

**HALFMOON LAKE ASSOCIATION
SECRETARY'S REPORT
JULY 2015**

The first annual meeting of the Halfmoon Lake Association for 2015 – the 49th annual meeting – was called to order at 10:10 am by President Bill Mannion with 25 members present. The meeting was held at the home of Bill & Pat Mannion at Rustic Shores.

Although not present at the meeting, Bill welcomed new members Andy and Carol Holt who purchased the property at 16 Crescent Drive in Center Barnstead, NH.

President Bill reminded members that they had already received copies of the August 2014 minutes. He asked for comments or objections. None were raised, so on a motion made by Roger Hatch, seconded by Ethel McConaghy, and members voted to accept the minutes as presented.

Treasurer, Linda Bramante, presented the HMLA Income Statement. Linda reported that the ending cash balance for 2014 was up from the prior year by \$516.38. This was due in part to reduced water testing costs (resulting from elimination of duplicate testing); increased dues payments from prior year; and a reduction in mailing costs since the Association is communicating via email more often. Dues for this year have been coming in earlier and it appears that the association will be ahead of last year. Linda reported that approximately 80% of owners are paying their dues. The Treasurer's Report may be found on the website. Following the discussion, Claire Bolster made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Bill Dugan, and voted on unanimously by members.

OLD BUSINESS

WATER QUALITY/TESTING UPDATE

Mike Fedorchak reported that the June water testing showed the lake to be in good shape and we are currently within all parameters recommended by the DES. The full report from the DES will be posted on the website (www.halfmoonlake.com). Mike named one of the biggest potential issues as Cyanobacteria. So far, there have been no indications of an outbreak. However, the DES and EPA have instituted a new program starting this year in which they will be taking 3-meter depth samples at three locations on the lake (Crescent Beach, Hollywood Beach and the deepest spot in the lake). For more information on Cyanobacteria you can visit the DES website:

http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/beaches/cyano_bacteria.html

Mike also reported that here are two troublesome areas in which water inlets do not seem to be flowing properly: 1. The Fernhill inlet which DES has agreed to allow us to take samples further upstream off the bridge on Hollywood Beach Road, and 2. Dugan's inlet is downstream of the horse farm inlet (off Prospect Mountain Road) and runs OK until it reaches Dugan's inlet, which has not been running for two years.

UPDATE: On July 20th, with the help of Camp Mi-Te-Na staff Tom Hart, Mike walked the stream and sent their findings to DES. He is awaiting their feedback and will have more information for the August meeting.

Finally, Mike acknowledged the volunteer crew that works with him to help with water testing and monitoring other things on the lake such as dates for ice-in and ice-out. His The crew for July water testing included Frank Bramante, N. Barnstead Rd., Jim Rye, South Shore Drive, John Wheeler, Suncook Vly Rd, and Mike Fedorchak, South Shore Drive.

MILFOIL UPDATE

Linda Bramante reported that Debbie Fedorchak had conducted her annual inspection during late June in the Cove, covering the area four times, and did not observe any fresh or old growth. They both canoed the whole lake on July 10th and again did not see anything evidence of Milfoil.

Linda reported that the problem of Millfoil is becoming more widely known. The Baysider and Suncook Times recently published a number of articles on Millfoil, and several lakes are joining forces to fight the battle. Northwood recently spent \$10,000 to treat their lake for Millfoil. Judy Cropper, Locke Lake President, also reported that they spent \$20,000 last year for removal.

John Wheeler suggested that the Association instate a Boat Watcher program and pay a small hourly fee to teenagers or other interested parties to man the public boat ramp on weekends with the goal of educating owners about proper boat cleaning. Funds from the NH Lakes Association may be available for such a program. Bill Mannion volunteered to follow-up.

BUDGET CONTRIBUTIONS

Treasurer, Linda Bramante, reported that the Association received a contribution of \$250 from the Town of Alton to be used for Milfoil control. It was also noted that, following an appeal for financial support, the Town of Barnstead declined to contribute stating that it is not the town's policy is to provide funding for 'private associations'. President Bill Mannion presented an idea for banding together with other lakes and ponds in Barnstead, (i.e. Locke Lake, Suncook Lake, & Beaver Pond) to form a Barnstead Lake Association that would present a unified appeal to the town. Bill mentioned that HMLA has already reached out to both Locke Lake and Suncook Lake Associations and is in discussion about such an arrangement. Judy Cropper, President of Locke Lake Association, was present at the meeting and commented that a warrant would need to be put before the selectman, but needed to demonstrate that all bodies of water are part of the Suncook River Water Shed. The Board will investigate this further and continue to have discussions with our neighboring Lake Associations.

BOAT TRAFFIC OBSERVATIONS

John Wheeler, Vice President HMLA, has lived on the lake year round for the last eleven years, and checks the Route 28 ramp twice daily. The North Barnstead ramp is typically used for the bigger seasonal boats. During the spring and early summer period, he witnessed about 2-3 boats per day. It picked up after the July 4th.

LAKE REP UPDATE

Kate Brown indicated that she'll be contacting the lake reps directly via email to get an update of owners contact information; see list of lake reps below:

Rustic Shores	Sam Barvar
South Shore Drive	Dan Wildes
Crescent Drive	Ann Bohley and Mike Geraci
Newcastle Extension	David Parish
O'Neill Drive	David Briggs
Fire Road 1 – The Point	John Wheeler
Rte 28 Alton line to Varney Rd	Steve Miller

Varney Road
Halfmoon Bay Drive

No rep at this time
Kate Brown

NEW BUSINESS

CHINESE MYSTERY SNALES & PHRAGMITE REED

Two new suspicious aquatic plant and animal species have been found in the lake this spring. Samples of an unfamiliar large snail were discovered and sent to DES for identification. Amy Smagula, from DES, identified it as the Chinese Mystery Snail which is an invasive. She recommends that when seen they be removed from the lake; the fewer there are to reproduce, the better. Collecting the snails is a great activity for the kids. Be careful, though...If left out of the water, they produce a very unpleasant odor. So the best way to handle them is to toss far into the woods or wrap in a plastic bag and take to the dump. Linda Bramante also reported finding a grass/reed like plant by Nathan Locke property on No. Barnstead Road and also near the boat ramp and sent samples to Amy for identification. It is known as Phragmites australis (common reed). It will form thick stands at the water's edge, and will creep out into the lake and take root, forming islands or peninsulas into the water crowding out other natural plant life. If it remains scarce, Amy recommends hand removing the plants and digging out the root system. The plants can be dried, then burned; or put into plastic trash bags and left in the sun for a few days before disposing in the trash. If it becomes more troublesome, Linda will look into other ways to control it such as chemical treatments. You can identify the plant by looking for a tall stem about 13-14' tall and red in color. Images of the plant can be found on the DES website: www.des.nh.gov/wmb/exoticspecies.

DUES REMINDER

As you are aware, every year we ask each lake front household to contribute dues that are used to keep our lake clean, free of invasive species, and safe for all users. At the 2014 August meeting, the membership voted on a small increase in dues from \$10 to \$15 annual to help build a better reserve in the event that we need to step up treatment for Millfoil. If you have not submitted your dues, please do so by sending a check to Linda Bramante (see Dues Form below) as soon as possible. Help us keep Halfmoon Lake pristine.

LOON NEST EXPERIMENT

During the winter Bill Mannion and John Wheeler attended a workshop conducted by John Cooley of The Loon Preservation Committee of New Hampshire. The workshop was devoted to learning about loon nesting habits and building an artificial floating loon nest to help attract more loons and better protect their nest eggs from predators. Seven nests were built. They consist of a slanted, covered, camouflaged, platform. Slanted to allow the loons to easily board the platform, covered to protect the eggs from predators, and located in an area away from boat traffic and other distractions. One of the nests is now located off Rustic Shores. Once installed, a pair of loons took interest and continued to come nearly every day to inspect the platform, but there were no sightings of any nest building activity. One evening two loons approached the nest only to encounter a muskrat who, in defense of his territory, fought with the loons and drove them away. This continued to happen night after night, so the loons finally nested in another location. Despite the fact that the loons did not choose the floating nest, the committee believes that the project was successful. It proved that a floating nest will attract loons. The recommendation is that next year more floating nests should be put out and located in different locations, away from beaver and muskrat activity.

DONATION IN HONOR OF MAUREEN FITZPATRICK

Treasurer Linda Bramante, announced that long-time Association member, Maureen Fitzpatrick had passed away in December. Maureen had served as treasurer for 20 years, donated countless hours to

lake concerns, and was very involved in the Barnstead School Committee. Linda made a request to send a donation of \$50 to the Town of Barnstead School Committee in memory of Maureen. Roger Hatch made a motion to accept the request; Nina Kelly seconded it; all were in favor.

INTERLAKE COMMUNICATIONS

During the late fall, winter and early spring there were several thefts on lake front property including aluminum boats, docks, and copper pipes. In addition, there have been several incidents reported of unsafe boating activity. The Association would like to appeal to all owners to keep an eye out for unusual activity and call the Alton or Barnstead Police. If you see something suspicious, take a picture and notify the Association (see below for contact information) so we may spread the word to other owners.

LOCKE LAKE SOCIAL CLUB

Judy Cropper, President of the Locke Lake Association, invited all members of HMLA to join their Social Club which meets every month in the lodge on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday. The club organizes several different activities such as brunches out, pot luck dinners, trips to local attractions, game & bingo night. It's a great way to meet your Locke Lake Colony neighbors. To join dues are only \$5. To learn more call Ann (393-7233) or Diane (776-0289). A flyer with more details is also posted on the HMLA website.

FACEBOOK PAGE

Gail Guinasso has been generously given her time to develop a Halfmoon Lake Facebook page: www.facebook.com/HalfmoonLakeNH. We encourage you to check it out, 'Like' the page, share it with your family and friends, and even post pictures of life on the lake.

NAVIGATION MARKERS

There are markers on the lake that designate low water or rocks. Over the winter, one of the markers shifted due to ice movement and one owner reported prop damage in an area outside of designated marker. Marine Patrol was called and the marker were moved to the proper location. The Association advises all boaters to be very cautious in areas where there are markers and to keep a safe distance. If for any reason, you happen to encounter a rock or low water outside of a marked area, please notify marine patrol.

50TH ANNIVERSARY PLANS

President, Bill Mannion, reminded us that the Halfmoon Lake Association will be celebrating its 50th anniversary next year and asked for suggestions on ways to observe this special occasion. If you have a suggestion or idea, please call any one of the Board members. Judy Cropper also announced that Locke Lake is celebrating their 50th and suggested that we might schedule an evening for a joint celebration such as a picnic or pot-luck dinner. She offered the use of the Locke Lake lodge and pavilion. It was also recommended that for any activities in celebration of our respective 50th anniversaries, that the Barnstead Historical Society be invited to attend. All present were in favor.

AUGUST MEETING

Bill announced that the next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, August 23 at 11:00 am at Camp Mi-Te-Na's Recreation Hall. There will be signs directing us where to park. Potential guest speakers for the meeting will be John Cooley of the Loon Preservation Society and/or a representative from NH Marine Patrol regarding safe boating procedures.

OPEN DISCUSSION

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT

Several attendees reported observing unsafe activity on the lake with drivers of personal watercraft. The parties involved were identified and reported to Marine Patrol who is currently investigating the incidents. If you should observe any unsafe boating activity on the lake, if possible get the registration of the craft or trailer and call Marine Patrol. It was also noted that single 'Jet Skis' with only one operator are only allowed on the Lake Monday – Friday. Personal Watercraft with more than one rider sitting are permitted to use the lake week-long. Other issues were raised regarding specific boating activities and the impact it has on the lake. The Association is in favor of enabling all neighbors to recreate and enjoy the lake as much as possible, but in doing so, follow the safety rules established by Marine Patrol such as boating in a counterclockwise pattern, remaining at least 150 feet from shoreline or swimming area. Have fun, but be safe!

BEAR SIGHTINGS

Linda Bramante reminded those present that there have been several reports of black bears in and around the lake area. According to the New Hampshire Fish & Game Commission, though, it is extremely rare for a black bear to attack a human or dog unless suddenly startled or surprised. If you do encounter a bear, keep a distance and make it aware of your presence by clapping, talking, singing or making other sounds. To prevent black bear visits to your yard, be sure to bring in any bird feeders. Keep trash containers secured at all times. It is advised that trash cans be kept in a well-constructed shed, garage or basement. If you use a trash pick-up service, do not put your containers out until the day of pick up. For more information on black bears, visit the NH Fish & Game website: www.wildlife.state.nh.us/wildlife/faqs-bears.html

FIREWORKS

There was a discussion about the number, length, and timing of fireworks recently. Although there are no HMLA regulations regarding the use of fireworks, the Association would like to ask all neighbors to be considerate by ending any activity by 10:00 pm.

On a motion by Mike Fedorchak and seconded by John Wheeler, the members voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kate Brown
HMLA Secretary

HMLA OFFICERS / CONTACT INFORMATION:

Bill Mannion, President	603-776-2362	wpmatlake@aim.com
John Wheeler, Vice President	603-472-3228	goatroper144@yahoo.com
Linda Bramante, Treasurer	603-776-0486	lbramante118@gmail.com
Kate Brown, Secretary	978-376-9598	katebrown@browntech.com

Halfmoon Lake Association Dues for 2015 from:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Please include your email address to help defray the cost of postage for meeting notices and to assure you receive emergency email notices (i.e. water conditions, etc.) during the year. Thank You!

MAIL THIS FORM WITH YOUR CHECK TO:

Linda Bramante, Treasurer
118 North Barnstead Road
Barnstead, NH 03225

Make checks payable to the "Halfmoon Lake Association".