members working with us to protect our beautiful lake.

Spotted Sandpiper

By Sue Boyce



Photo taken along the shore at Cerroni cottage by Association Member Sue Boyce

You may have noticed this shorebird foraging along the water's edge. It is a Spotted Sandpiper (Juvenile). The Cornell Lab reports -- In breeding season Spotted Sandpipers have bold dark spots on their bright white breast and an orange bill. The back is dark brown. In winter, a Spotted Sandpiper's breast is not spotted; it's plain white, while the back is grayish brown and the bill is pale yellow. In flight, Spotted Sandpipers have a thin white stripe along the wing.

Spotted Sandpipers search the shoreline and muddy edges of inlets and creeks, wading less frequently than most sandpipers; inland they feed along the shores of sandy ponds and all types of streams, but sometimes straying into meadows, fields, and gardens in agricultural areas. Typical diet consists of insects, crustaceans and other invertebrates. Nests are built on the ground or water and the female is the one that establishes and defends the territory. During migration, Spotted Sandpipers can be found on the shoreline of rivers, lakes, streams, or ponds. They generally migrate short distances to the southern United States, but sometimes as far as South America. Most adults leave by late July or August; while the juveniles follow by September or October. In the spring, they arrive by the second week in May.



TRYING TO FOLLOW THE LAW:

by Bob Rosati

NYS Not For Profit Corporation Law (NFPCL) covers most of the association's obligations but sometimes requires the hiring of an attorney to make sure we are doing things right. Back 10 or more years ago the association was forced to spend close to 100% of the income from dues to try to make sure that things were done right. For the most part, the decisions turned out in the association's favor.

Several years ago we were sued by an adjacent property owner suggesting that we overstepped the boundary and caused damage to their land. In another case the same property owner claimed that some association officers and members committed some acts against them. In both cases the decision was in favor of the association. Unfortunately it cost us several thousands of dollars to win (?) the case.

Several years ago, an association member who owned a large parcel connected to his association property looked into how he could develop the parcel into several smaller lots and try to "keyhole" the right to the lake thru his lakefront property. Thanks to the hard work of the current association Vice-President Glenn Diego the effort was halted and the By-Laws were changed to prevent the attempt from it happening again.

Sometime the law works in our favor. The NFPCL allows the association to collect dues and fees necessary to carry on the mission of the association. It also allows us to enforce rules and regulations and sue in court to collect fees along with court costs and interest. This was only necessary once about 10 years ago and was decided in the favor of the association.

Many times our rules are questioned by some members and to justify their argument they compare the rules of the "gated community" or "home owners association" they live in while away from the lake. You must realize that laws vary from state to state and there is quite a difference between a not for profit corporation and a profit making home

owners association. Sometimes I wonder why if things are so perfect in their home owners association then why do they rush back to Melody Lake that they are not happy with as soon as the weather up north improves.

For the past several years our attorney fees have been zero. Recently certain members have doubted the decisions of the association board of directors. The most recent concern was that a property owner approached the association asking to purchase part of association property to increase the size of their current property. After looking at the NFPCL the request was denied. Some members objected to the decision and requested that we hire an attorney to see if things were done right. An attorney that specialized in Lake Associations and NYS Not For Profit Law was hired and after spending about \$400 his opinion was; "Under NFPCL, Section 509(b) the decision on this proposal is made by a Board majority and is not subject to any vote of the membership. Assuming the members desire to vote on the issue, such vote-whether for or against-should be regarded as merely advisory. ". The decision goes on to say "a Board should treat all members of the organization similarly. That would suggest that the opportunity given to a single member ought to be offered to all members. This might result in a bidding process". ..."since the association owns several other parcels, by agreeing to the current proposal; you place considerable pressure on the Board not to approve similar requests by other property owners around the lake."

Yes there is a law as to how we are supposed to conduct business but please be patient. Remember the board of directors are volunteers and try their best to follow the law. Let's make spending our money on protecting the lake our priority instead of making members happy and attorneys richer.

INSURANCE

Over the past few years many members have questioned whether the association is adequately insured. It is also recommended that we look into Director's and Officer's Insurance (D&O) which protects the officers and the association if and when they are challenged by a lawsuit while acting in good faith. Our present and future insurance coverage will be a topic at a future meeting in 2021. Please join us and give us your opinion.

A QUICK HISTORY LESSON:

By Bob Rosati

Over the past few years we have had property owners that are new to Melody Lake. It's obvious that our dam is the most important part of the lake. You can see that it is basically built out of dry laid up rocks similar to what a stone wall or fence that can be seen along farm property throughout the area. One might wonder when and why it was built. To answer that question we must look back about 150 years. NYSDEC shows that the dam was built around 1900 however an 1876 map clearly shows a large body of water where Melody Lake is now. What's not clear is was it a swamp, wetland or a lake at the time. At that time, just downstream of the lake, a hamlet of Georgetown was located between here and "downtown" Willet what is now the intersection of German Rd. and State Rt. 41. That area was a booming place at the time complete with a school house, dry goods store, bar, several houses and a church. Also there was a tannery and at least two mills for lumber and grain. Both of these mills were water powered and as the hamlet grew, so did the need for a constant supply of water. At first, a dam was constructed forming what is now Stump Pond. Shortly after a second dam was constructed forming Ellis Pond, now known as Melody Lake. At that time, drains were built into the bottom of the dam to allow the flow of water to be controlled. At that time the entire population was 882 and today is still just a little over 1000. As the mills shut down there was no longer the need for water. Much of Georgetown was washed away in the floods of the mid 1930's. A large portion of the main part of Willet was also severely damaged. Now all that is left of Georgetown is 3 or 4 houses and empty fields.

At that time there were only about 3 houses on Ellis Pond. By looking at the map a house owned by H. Greene across the road from the dam, T.L. Sternberg about where the Matola property is now, and I. Leach about where the Sudbrink property is located. The property around the lake would remain in private ownership until the early 1960's when it was subdivided into 100+ parcels and sold. In 1965 the lake, dam, Melody Lane and a couple right of ways were deeded to newly formed Not For Profit Corporation of Melody Lake Association. The deeds for all property within the subdivision allow the use of the lake and association property but also state that ***"This conveyance is made and accepted subject to the by-laws, rules and regulations adopted or hereafter adopted by Melody Lake Association Inc."***

So now let's take a good look at the dam itself. Melody Lake is a manmade reservoir located off of State Route 41 on Melody Lake Rd, approximately 2 ¼ miles northeast of the downtown section of the Town of Willet. The elevation of the lake is 1402' with a normal surface area of 43.61 acres (410 acre feet). The maximum depth of the lake is 17' with an average of 8-10'. The watershed is mainly undeveloped and is approximately 1 ½ square miles.

Melody Lake Dam is constructed of native stone rubble, dry laid without an apparent key into the bedrock underlying the structure. The dam is of the gravity type which relies on the mass weight of the structure to insure it's stability against sliding. The original dam was approximately 120' long and 27' high with a 34 ½' wide spillway. In 1980, the dam was inspected by the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation and was found to have an inadequate spillway capacity required by a Class C, High Hazard Dam and was ordered to be either modified or removed. Over the next several years, the spillway was expanded to 106' which exceeded the requirements of 50% PMF. Also, at that time, a drain was installed which would allow the lake to be lowered to an elevation of 1395'. Since the dam is of the gravity type, and the expanded spillway would decrease the weight of the dam, a 12' wide x 6 ½' high rockfill buttress was constructed along the downstream toe of the dam.

Melody Lake Dam is considered a Class C, High Hazard Dam. A recent Dam Engineering Assessment was completed by Urda Engineering in 2014-2015. The result of this assessment shows that a complete failure of the dam would affect approximately 19 residences resulting in no anticipated serious personal injury or loss of life.

Want to know more about the history of the area. Send us your questions and they just may be answered in the future editions of "*Melody Lake News*".

NEW SIGNS AROUND THE LAKE:



You may have noticed some new signs installed around the lake. Association member Bill Matola expressed his concern about the speeding on Melody Lake Rd. The speed limit has been 30 mph for years but to ask the police to enforce it hasn't been too successful. A letter was written from the association to the county and state police asking that they try to be seen in the area more frequent. In the meantime the town purchased a couple "SLOW Children Playing" signs which were installed by Rob Pigott, a friend of Bob & Carol's. Rob also made and installed some new signs on Melody Lane. Even though he agreed to do them at no cost, we did purchase a \$50 Lowes gift card. Early this winter, the stop sign was knocked down but was reinstalled by association member Scott Harris. Thanks to everyone that worked on this project.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

By Bob Rosati

Several times every year we are asked by members how they can get in tiuch with their neighbor. It's amazing that most lots are only 50' wide, we have to be asked who lives next door to you. In the winter months and you live here full time you learn to appreciate your neighbor even more. On the night of 12/17 they were predicting about 8-9 inches of snow. I was surprised to wake up to 30" or more. I already heard some machinery running and by the time I shoveled a path to my 80 year old tractor, Melody Lane had already been plowed out by my neighbors Eric Larsen and Brett Hammond. I did have a chance to participate with some final cleanup. Later in the day, Scott Harris came and did some better clean up. There are times when you can walk by neighbors with a simple "Hello" but it is times like these you can really appreciate having good neithbors.

NYS FUN FACTS:

Syracuse had the country's first drive-thru bank teller window.

New York State has 62 counties, 62 cities, 553 villages and 932 towns

New York has 390 miles of inland waterways, ranking it 22nd in the nation

It is estimated that 90 billion gallons of rain fall in New York State per day (40 inches per year)

The only two-story brick outhouse in America is located in Phelps (Ontario County). In case you are wondering, it is a *six-holer*: Three up and three down

Comment Period Open for Draft Sunfish and Crappie Management Plan

If you've ever fished for bluegill, pumpkinseed or crappie, you know that not only are they fun to catch, but also that they make an excellent meal. What if you had the opportunity to catch even bigger sunfish and crappie (think dinner plate size)? DEC just released a draft sunfish and crappie management plan that seeks to provide better angling opportunities by adjusting daily harvest and minimum size limits. This draft plan is based on recent research and an online angler survey that indicated support for more conservative sunfish fishing regulations. The draft plan is available on DEC's <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7977.html>. DEC will accept public comments through **February 15, 2021**

Also, DEC is looking into some new bass regulations. Make sure to check on the status of the current fishing regulations before going fishing this year.



Maybe this will explain why the fishing was so lousy in 2020 !!!

NYS FUN FACTS:

New York was the first state to require people to use license plates on vehicles.

New York City is the birth place of the United State's first pizzeria which opened its doors in 1905.

The Cross Island Chapel is the world's smallest church at just 3.5 feet X 6 feet (1.06 meters x 1.82 meters); it is located in the town of Oneida, New York.

SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

On the next several pages you will see the people that help make this newsletter possible. Most have been with us for multiple years. Many of them are association members that still pay extra to support us. All of these businesses are small family owned and have had an extra difficult time surviving the numerous closures of COVID 19. We would like to say THANKS to all of them with a special thanks to Cincinnatus Home Center who not only supports us here but also donates several door prizes to raffle off at our association meetings or other events. Please make it a practice to patronize all of them whenever possible and when you do make sure to say THANKS for their support.

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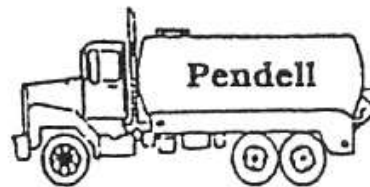
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