

THE HALFMOON LAKE ASSOCIATION
SECRETARY'S REPORT
August 28, 2011

The second annual meeting of the Halfmoon Lake Association was called to order at 10:10 am with 33 members present. The meeting was held at Camp Mi-Te-Na.

President Roger Hatch asked if any new members were present, at which time Steve and Gail Bessette introduced themselves from 6 Crescent Drive. Welcome to the Bessettes!

The scheduled guest speaker, Jay Aube, Program Outreach Coordinator with Shoreland Protection, NH Dept of Environmental Services, was unable to join us. Vice President, Bill Mannion, proceeded to outline some of the talking points which Mr. Aube was prepared to discuss. One of the major topics of interest to most present was the discovery of cyanobacteria (i.e., green/blue algae) in Halfmoon Lake within the last few weeks. Bill explained that cyanobacteria are photosynthetic, meaning it gets its energy from the sun. It is a primitive, naturally occurring bacteria which increases as the nutrients in the water increase. It is displeasing in sight, odor and taste as well as potentially toxic to domestic animals, livestock, waterfowl and humans.

Cyanobacteria are a potential public health danger because they may produce toxins. Blooms of these primitive cyanobacteria have caused adverse health affects. DES has advised against swimming and drinking the lake water when the bacteria is present.

When asked if this bacteria was ever discovered on the lake in the past, Mike Fedorchak responded that it had, but not to the degree that it did this time. When asked if the cyanobacteria is concentrated in areas being fertilized or if it was random, Mike replied that it seemed to be random. It wasn't witnessed in the cove area, but more so in the deepest parts of the main lake.

One of the major contributors to cyanobacteria is the use of phosphates. DES prohibits the use of fertilizer closer than 25 ft from shore; between 25 and 250 ft from shore only low phosphate, slow release nitrogen fertilizer may be used. Keeping our septic systems maintained will also help keep nutrients from leaching through the soil into nearby streams or lakes. One member suggested that owners use lake water for their grass. President Hatch asked if we could commit, as a group, not to use fertilizer (containing phosphates) for lawns and the attendees indicated unanimous support.

Nina Kelly then read the Secretary's Report of the July 10, 2011 meeting. On a motion by Mike Fedorchak and seconded by John Wheeler, the members voted to accept the minutes as read.

Linda Bramante, who reported a beginning balance of \$8,373.15, read the Treasurer's Report. Income to date equates to \$2105, where she has collected \$1625 in dues, \$260 in t-shirt sales, \$20 books, \$100 donation, and \$100 from the Town of Alton. Expenses totaled \$1,864.39 to include \$300 to the NH Lakes Assn, postage, printing, labels, t-shirts, water testing, and donation in memory of George "Fitzy" Fitzpatrick. This leaves us with a current balance of \$8,807.29. On a motion by Pat Mannion and seconded by Mike Fedorchak, the members voted to accept the Treasurer's Report as read.

OLD BUSINESS

Mike Fedorchak reported on the findings of the water testing. He stated that the results were comparable to 2009/2010. He plans to arrange for the reports for the last three months to be posted on the new website. The first test in June was scheduled prior to the budget cuts. No further biology tests will be conducted by DES until 2013; due to the budget cuts, their staff can't perform the tests and we would have to borrow equipment to conduct testing ourselves. We saved \$120 on testing this year by taking out some e-coli tests according to state guidelines.

Mike stated that Halfmoon Lake is still considered to be one of the cleanest lakes in the state of NH. Years ago we had problems with run-off from the horse farm, but that was resolved. Roger Hatch asked the members to extend their appreciation to our lake volunteers – Mike and Deb Fedorchak, Linda and Frank Bramante, Larry Holt, Jim Rye and Dugie – for all their time and effort in ensuring and preserving our water quality throughout the year. Roger also stated that the committee planned to work with DES to address further run-off issues in the off-season.

Linda Bramante discussed the status of milfoil on the lake, recounting that although they had found milfoil in the fall, when they returned to the cove area in the spring, they found there was none to report at this time. They're not sure how that can happen. She will contact DES to further discuss. She stated that Cliff Brown volunteered to be part of the Milfoil Committee. Jim Rye reported that he had found what he thought to be milfoil 2-3 weeks ago; it was floating, not rooted. Mike F added that it was in the cove area, near South Shore Drive across from the ramp. Roger suggested that we may consider getting

students or Boy Scouts to volunteer for community service much like the Lake Host Program, or we could apply for grants before the boating season. John Wheeler stated that there are very few boats that are launched during the week – generally 1-2 over the weekend. Most come from the Alton launch. He offered to start/maintain a log whereby we could at least be aware of the amount of boat traffic we have coming in to the lake. Paul Hersom noted that there are no signs at the North Barnstead ramp, and there seems to be reduced boat traffic.

Bill Mannion reported that the Alton Milfoil Committee will recommend that the selectmen award an \$18,000 expenditure this year to harvest milfoil., focusing chiefly on the Merrymeeting River. Also, the committee is recommending to the selectmen for next year's budget a \$20,000 warrant article for milfoil removal. He noted that we've been very fortunate up to now, and we shouldn't hesitate to spend money on milfoil if we had to. He added that according to experts at DES, we are never rid of milfoil problems once they've started. Bill attends the Alton meetings and Mike attends the Barnstead meetings to ensure that the interests of Halfmoon Lake are represented, and that our lake receives some of the milfoil allocated funding.

Bill Mannion announced the new website for the association: HALFMOONLAKENH.COM. He thanked Sandra Roe for her assistance and noted that there are a number of photos posted. He asked that area reps forward pictures to him to post, specifying that they identify the area and the credit for the picture. He will ensure that the site include topical info (i.e., water quality updates) and pertinent info has been included on subsequent pages: 2nd page – who we are/contact info/area reps; 3rd page – documents/minutes/financial data/water testing; 4th page – helpful links, historical accounts. The goal is to keep the cost under \$100/yr.

Nina Kelly asked members if they'd be willing to provide email addresses in lieu of home mailing addresses in order to reduce costs, but more importantly to ensure timely notification of important information. Those members who have provided email addresses were timely notified via email of the DES water quality warning earlier this summer and the subsequent release of the warning. Members with home mailing addresses weren't so notified. Please contact Nina with your email address in lieu of mailing addresses (jnkelly154@comcast.net).

NEW BUSINESS

Roger Hatch read to the membership changes to the By-Laws which were suggested by the new officers, which included the terms served by the officers, specifically: "In the event the President cannot complete his/her term, the Vice President shall assume the duties of President for the remainder of the term. In the event the Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer cannot complete his/her term, the President shall appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term." A motion was made to accept by Trudy Rye and seconded by Dan Wildes. All voted in favor to pass this motion; no nay votes.

Roger appealed to the membership regarding the payment of dues. At a nominal cost of \$10 per year, the fee supports our mailing activities, milfoil oversight and water quality testing. The last increase was in 2006 – a 100% increase from \$5 to \$10. The average response rate is approximately 80%, and this year it has fallen short of that mark. Dues may be forwarded to Linda Bramante, Treasurer, 19 Paulina Ave, Somerville MA 02144-1812.

Roger read to the members a draft of a Mission Statement to be posted on the website: "To protect the interest of property owners through education and the continued monitoring of lake quality in order to enhance both property values and recreational opportunities." A motion was made to accept by Pat Mannion and seconded by Mike Fedorchak. All voted in favor to pass this motion; no nay votes.

Linda Bramante spoke about the possibility of the Youth Program associated with the NH Lakes Association to assist us in working on a project to identify potential water runoff issues. Specifically, she cited a situation where a property owner had mistakenly been cited by another property owner as a potential source of gray water going into the lake. This situation was determined not to be factual. Mike F. indicated that there are more than three properties working on this type of issue. Roger once again stated that the officers were planning to discuss possible solutions to these runoff issues during the off season and requested volunteers to assist with the process.

In light of the heightened water level caused by the recent Tropical Storm Irene, boaters are asked to continue the no-wake policy throughout the weekend as a matter of courtesy.

Members were reminded of the End-of-Season Boat Parade beginning at 8:00 pm in front of the Boys' Camp tonight.

On a motion by Pat Mannion and seconded by Dan Wildes, the members voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nina P Kelly, Secretary