

The Laurel Lake Ledger

Volume 5 Number 1

A PUBLICATION OF THE LAUREL LAKE ASSOCIATION

Winter 1991-92

FIRST ANNUAL CANOE RACE IS A BIG SUCCESS!

By Charley Brackett

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On Saturday, August 24, 1991, the first Laurel Lake canoe and kayak race was held. This was a family event consisting of two races: one big race, 2.5 miles, and a 3/4 mile children's race. These races were and are designed for average people using recreational canoes only.

The race proved to be a popular lake event including thirty participants and many spectators around the lake. We had twelve canoes and two kayaks (fair for the first year) in the big race, two canoes and a kayak in the children's race. Every participant received an award, even Bruce and Adam Johnson who took an accidental swim on their journey around the lake. Adam, and kayaker Daniel Jackson received awards for both races.

Next year, we hope for a better turnout. To encourage more participation, we are adding another race, including two person paddle boats and inflatable rubber rafts with oars. This will be a separate race, giving the chance for entries into different events. Refreshments will be served at the finish line.

Five, four, three, two, one -- and they're off!! "I knew those guys would win." John and Bryan Bradley pulled away from the crowd almost immediately; they were the only canoeists who had ever raced before. Leading all of the way and finishing four minutes, 16 seconds in front of the second place canoe, they set a record time. However, they can be beat - maybe someone new will take first place

honors next year. Daniel Jackson, in a sleek kayak, crossed the finish line second. Danny and Damon Mahoney, a father and son team, were next, taking second place canoe. Wendy and Eric Moreira struggled to keep a runaway third place position but wound up coasting in at fourth. The big winners of third place were Wayne Rigg and Jim Flaherty.

Now we have a canoe race, a sailboat race, a barbecue, and a family picnic. Please support these events by participating and renewing your Laurel Lake Association membership.

Special thanks goes out to Gus and Sue Hoyland for providing us with a place to hold the race and award trophies; race committee members Judy Moreira and Sue Hoyland; time keepers Tony Moreira, Wendy Moreira, and Kerri (Larder) Randell; and to race officials David (Fido) Brackett, Randy Courtemanche, Bruce Knight, Karl Anderson, Jon LeClaire, and Steve Olson. Also, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Laurel Lake Association and its members for sponsoring the race.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

RACE DATE: Saturday, July 18, 1992

RAIN DATE: Sunday, July 19, 1992

For your convenience, a 1992 race entry form is included with this publication.

FITZWILLIAM WOMAN DIES IN KAYAK ACCIDENT

The Keene Sentinel

Nineteen hours after her kayak capsized near the mouth of the Kennebec River, a Fitzwilliam woman was found drowned 8 miles out in the Atlantic Ocean.

Barbara J. Shea, 36, was last seen clinging to her capsized kayak as powerful currents swept her out to sea, Maine authorities said.

The crew of a U.S. Coast Guard jet spotted Shea's body Tuesday at about 11:30 a.m., 15 miles from where her kayak had capsized in heavy seas the previous afternoon and 8 miles offshore, said Lt. Joseph Fessenden of the Maine Marine Patrol.

A medical examiner found that she had probably lost consciousness from hypothermia, then drowned.

Shea and her boyfriend, Edson Skinner, 29, lived together on Brigham Hill Road in Fitzwilliam. While they were vacationing in Popham Beach, Maine, they went sea-kayaking together Monday at the nearby mouth of the Kennebec River.

Fessenden said that at about noon Monday, the two kayaked with no trouble from the shore at the river's mouth to a small island about a half-mile away. They ate lunch on the island and stayed there for several hours before heading back at about 4:00 p.m.

However, by then, the tide was going out and there were gusty winds from the

south, Fessenden said, intensifying the effects of typically strong current at the large river's mouth. Waves were running 4 to 6 feet in height.

In the heavy seas, Shea's kayak flipped. She managed to cling to the capsized craft, and Skinner, about 100 to 150 feet away, tried to maneuver near her so he could help. But his kayak capsized, too, Fessenden said.

Skinner then tried to swim for Shea, but the current was too powerful and he couldn't make it, Fessenden said. It took Skinner 25 minutes to swim back to the island.

Shea, a capable swimmer, opted to stay with her kayak, an understandable decision, Fessenden said. "She didn't have much control of the situation," he said. "You're taught to stay with your boat."

The last Skinner saw, Shea and her kayak were being pulled out into the open ocean. On the island, it took him about 45 minutes to flag down a boat and then contact authorities. An all-night sea and shore search by the Coast Guard Marine Patrol and local authorities followed.

Fessenden said Skinner scoured the beaches all night with other searchers.

But Shea had been swept well out to sea. Fessenden said she was wearing a life jacket, but it was dark blue, making it hard for rescuers to spot her.



3-2-1 ... and they're off to a great start at Laurel Lake's 1st Canoe Race.



1st place canoe
2nd place canoe
3rd place canoe

Bryan Bradley, John Bradley
Damon Mahoney, Dan Mahoney
Wayne Rigg, Jim Flaherty

1st place kayak
2nd place kayak

Daniel Jackson
Bob Courtemanche



Kelly Desreuisseau, age 12, and Erin Mahoney, age 11, crossing the finish line of the children's race with a time of 15 minutes, 8 seconds.

Her kayak was nearby.

Fessenden said Skinner has about two years of experience using kayaks; Shea took up the sport about a year ago. "I wouldn't consider them real experienced," he said.

And, unfortunately, they picked a bad place to use their kayaks. "It's a treacherous place to operate," Fessenden said. "The mouth of the river is not a place we'd recommend because of the current."

She was a mental health worker, he said, but didn't know where she worked.

Michael Hall, a funeral director in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, said the Dolan Funeral Home in Milton, MA, the town where Shea grew up, is arranging the funeral. She will be buried in Vermont, where her parents have a summer home, he said.

Fitzwilliam residents said the couple was living in a new house, and were apparently new residents of town.

By Bruce Knight

As I write this, we are enjoying the brilliant Fall colors and anxiously awaiting the winter activities that New Hampshire has to offer. It was my pleasure to see many of you over the summer and I'd especially like to welcome all the new members who joined this year. Thanks to all the hard work of the membership committee headed by Milt Posovsky, we had a record number of memberships this year.

I really appreciate everyone's willingness to become part of the Laurel Lake Association to evaluate the quality, condition and level of the lake water on an ongoing basis. Many, many volunteer hours are spent in this endeavor as well as in developing strategies to deal with problems and trends that are discovered. The water sampling committee consists of five members. Thank you to Don Treat, Don Garland, George Graf, Barbara Green and Jim Deyo.

1991 brought us one of the best summers in recent memory. We saw:

- * membership expand to a record high
- * our first annual canoe race
- * an excellent water rescue demonstration at our annual meeting
- * the new children's membership category
- * a really windy and cold sailboat regatta
- * Laurel Lake begin to leak
- * more concrete evidence regarding water quality and the direction it's heading
- * two loons on the lake
- * a bear walking through the woods

That's quite a variety of events for one summer!

So enjoy your Ledger -- thanks to Larry Friedman's efforts, you will now have the inside scoop on all this year's issues and events. Thank you, Larry, for the finest publication of its kind in the area.

Looking forward to seeing you on the lake!



Chief Bob Murray and Capt. Bob Cunningham rescue Rob Cunningham after simulated diving accident.

By John H. Dumont

The Annual Meeting of the Laurel Lake Association was held on Saturday, July 20, 1991 at White's Field in the Laurel Lake Campground in Fitzwilliam, NH, after a demonstration on Water Rescue by Bob Murray, Chief of the Meadowbrook Fire Department.

The meeting was called to order by President Bruce Knight at 11:00 a.m.

Jack Dumont, Association Secretary, read the minutes of the July 21, 1990 Annual Meeting. On a motion by Phyllis Chase and seconded, the minutes were accepted as read.

Don Austin, Association Treasurer, reported on the financial status of the Association. It was motioned by Milt Posovsky and seconded, that the Treasurer's Report be accepted subject to audit. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was read to the general membership by Secretary Jack Dumont redefining the membership of the Board of Directors. The motion read: "The Board of Directors will be comprised of twelve (12) members in addition to one (1) past president and all members of the Board of Directors will be elected for a three (3) year term on a staggered basis." The motion was seconded by Don Austin and passed unanimously.

Don Garland, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented a proposed list of persons to serve as Officers and Board of Directors for 1992. As Officers for a two (2) year term: President, Bruce Knight; Vice President, Phyllis Chase; Secretary, Jack Dumont; and Treasurer, Don Austin. As Directors for a one (1) year term: Karl Anderson,

Marguerite Albertini, Robert Prunier, George Graf, Shirley Quinn, Tom White, Milton Posovsky, and Jim Baldwin. It was motioned by Don Austin and seconded, that the membership accept the entire slate of offices as presented by the Nominating Committee, and that the Secretary be directed to cast one vote for the entire slate. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

It was motioned by Joanne Anderson and seconded, that the Secretary be directed to send a letter of appreciation to Chief Robert Murray, Meadowbrook Fire Department for his excellent presentation on Water Rescue. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

President Bruce Knight appointed and introduced to the general membership Charles Brackett, who is to serve as Chairman of the Canoe Race Committee. Charles addressed the membership seeking volunteers for the event, which is tentatively scheduled for August 24, 1991.

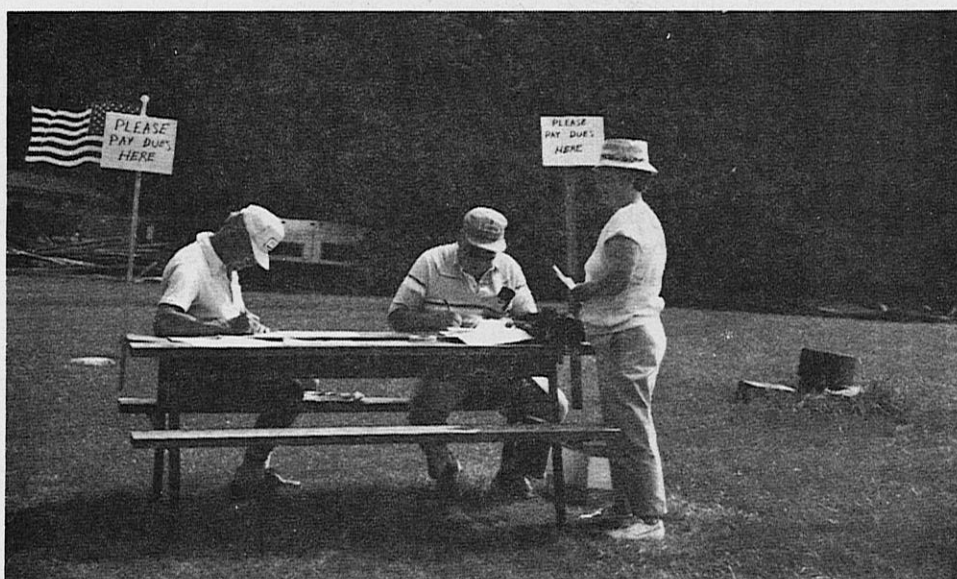
President Bruce Knight appointed Gail Bailey as Chairperson of the Annual Chicken Barbecue to be held on August 17, 1991. She addressed the membership and organized a meeting of volunteers to follow the Annual Meeting and Family Picnic.

Milt Posovsky, Chairman of the Membership Committee, addressed the membership informing them of the current status of Association memberships.

It was motioned by Don Austin and seconded, that the Annual Meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.



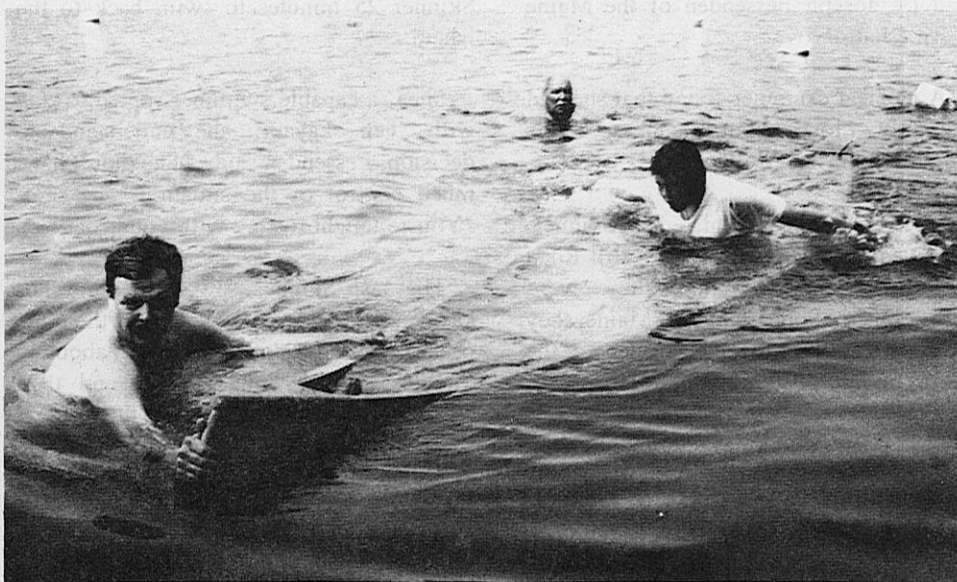
Brian Rutgers rescues Bruce Knight using cold water survival suits January 1991. This drill was conducted by Meadowood County Area Fire Department in Laurel Lake.



Milt Posovsky (center) collects dues from Midge Deyo and Don Garland at the Annual Meeting.

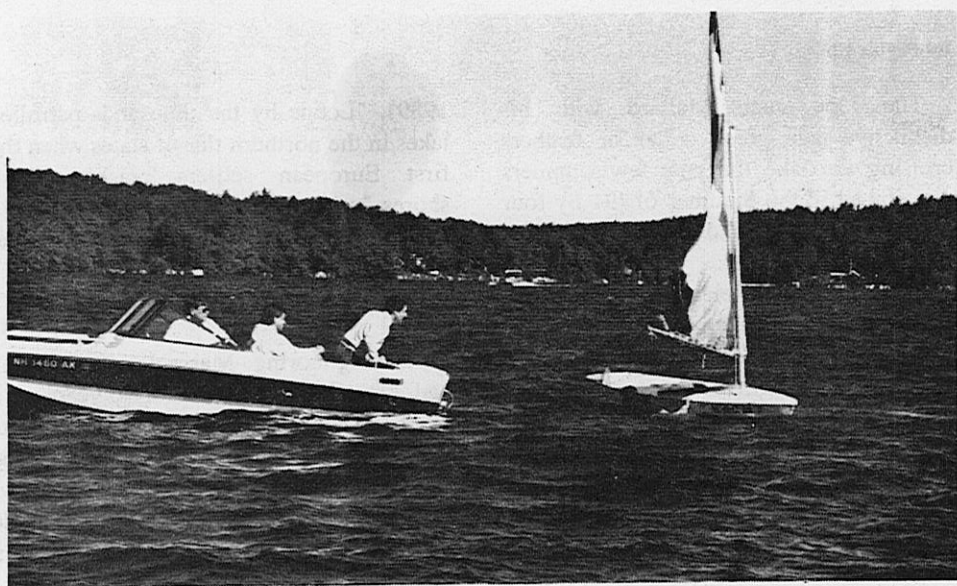


Meadowood Fire Chief Murray demonstrating a handy flotation device.



Chief Murray (rear) demonstrates how to handle a swamped canoe. Capt. Bob Cunningham (front), Rob Cummingham (in the canoe) at the Annual Meeting.

WHITECAPS ADD EXCITEMENT TO REGATTA!



1991 was the windiest Regatta ever! Several contestants fell in before the race even started.

By Rob Prunier

On September 1, 1991, the annual Laurel Lake Regatta was held under blue skies and heavy winds. In years past, races were delayed due to lack of wind. This year, we contemplated delaying the race until the winds calmed down.

It was quite an event just getting the boats down to the boat landing, which is where the race started. The winds were coming from the northwest and were so severe that four boats capsized just getting into position to race. Whitecaps came roaring down the lake.

The race finally started about a half-hour late. The course took the contestants from the boat landing toward the first buoy near Milt Posovsky's house. After rounding the first buoy, the boats headed toward Sunrise Rock and rounded the second buoy. They then sailed on to Sunken Island. The course was reversed

after going around Sunken Island. The reason for the long course was due to the exceptionally strong winds.

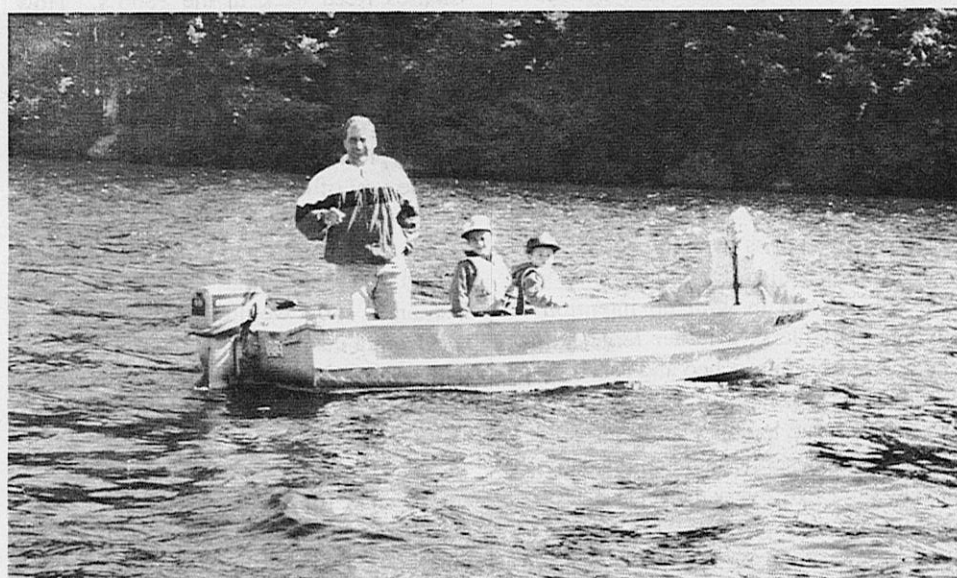
The race was a testament to one's sailing skills. David Garland was the winner by a good margin with Bill Chase second. Close behind, for a third place finish, was Erik Ross. The rest of the nine contestants did a great job to finish the race.

A victory party was hosted by the Leith-Snow household after the race. Trophies were handed out and words of congratulations given.

Many thanks are given to the Leith-Snow household, Don Garland, Carl Anderson, Jack Dumont, and Larry Friedman. Hopefully, next year's race will be as successful as this year's race. See everyone next year!



From left to right: Erik Ross (3rd Place), Bill Chase (2nd Place), and David Garland (1st Place)



Rob Prunier supervises race with his 3 children David, Jeffrey, and Heather.

THE SUMMER OF '91

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By Larry Friedman

Why do summers go by so quickly and winters never seem to end? I suppose that is true for any vacation time.

We've been vacationing at Laurel Lake for seven summers. Our vacation begins on Memorial Day Weekend and ends, for the most part, on Labor Day Weekend. Unfortunately, we are limited to the weekends only. Every Friday after work, all five of us pile in the Dodge Caravan. We normally leave Providence by 5:30 p.m., stop in Worcester for dinner, then arrive in Fitzwilliam before the sun sets. If the weather is good, we'll stay till dinner on Sunday night and get home by 9:00 p.m.

Weekends in Fitzwilliam are like mini-vacations for me. I usually start to look forward to them on Monday morning. By Friday noon, I'm ready to bolt to New Hampshire. The same is true for the season. By February, I'm ready to put the dock in.

We are fortunate in New England to have four distinct seasons. I love them all, but summer in New England is really special and much more so now that we've found Fitzwilliam. My guests always ask me, "How did you ever find this wonderful place?" It's true, there aren't many Rhode Islanders who know about Laurel Lake and if the following events did not take place, I doubt I would have either ...

Back in 1983, for lack of anything better to do, I took my family to a boat show in Boston. This particular event must have been a powerboat show, but what was unusual about it was that a temporary marina was set up to display the boats right in Boston Harbor. Our kids were young -- Leslie - 1½; Mark - 3; and Michael - 6. All I can remember was having all five of us in a small cabin cruiser. I was trying to imagine what it would be like to be out on Narragansett Bay when all of a sudden Mike and Mark began to fight, Leslie began to scream, and I began yelling at the boys. I looked at Marilyn and said, "Maybe we'd be better off with a house by a lake!"

For the next two years, we took long rides looking for the right lake house. We looked in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. I didn't even give New Hampshire a thought because of the perceived distance. By 1984, the kids wouldn't even get in the car if they thought I was going to look for a lake house. They really didn't know what a lake house was or why I had to find one.

On Labor Day Weekend of 1984, Bill and Beth Samuels invited us for a weekend at Laurel Lake. Beth's parents, Pearl and Emil Vaida, owned a house on East Lake Road. I remember when I first arrived and

saw the crystal clear waters surrounded by the vibrant fall foliage, I knew that Laurel Lake was where I wanted to be. One week later, I was disappointed to learn from a local realtor that houses on Laurel Lake rarely came to the open market. Most were passed down within a family. We did see a few homes on other lakes but none compared with the charm of Laurel Lake. A few month's later, Frank and Carolyn Terhune decided they were too old to take care of their camp on Laurel Lake and told the Vaidas that they would offer it to Emil and Pearl's daughter, Beth, if friends of the Terhunes didn't want it. Bill Samuels called me and asked my opinion about whether or not he should buy it.

I told Bill he would be crazy not to buy a waterfront home if he could afford it. My feeling was that opportunities like this don't come along very often and in the future, waterfront property would be a rare find.

Bill was torn between the Lake and golf, and he opted instead to spend his weekends on the links.

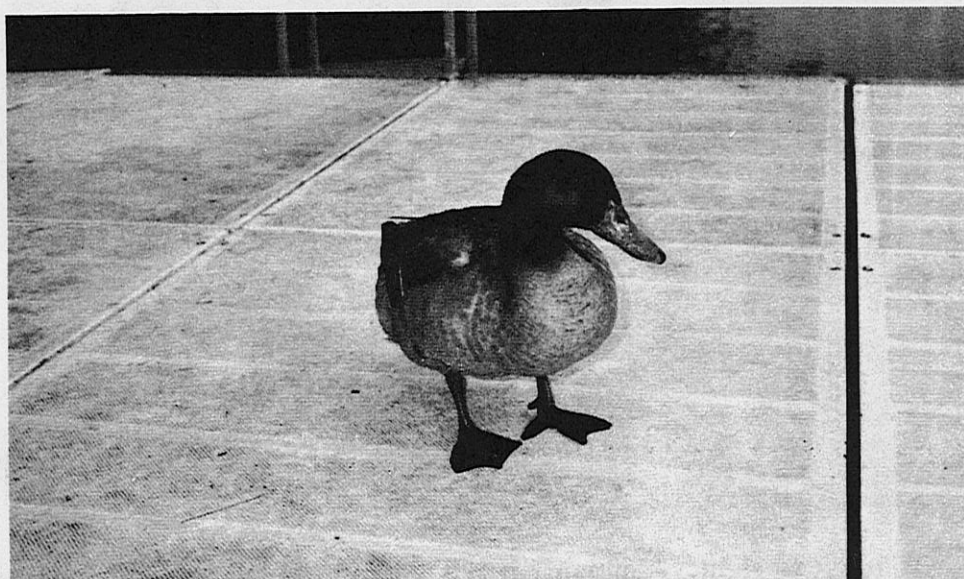
Bill turned to me and said, "Why don't you buy it?" "Oh," I said, "New Hampshire is too far away for me. I want to be closer to home in case I'm needed." (Rhode Islanders typically don't like to drive long distances.) Bill tried to convince me by saying that you will never feel like you're on vacation if you're not at least two hours away. "And besides," said Bill, "if I was crazy not to buy it, why aren't you crazy not to buy it?"

Bill was right. What a hypocrite I would be if I couldn't follow my own advice. So, I did agree to buy the house.

It was a decision that I have never regretted.

Weekends for us are a precious commodity. I get disturbed when the weather during the work week is sunny and 90°, and then the weekend is a washout. Back in 1986, I believe it rained almost every weekend of the summer. I was beginning to have doubts about my investment. 1991, on the other hand, will probably go down in history as one of the best summers at Laurel Lake. This year, we actually had a Spring which led into an almost perfect Summer. If this is due to global warming, then I'm all for it!

The one problem I can't seem to resolve is why these summer seasons just fly by. Is it because I'm only counting the weekends or is it because all vacations go by quickly? Life goes by quickly when you're having fun!



Harold the Duck poses for Larry Friedman, Editor of the Laurel Lake Ledger.

JUNE 15 BOARD MEETING



From left to right: George Graf, Jack Dumont, Marguerite Albertini, Virginia Nevins, Don Treat, and Don Garland. June 15, 1991 Board Meeting.

By John H. Dumont

The Laurel Lake Association's Board of Directors Meeting was held on Saturday, June 15, 1991. In attendance were Bruce Knight, Don Treat, Don Austin, Jack Dumont, Marguerite Albertini, George Graf, Shirley Quinn, Don Garland, Larry Friedman, Karl Anderson, Midge Deyo, Phyllis Chase, and Virginia Nevins.

The meeting was called to order by President Bruce Night at 8:30 a.m.

Secretary Jack Dumont read the minutes of the September 8, 1990 Board of Directors Meeting.

Don Austin, Association Treasurer, reported on the financial status of the Association. It was motioned by Phyllis Chase, and seconded by Don Garland, that the Secretary's report be approved and the Treasurer's report be accepted. Motion passed unanimously.

Don Treat, Chairman of the Water Testing Committee, reported on the comparison of Laurel Lake water quality for the years 1977, 1989, and 1990. It was motioned by Marguerite Albertini, and seconded by Don Garland, that the report be accepted. Motion approved unanimously.

It was motioned by Shirley Quinn, and seconded by Don Garland, that the membership of the Laurel Lake Association Board of Directors be set at 12 members, with the addition of one past President, on a 1/3 staggered basis with the election of all new Board members to take place at the 1991 Annual Meeting on Saturday, July 20, 1991. This change in by-laws should be brought forth to the general membership at the Annual Meeting for approval. Motion passed unanimously.

George Graf reported on the uncontrolled outflow of water from Laurel Lake. It was motioned by Don Garland,

and seconded by George Graf, that the report be accepted and that George Graf's Committee continue to pursue the matter and report back to the Board of Directors on their progress. The motion passed unanimously.

Bruce Knight reported that the signs relating to Boating Rules and Lake Contaminant Information will be installed at the boat launching area by July 1, 1991.

George Graf reported on water quality study and possible solutions to contamination. Motion by Midge Deyo, and seconded by Virginia Nevins, that the Water Quality Committee review the report and bring back recommendations to the Board of Directors. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of the activities and business meeting for the Annual Meeting which will take place at White's Grove on Saturday, July 20, 1991 were discussed. The business meeting will take place at 10:00 a.m., followed by guest speaker Bob Murray, Chief of the Meadowood Fire Department. The meeting will culminate with the annual family picnic.

Discussion of the Chicken Barbecue was led by Bruce Knight. This year's chairperson will be Gail Bailey, assisted by Karl Anderson.

Discussion of the Labor Day Sunfish Regatta was concluded by a motion by George Graf, and seconded by Don Garland, that all persons participating in the Sunfish Regatta must be members of the Association. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn at 11:34 a.m. by Don Garland and seconded by Shirley Quinn.



From left to right: Phyllis Chase, Bruce Knight, Karl Anderson and Midge Deyo at the June 15, 1991 Board of Directors Meeting. Home of Bruce and Joan Knight.

MALLARDS, LOONS AND CORMORANTS

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By Phyllis Chase

The lone male Mallard with his distinctive jade green collar of feathers cruising the lake the past few summers was joined in the Summer of '91 by four other water bird friends.

Early in June, an elegant pair of Loons with striking black and white markings appeared on the lake waters. They stayed for about a month, disappearing in early July when lake activity began to pick up. Late in the summer, just prior to Labor Day, a pair of double-crested Cormorants, blackish in color except for bright orange chin pouches and light colored slender hooked beaks, visited the waters, where they swam and fished together, and enjoyed "sunbathing" on docks and floats, usually leaving unmistakable calling cards (to their hosts' chagrin!)

For nature lovers, these bird couples provided much enjoyment because of their interesting behaviors. Both the Loons and the Cormorants were fascinating to watch as they flew low over the water, flapped their large wings after a long swim, glided gracefully over the lake, or dived deep in search of fish, soon to emerge at some distant and totally unpredicted point. It was intriguing to watch their performances, always done side by side or in near unison, as if they were carefully choreographed to some mysterious water music.

While Mallards and Cormorants are rather numerous and widespread in the Northeastern U.S., Loons, by contrast, are considered quite rare. Therefore, the appearance of the Laurel Lake couple seemed a tremendous treat. According to National Geographic magazine (April

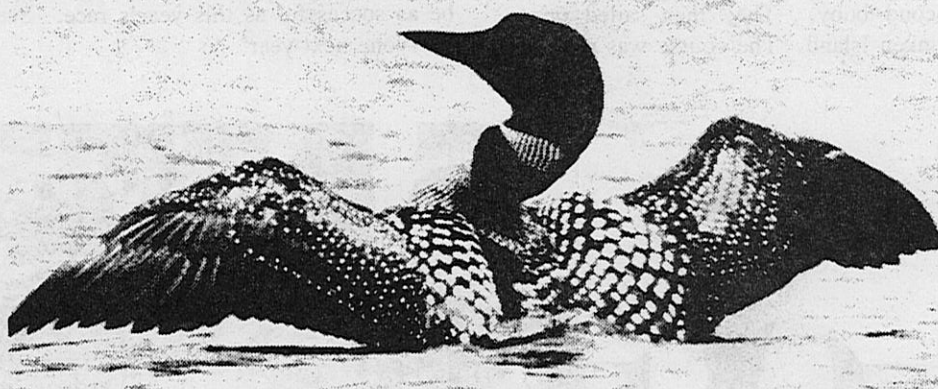
1989), "Loons by the thousands patrolled lakes in the northern tier of states when the first European settlers reached these shores." However, as an August 3, 1991 Boston Globe article reported, today the Loon is "a symbol of a vanishing wild ... an object of special conservation efforts."

In neighboring Massachusetts, Loons had virtually disappeared for 70 years until 1975. The most recent Massachusetts Loon census found 30 birds, the Globe reported. New Hampshire, according to the same report, now boasts a statewide count of 495 birds, up from 302 two years ago.

Threats to the Loon population historically have included lake pollution, acid rain, which reduces the fish Loons depend on for food, human encroachment, and most recently, lead poisoning from lead sinkers used in fishing and which the Loons ingest.

Among the more interesting facts about Loons are that they mate for life, bear at most two young per season, and tote their young piggyback. In addition, they usually stake out territories each season, frequently claiming one lake per Loon couple.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Loons might enjoy reading "The Common Loon Cries For Help," published in the April, 1989 issue of National Geographic magazine, as well as the Globe articles previously cited. Meanwhile, some of us lake residents feel lucky to have had these special visitors in the Summer of '91, and hope the Loon couple will once again return the next season to delight us with their graceful performances and presence.



A loon settles onto a lake's surface; the species is considered rare or threatened in most of New England.

RARE ESSENTIALS

By Larry Friedman

On rainy or cold days at Laurel Lake we always take a drive into Keene to go shopping or take in a movie. On one of those occasions, we stopped at the Colony Mill Marketplace because Marilyn loves to browse (and buy) at their bookstore on the upper level. Michael and I figured we would kill some time by looking in some of the men's stores. Michael is 14 years old but already weighs more than I do. We actually wear the same size blazer.

Diagonally across from the bookstore is a small shop called Essentials for Men. We both walked in with no intention of buying. The clerk, a rather large fellow in a golf shirt, approached and asked if we needed any assistance. I gave him my automatic "just looking" response. He proceeded to describe in detail the benefits and attributes of every garment I looked at. I soon realized this wasn't just any store clerk, this was the owner and, obviously, the buyer. We got to talking and I admitted I was just killing time while waiting for my wife in the

bookstore. When he learned that I summered at Laurel Lake, he smiled and told me stories about how his great grandfather had opened the quarries for Charles Reed back in the 1860's. How his aunt, who is 100 years old, still owned several quarries along Route 119, west of the depot. We introduced ourselves to each other. His name is Ron Russell. He was typical of the warm and friendly people you often meet in Keene.

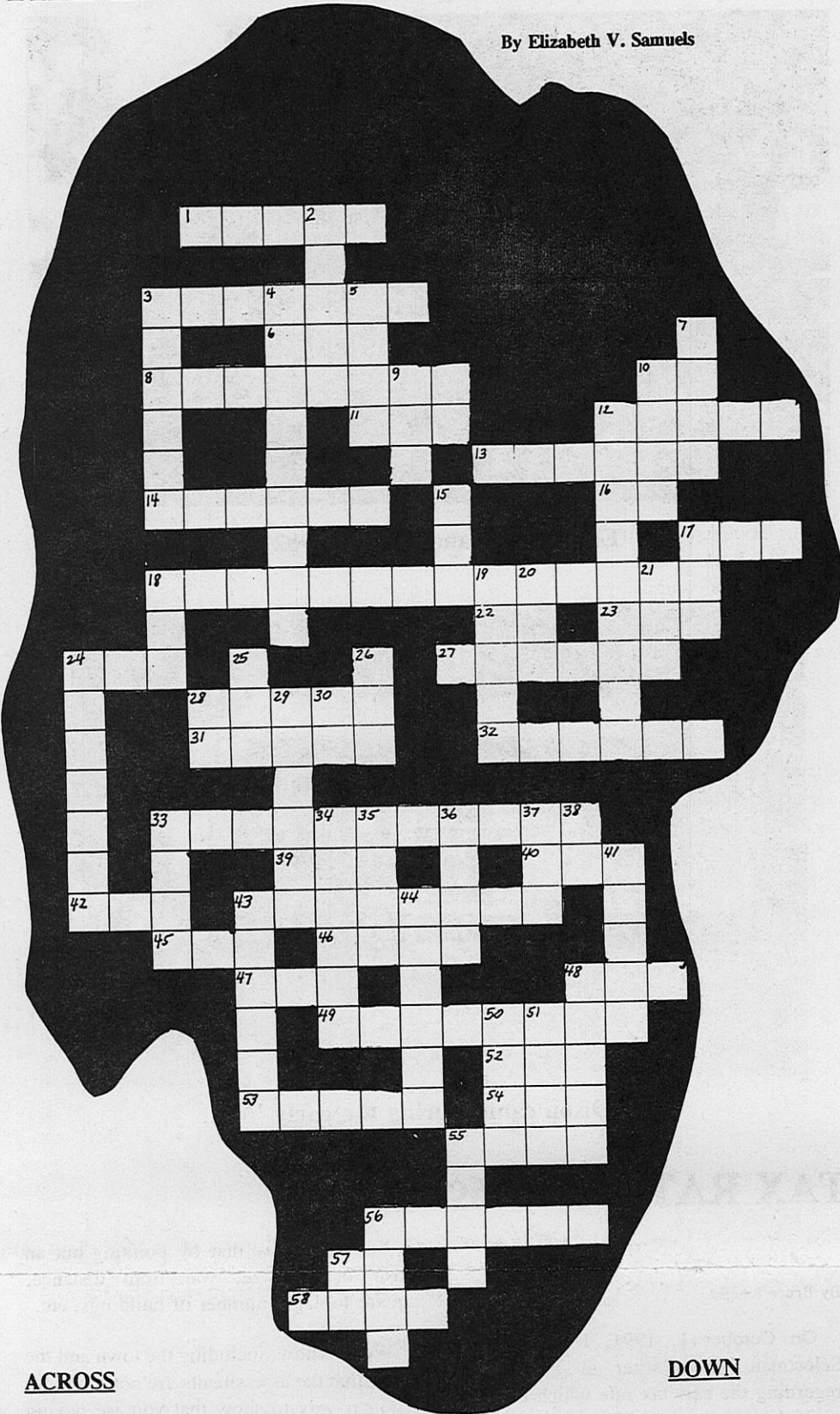
The merchandise in his shop is hand-picked -- only high quality designer fashions. You wouldn't expect anything less from a man who took the time to make your browsing an experience worth writing (and buying a coat ... quite a salesman!) about.

The next time it rains at Laurel Lake, take a trip to Essentials for Men. I not only bought a beautiful fall coat but I got a free history lesson about Fitzwilliam.

P.S. Bring your VISA Card!

THE LAUREL LAKE LEXIGRAM

By Elizabeth V. Samuels



ACROSS

- 1 Uni or bi item
- 3 Vehicle used in regatta
- 6 LOL _ _ _ (not our kind of nymph)
- 8 Cat or Fair
- 10 _ _ _ _ Mein
- 11 Fleur de _ _ _
- 12 First half of our galaxy
- 13 Pet name for resident duck
- 14 *Kalmia Latifolia*
- 16 State that borders VT
- 17 Equipment used by 4 DOWN
- 18 Susan Link's spot
- 22 Annoying response to catalogue order (abr.)
- 23 Direction of Hitchcock title (abr.)
- 24 "... for dishes" or "Ode to ..."
- 27 "Snapping Turtle" or "Creature from the Black _ _ _ _"
- 28 Rhododendron _ _ _ _ Park
- 31 Store or station
- 32 Local island phenomenon
- 33 Our Town
- 39 Alphabet ending in England
- 40 Pen tip
- 42 Did you join the Laurel Lake Association?
- 43 A pregnant pause ... ????
- 45 Owl's question?
- 46 Berries that fringe the lake
- 47 How fish start
- 48 Abr. for things that hold music and money
- 49 Labor Day events
- 52 What noses do in winter
- 53 What guests do on weekends
- 54 Stella D' _ _ _
- 55 Auld Lang _ _ _
- 56 Kind of paper or water
- 57 Ma's mate
- 58 Cake or side

DOWN

- 2 City N. of Edinburgh or relative of 43 down
- 3 Ice cream _ _ _ _
- 4 "Old _ _ _ _ never die; they just smell that way."
- 5 Kind of boat
- 7 Realtor's favorite work
- 9 Famous last words (abr.)
- 10 _ _ _ _ pads
- 12 Mount _ _ _ _
- 15 Kind of roast
- 17 " _ _ _ _ your boat ..."
- 18 Fishing lure
- 19 Beans or dragons
- 20 Kids' game
- 21 Fitzwilliam or Monadnock _ _ _ _
- 24 Neighboring town
- 25 What we overdid at 3 and 21 DOWN
- 26 _ _ _ _ PAINT
- 29 Local eatery
- 30 Official break (abr.)
- 33 " _ _ _ _ or cut bait!"
- 34 Kind of grill or Dick
- 35 Elvis or The Golden Calf
- 36 "Mother _ _ _ _"
- 37 " _ _ _ _ -one for tennis?"
- 38 "... re, _ _ _ , fa, sol, la ..."
- 41 Jays, orioles, etc.
- 43 Doone and Snow
- 44 Shoes required for hiking
- 48 What Indians made from birch bark
- 50 Bakery locale
- 51 What leaves do in the fall
- 55 What fish do
- 56 Pillow or small
- 57 Where you've got a Friend (abr.)

NEED A CLUE?
Write Elizabeth V. Samuels
34 Irving Ave.
Providence, RI 02906
Send stamped, self-addressed envelope

DEATH OF A SNAPPA

Page 5

By A Fellow Lakey

On a Sunday evening in early August, while standing on our dock, I noticed a big snapping turtle's head bobbing in the waves. I got in my canoe and paddled just passed turtle rock. Even though submerged, I spotted her about three feet under water, sitting on a rock. As I slowly paddled by her, she was startled by the splashing water and headed off to the bottom of the lake.

After seeing her once again, I remembered how most "Lakey's" had watched this turtle grow. She would be over by the docks early in the morning or at dusk, and was actually caught a few times; however, she was always let go! It's sad to say, but she is just a memory now ...

It was sometime in August when she met her unfortunate death. Rumor has it that she scared some children, so their father took it upon himself to see that she never came up for a peek around again! What's even more disturbing is how the children were skipping across the beach chanting "the turtle is dead, shot him dead and chopped off his head." What's the next move, hanging the shell on the wall?

I know I feel a great loss at her untimely death, which is what inspired me to write this article, passing on the facts about snappers.

Snapping turtles can have a carapace (outer shell) up to 15 inches in length and can weigh as much as 85 pounds. Males grow larger than females. Their life span is usually over 100 years, (our particular turtle had probably been at Laurel Lake longer than most of us).

Chelydra Serpentina (the common snapping turtle) rarely leaves the water, except to lay their eggs. Sometimes laying eggs twice in a season, the cold weather

arrives before incubation; however, the eggs do not die from freezing and hatch in the spring.

Most turtles enter hibernation by late October by burrowing in the mud at the bottom of the lake, or sometimes hiding under logs. In some instances, they have been observed crawling along under the ice in mid-winter. Come March or April, depending upon temperature, they will emerge and start this cycle once again.

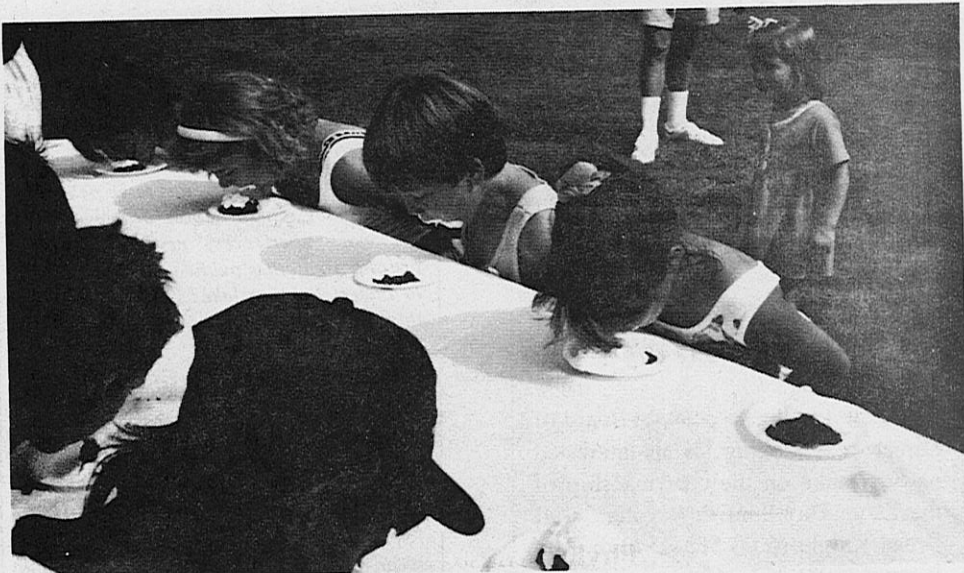
When cornered, snappers have been known to have a vicious temper and can strike with amazing accuracy, capable of tearing flesh. Instead of retreating into its shell when challenged, they turn to face the intruder, even advancing to the attack, snapping and biting. Although very rare, there have been a few cases reported where fingers and toes have been snapped off when these turtles have been disturbed by bathers. Extreme caution should always be taken when approaching a snapper. It must also be mentioned that these turtles will not bother you when left alone. When approached in the water, they are usually frightened and seek out cover in the mud.

Although snappers have been accused of eating game fish and water fowl, studies of their stomach contents show that vegetation, assorted invertebrates, and dead decaying flesh account for more than two-thirds of their daily diet.

As with all wildlife, we should keep in mind that these animals help make Laurel Lake a special place to visit. We should all strive to preserve it instead of working toward destroying it. History was altered the day the snapper was killed; perhaps another one will be allowed to live long enough to take its place.



Laurel Lake Winter of 1962



Pie eating contest at the Chicken Bar-B-Que is always a favorite for the kids.

ELLEN M. OLSON

By Erika Duke

Before Ellen Anderson and Francis Olson were married, they started visiting Laurel Lake. The year was 1927, and they were still teenagers. They heard about the beautiful area just over the New Hampshire border from other people who went there. They mostly would drive to Fitzwilliam, but they had also taken the train to the depot and then walked up to the Lake. It was about 1½ hours from their home in Holden, MA.

At first, they would spend the day and picnic. After a time, they rented a spot in the pine grove to tent with a platform. Sometime after the 1938 hurricane, they built the main part of their camp. It consisted of a kitchen and a bedroom. In the late 1940's or early 1950's, they added a bedroom and turned the old bedroom into a living room. They then added onto the bedroom to include a closet and bathroom. They had previously used an outhouse for toilet facilities. In 1964 or 1965, they added onto and enclosed a porch to provide a sleeping area for a growing family of grandchildren. That is how the camp stood in 1990 when it was sold.

Back in the early days, everyone who camped, including the Smiths and the Gayles, all got to know each other and would get together and have fun. They would swim (of course), play horse shoes,

pick blueberries at Haydens and have bonfires by the beach. Every Saturday night, the group they socialized with would get together for drinks and visiting.

Although there weren't the modern conveniences there are today, it seemed like they had more fun back then. People seemed more friendly and there was a kind of comradery. It was different from today. Sometimes they would have fireworks in the field. Everyone would bring food and picnic. Another memorable time was in Winter when everyone would pack food, park the cars (the roads weren't plowed), and trudge through the deep snow to have Sunday dinner. Everyone would skate and shovel the snow off the flat part of the camp roof. Over the years, there were many, many fun weekends.

Due to a growing family, Ellen and Francis' son, Richard, and his wife Tanja bought their own cottage on Laurel Lake. It is located on Keene Ave., right on the water. After the sale of her camp, Ellen occasionally continued to come to Fitzwilliam on a Sunday afternoon. She now resides in a nursing home in Worcester. The Olson tradition at Laurel Lake continues as Dick and Tanja are joined most weekends by their children and grandchildren, who enjoy swimming, water skiing and boating with their Grandpa Dick and Grammy.



Ellen and Francis Olson 1982.



The Olson camp during the early '50s.



Ellen and Francis Olson with friends, Sunday, June 14, 1930 cooling off at the beach, Laurel Lake, New Hampshire.

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Don Austin

Your association is operating on a break-even basis. Revenues and expenditures are about even for the period July 21, 1990 through June 12, 1991.

The principal sources of revenue are memberships and bank interest. Your dues support the newspaper, water testing, and the Sunfish Regatta. The annual BBQ is a break-even operation, showing a small gain last year.

More detailed information is available by writing to Don Austin, Treasurer.

WANTED

The Laurel Lake Association Board of Directors is looking for an interested party to take on the chairmanship of the Labor Day Sunfish Regatta. Call Bruce Knight (603) 585-9549 or Rob Prunier (508) 753-2418.

Note to readers

The Laurel Lake Ledger is the official newsletter of the Laurel Lake Association, Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire (a non-profit organization). Membership is open to anyone who has an interest in maintaining the quality of Laurel Lake and its surrounding areas. For information on how you can join and receive free copies of this publication, write for a membership application:

Laurel Lake Association
John Dumont, Secretary
20 Surry Lane
Chicopee, MA 01020

Members and their families are encouraged to mail in articles of interest to be published in upcoming issues. These articles can be personal experiences, news stories, or articles from other publications that pertain to Laurel Lake or lakes in general. Mail this material to:

Larry Friedman, Editor
Laurel Lake Ledger
265 Freeman Pkwy.
Providence, RI 02906

Photographs will be returned if requested. Every attempt is made to report accurately. Mistakes will be corrected in subsequent issues if brought to our attention.

TAX RATE CUT 6¢

By Bruce Knight

On October 1, 1991, I visited with Selectman Tom Parker in Town Hall regarding the new tax rate which had just arrived from Concord. The good news is that it's good news, the bad news is that it's only six cents of good news. The 1991 tax rate will be \$17.40 compared with \$17.46 in 1990.

Here's what that means: If your property is assessed at \$100,000.00, your 1991 tax will be six dollars lower than your 1990 tax.

Here's how the taxes break out:

Town	1990:	4.78/1000
	1991:	4.51/1000
	Reason:	Held line on spending
County	1990:	1.64/1000
	1991:	1.52/1000
	Reason:	\$15,000.00 lower county tax bill
School	1990:	11.04/1000
	1991:	11.37/1000
	Reason:	Increased budget 6% cap

Your total assessment X \$17.40/1000 = Your 1991 tax bill. You can then subtract your June payment from the total to calculate your December payment.

Remember that you have 60 days from the day your tax bill was mailed to file with the town for an abatement. Tom had several comments to make on this issue as well. Decisions on granting or denying abatement requests are not made solely on the assessed value of your property or the actual value of your property. What the town considers is whether or not there is an error or an inequity showing that you are paying a disproportionately higher share of the total town expenses.

You can show that by pointing out an error in lot size, waterfront distance, square footage, number of buildings, etc.

We all know, including the town and the state, that the assessments are not accurate. Another way to show that you are paying a disproportionate share is to demonstrate that the proportion of inaccuracy on your assessment is grossly different than other assessments in the town. for example, if your assessed value is \$200,000.00 and the actual real estate market shows that it would only sell for \$150,000.00, you are assessed at 133% of your actual value. If you can show that other properties within Fitzwilliam are assessed at or close to their actual market value, then you have a case.

The real world problem with Laurel Lake up to this point is that we have only seen two sales of waterfront property in the last few years. Both of these sales occurred in 1991 and show a huge disparity between assessed value and selling price. (See below)

Map #25.08 Assessment: \$214,650.00
Selling Price: \$120,000.00

Map #22.01 Assessment: \$178,050.00
Selling Price: \$95,000.00

When I learned of the 25,08 sale, I phoned Powers Appraisal Inc. to discuss the possibility of taking some action now that we had some sales history. (Note: I did this as a representative of a number of lakefront owners and not as a representative of the Laurel Lake Association.) Powers Appraisal indicated that the town, the tax board and the Supreme Court would all require more than one or two sales on which to base our case.

I will continue to follow real estate transactions on and off Laurel Lake. If any of you have additional information you can provide, it would be greatly appreciated.

AN UPDATE ON WATER QUALITY

By Don Treat

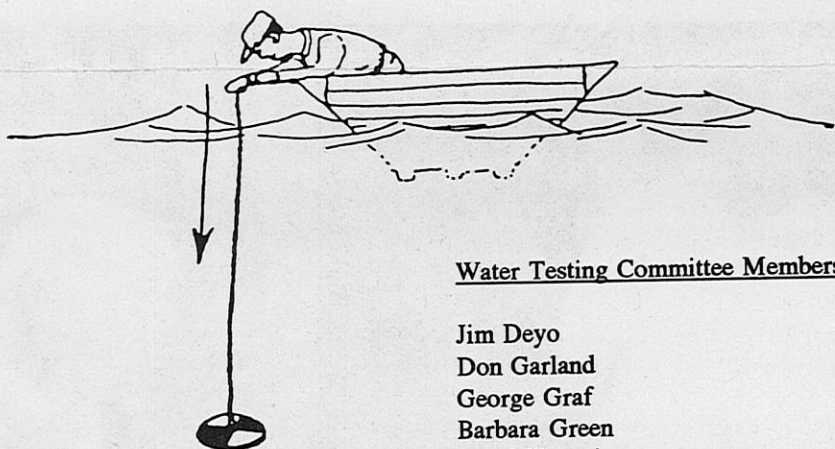
Laurel Lake Associates will be pleased to learn that the quality of the lake's water shows some signs of improvement, as revealed in tests conducted by the State's Limnology Laboratories on water samples collected in June, July & August by members of the Water Testing Committee. Average results from last summer's tests, together with averaged results from the previous two years, are displayed in the table below.

Of the six tests, five show improvement and one, Total Phosphorus, reflects continuing deterioration and remains a major concern for the future of the lake. Because rising phosphorus levels encourages the growth of algae and other undesirable plant life, property owners should try to reduce as much as possible the amount of phosphorus entering surface

water around the lake. Contaminated surface water is, in all probability, the principal way of phosphorus entering our lake. We can all do our part by keeping our septic systems/holding tanks properly maintained; by reducing the amount of phosphorus containing fertilizer applied to lawns and gardens; by maintaining or planting shrubs, bushes and trees in areas of water run-off; and by using non-phosphorus containing detergents wherever possible.

In late June, fecal coliform organisms were discovered at three sites used for swimming. Although the number of organisms per 100 cc was not sufficient to preclude swimming, and subsequent retesting showed normal results (less than 10 per 100 cc), the June tests do indicate that the potential for serious problems exists. The town Selectmen were informed of the results.

Test	Normals	NH Lakes Median	1989	1990	1991
Color	Clear < 20 Tea > 40	25	8	11	6.3
Ph	6.5-7.5	6.6	6.1	6.52	6.63
Clarity (in feet)		12-3/4	21	19-1/6	21-1/4
Total Phosphorus	< 10	10	4	6	8.3
Acid Neutralizing Capacity		6.3	1.7	1.4	2.26
Chlorophyll-a		6.6	7.7	4.2	3.34



A FEW WORDS ABOUT AQUATIC WEEDS & MILFOIL



By Don Treat

Some people have expressed concern about the rooted plant life found growing in shallow water. We are fortunate that to date, the plants are among those normally found in lakes with good quality water and an assemblage of desirable rooted plants. Pipewort is the plant with the long stem and a small modular flower on top. Floating Heart has small heart-shaped floating leaves with additional stems and leaves at the base. And finally, there are common water lilies in a few areas. While the lake has normal, useful plant life now, there are a number of lakes within an hour's drive which have the non-native, exotic weeds Eurasian Milfoil

and Fanwort. When fully established, these exotic weeds can seriously impair swimming, boating and fishing, so we must remain vigilant.

Milfoil, through perhaps "normal" denizens of our lakes and ponds, are undesirable from a water quality viewpoint. Furthermore, many are infested with a near-microscopic size parasite which, if it burrows into your shin, will produce intense itching -- Swimmer's Itch. While there is no practical and safe way to ensure that the parasite won't appear in Laurel Lake, there is a way to reduce the chance: Don't Feed the Ducks!



Charley Brackett reports to the board about the 1st Annual Canoe and Kayak Race.

2.5 MILE CANOE & KAYAK RACE RESULTS

OVERALL CANOE

- 1st John Bradley/Bryan Bradley
- 2nd Dan Mahoney/Damon Mahoney
- 3rd Jim Flaherty/Wayne Rigg

OC-2 RECREATION

- 1st John Bradley/Bryan Bradley 23:14
- 2nd Jim Flaherty/Wayne Rigg 29:12
- 3rd Dave Flanders/Darren Leger 35:30

OC-2 FATHER & SON

- 1st Dan Mahoney/Damon Mahoney 27:30
- 2nd Mark, Nathan & Sam Frey 32:10
- 3rd Bruce Johnson/Adam Johnson 32:17

OC-2 ALUMINUM

- 1st John Dumont/William Chase 29:55
- 2nd Amy Johnson/Sue Hoyland 39:55

OC-2 MIXED

- 1st Wendy Moreira/Eric Moreira 29:45

OC-2 FEMALE

- 1st Chris Brackett/Karen Courtemanche 34:32
- 2nd Nancy Wyman/Susan Wood 37:19
- 3rd Judy Moreira/Jessica Moreira 37:42

K-1 KAYAK (Men's)

- 1st Daniel Jackson 24:58
- 2nd Bob Courtemanche 31:49

3/4 MILE KIDS FUN RACE RESULTS

OC-2 BOYS

- 1st Adam Johnson/Ryan Mullet 12:10

OC-2 GIRLS

- 1st Erin Mahoney/Kelly Desreuisseau 15:08

K-1 KAYAK (Boy's)

- 1st Daniel Jackson 08:32

YOUNGEST PARTICIPANT: Sam Frey

1991 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

By Larry Friedman

The 1991 Membership Drive was by far the most successful campaign to increase membership. As of September 15, 1991, there were 278 - \$5.00 memberships. 44% of these \$5.00 memberships were "couples" (usually husband and wife). The other 56% were single memberships (18 and over). This year, we added a new category called Junior Member. A junior member is a child of a regular member (under 18). There were 58 Junior Members each paying \$2.00. A total of \$1,506 was raised by dues.

Our membership comes from 22 states.

State	Members	Junior Members
NH	110	23
MA	83	15
CT	26	5
CA	10	1
FL	7	0
NY	6	2
RI	6	4
NJ	4	0
VA	4	4
IL	3	1
AZ	3	0
MD	2	0
SC	2	0
DE	2	0
PA	2	0
ME	2	0
TX	2	3
OH	1	0
VT	1	0
MI	1	0
NC	1	0
TOTAL	278	58

30% of our membership lives full-time in Fitzwilliam. 17% of our Junior Members make Fitzwilliam their permanent address.

Milt Posovsky, who has been the Membership Campaign Chairman for the last 4 years, will be stepping down. The Board of Directors is looking for a replacement for Milt. If there are any members who are interested in taking on this responsibility, please call Bruce Knight at (603) 585-9549 or Milt Posovsky at (619) 451-0633. Milt has agreed to train our next chairperson and also to continue to solicit some of his neighbors for membership. If you enjoy meeting and talking to people, believe in the Laurel Lake Association, and have the time to solicit and inspire others to solicit new and old memberships, then you owe it to yourself to find out more about this exciting opportunity.

Thank you, Milt, for a job well done!

MEETINGS & EVENT DATES

Board Of Directors Meeting
Saturday, June 20, 1992

Annual Meeting/Family Picnic
Saturday, July 25, 1992

Chicken Barbecue
Saturday, August 22, 1992

Canoe Race
Saturday, July 4, 1992 or
Sunday, July 5, 1992

Labor Day Sunfish Regatta
Sunday, September 6, 1992 or
Monday, September 7, 1992

Board Of Directors Meeting
Saturday, September 12, 1992

DOWNTOWN FITZWILLIAM

By Larry Friedman

You never think of going into the Village of Fitzwilliam to spend an afternoon shopping; yet, at one time, there were several businesses in the area: The Fitzwilliam Savings Bank, Batcheller's Drug Store, Carters Harness Shop, The Union Store, Dr. Cumming's Drug Store, The Post Office, Charles Newman Tin Shop, The Rand Blacksmith Shop, The Red Garage, Kennett's Emporium, Rucker's Ice Cream, Demidoff's Sports Shop, and I'm sure there were others. I suppose if the automobile was not invented, some of these businesses would still be there.

We are fortunate to have the Fitzwilliam Market which was originally built in 1859 by Amos A. Parker. We find that they have the best meats in the area. Food shopping today is changing. Large regional centers such as the Market Basket in Rindge tend to overpower the smaller markets because of their gross buying power. Eventually, they reduce the volume of the neighborhood market to the point where the small market can't survive. I hope that doesn't happen in Fitzwilliam.

There is a place in the Village of Fitzwilliam that I never considered going into until this past summer. The Amos J. Blake House was a delightful surprise. It was a rainy Sunday afternoon and I had completed all of my repair projects at my Laurel Lake camp. I decided to take a drive. I saw a few people in front of the Blake House and decided to go in.

There were several women standing in the Blake House country store and before I could say a word, one insisted I tour the museum. I agreed.

Amos Blake was an attorney, town official, state legislator and community leader. When you first enter his home, you walk into his office. It's quite a contrast to the law offices I've been in recently. The rest of the house is a museum. Each of the 13 rooms has its own theme.

Dr. Emerson, the town physician, has a room dedicated to him. It contains all his office furniture and memorabilia.

Another room contains the contents of an elementary school room. This room is dedicated to Grace Blodgett, one of Fitzwilliam's beloved teachers.

There is even a country store selling candy, maple syrup and whole grain breads.

I suppose most cities and towns have a dying central business district (Keene being a major exception). It's nice to see that the memory of what was once there is preserved at the Amos J. Blake House and also in a book entitled "Fitzwilliam, The Profile of a New Hampshire Town 1884-1984," available in the country store in the Blake House.

The next time it rains at the lake, take a tour. You'll be glad you did.

ASHUELOT DAM STORY

By Catherine Pritchard
The Keene Sentinel Staff Writer

The water had probably been working on the gravelly base of the dam for a while.

It would first have pushed the finest particles in the base out of its path, and then gone to work on bigger rocks, worming its way through the barrier.

Eventually, it pushed a big hole through. Engineers call it a pipe, but it's big enough for an adult to crawl in. Through that, all the water that had been pent up in a small hydroelectric company's pond ran away.

That's what happened sometime Friday night or Saturday morning at the River dam operated by a Colorado-based company on the Ashuelot River in Ashuelot, near the Hinsdale border.

Luckily, said state officials and others, it's summer and the river is low, so the unplanned release of water didn't do any harm downstream.

But it will mean expensive repairs for HDI, the company that operates the dam. It also means that Ashuelot Paper Co., which leases the dam property to HDI and sits within spitting distance of the barrier, has to rely on outside help for fire protection. The company would usually rely on the pool of water built up behind the dam, said manager Brad Silver.

Other than that, the dam failure didn't affect the paper company, Silver said.

Though the company usually gets water for its boiler from the pool, it is still able to get a sufficient amount from the river itself.

The dam -- which has a 120-foot spillway and is 10 feet high -- was originally constructed of timber and rocks, and later covered over with concrete. The trouble came in the gravelly foundation, said Steve Doyon, a state engineer who oversees dam safety.

It was last inspected in 1985 or 1986 when HDI put in new turbines at the site, he said. Even a recent inspection wouldn't have picked up this problem though, he said.

"It's one of those things where there was probably water in the pond, and you can't tell what's going on underneath the dam unless water is coming out on the other side," he said.

Doyon said it was ironic that the dam's failure came now, when water pressure is lower than normal.

The small dam is classified as one that would create the least hazard in cases of failure, even in times of high water. "It would cause some property damage but nothing catastrophic," Doyon said.

He said the dam will be fixed in stages. First, the hole will be filled in so there's support under the dam. Then workers will fix the dam so this problem won't happen again, he said. The state will oversee all the work, he said.

WANTED

The Laurel Lake Association Board of Directors is looking for an interested party to take on the chairmanship of the Membership Committee. We will train you. Ideal for a person who enjoys meeting new people. Call Bruce Knight at (603) 585-9549 or Milt Posovsky (619) 451-0633.

PLANS PRESENTED FOR VILLAGE DISTRICT

By Jeff Rapsis
The Keene Sentinel Staff Writer

After a summer of debate, a plan to form a village district around Granite Lake is moving closer to becoming a reality.

Organizers have presented village-organizing petitions to selectmen in Nelson and Stoddard, the towns that share the lake's shoreline.

In theory, the district would spread the cost of maintaining the lake's dam and buying liability insurance evenly among property owners who benefit from the lake.

Supporters of the idea say a village district is a fair way to spread the costs of maintaining the lake among all who benefit from it.

But opponents say it's an unnecessary level of bureaucracy.

To get a village district considered, organizers had to collect at least 10 signatures from property owners in each town. That was done this summer, and the petitions were presented to selectman in each town this week, said David L. Knight, president of the Granite Lake Association.

"Basically, they're not thrilled with it, but they're willing to sit down and look at it," Knight said.

Next, state officials and the two boards of selectmen will work out details of what

happens next. That should happen in the next two weeks, Knight said.

Among other things, selectmen from both towns will have to agree on what properties will be part of the property district. Similar districts generally include any property on the shore or with deeded access to the lake.

After the boundaries of the proposed district are set, people living within it get to vote. If a majority says yes, the district is formed.

People who aren't legal residents of Nelson or Stoddard, but who own shoreline property, won't be able to vote. Only registered voters in the two communities can cast ballots.

The district would cover its costs -- a few thousand dollars a year -- through a property tax that could add about \$12.50 to the bill for property assessed at \$100,000.

However, that's less than the annual \$15 fee for membership in the Granite Lake Association, which owns and maintains the dam.

The association is a non-profit corporation to which not every property owner belongs or pays dues. If the village district is formed, ownership of the dam will be turned over to the district.

The lake association has also found it impossible to get liability insurance at reasonable rates.



Rob Prunier speaks to Board Members at the September 7, 1991 Board Meeting about his resignation as Commodore of the Regatta.

OFFICERS

Bruce Knight	President	1992-1993
Phyllis Chase	V. President	1992-1993
John Dumont	Secretary	1992-1993
Don Austin	Treasurer	1992-1993

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Don Treat	Water Testing Committee
Don Garland	Nominating Committee

Larry Friedman Editor/Publisher
Laurel Lake Ledger

Gus Hoyland Enforcement of Lake/Boating Rules

Jack & Barbara Dumont Annual Meeting Family Picnic

Gail Bailey Chicken Barbecue Committee

Charles Brackett Canoe Race Committee

Shirley Quinn Membership Special Categories

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karl Anderson	1992
Marguerite Albertini	1992
Robert Prunier	1992
George Graf	1992
Shirley Quinn	1992
Tom White	1992
Milton Posovsky	1992
Don Garland	1992
Larry Friedman	1992
Gus Hoyland	1992
Midge Deyo	1992
Jim Baldwin	1992
Virginia Nevins	1992
Don Treat	1992

EDITORIAL

By Larry Friedman

The purpose of government is to protect the people. Lately, it seems the purpose of government is to collect taxes. Government, on every level, is running out of money, and services that we have all come to expect are being sharply curtailed. If this trend continues, it will have an impact on Laurel Lake and the future value of your property.

Some of the members of the Laurel Lake Association have expressed concern about recent test results of water quality. These test results, which were collected by the lay monitoring committee of the Laurel Lake Association, indicate potential future problems. The lack of response by the local government concerns the Board of Directors of the Association.

Another issue, having to do with controlled flushing of the lake's waters through two adjustable dams, was brought to the attention of the State of New Hampshire. The State's response was disappointing. In their view, the problem involved private property which was out of their jurisdiction. As a property owner and board member, I see a disturbing trend. The State has asked us to help it by collecting long-term water quality trend data on Laurel Lake; yet, when we find potential and possibly correctable problems, they turn a deaf ear. Is this due to lack of funds, lack of interest, or are we just a low priority on the list of environmental concerns in New Hampshire?

LEAKING SEPTIC SYSTEMS

By Bobbie Crutchley

The following is an edited version from the minutes of the Board of Selectmen's September 25, 1991 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Laurel Lake Association

- a. Donald Treat speaking for the Association, 10 of whose members were present, asked what the town had done in response to the study by Cynthia Sterling in 1989 about septic systems leaking into the lake. There is a state law but no town ordinance covering the policing of water pollution at the lake. The Association wants the town to perform this function. Mr. Lacy said that there was a question of the town's authority to enter a private residence to conduct tests and that he is trying to resolve this issue with the town attorney at present.

There was particular concern about two of the original 11 septic systems which appeared to pollute in the 1989 report. These properties are used as year-round residences.

The Association also took their usual readings for E. Coli three times during the summer. On June 28th, they had the highest count with 110 parts per 100 cc. These figures were all under 10 at the subsequent test in July.

The Selectmen said they would look into the septic problem now that there is a health officer. Susan Link will write to her.

- b. There is an unimpeded outflow of water from the lake. There was a

As board members, we have a fiduciary responsibility to see that water quality is maintained to the highest standards. However, I believe our responsibility does not include enforcement of local and state laws that have been set up to protect us all. The dilemma is, what happens if the State does not enforce its own laws? Does the Association take action against the perceived offenders? Do we have the resources or even the right to suggest to certain landowners that they may be polluting Laurel Lake?

I, for one, feel that our energy should be put into convincing the town or state that they should get involved rather than trying to solve these problems ourselves. The strength of the Association is in the numbers of active members we can maintain. If the Association begins telling individual property owners (members) that they must make expensive repairs to their septic systems or that they can't convert a summer house to a full year-round home, then dissension among the membership will occur and the Association will become weak. Our charge is to be the watchdog, not the enforcer.

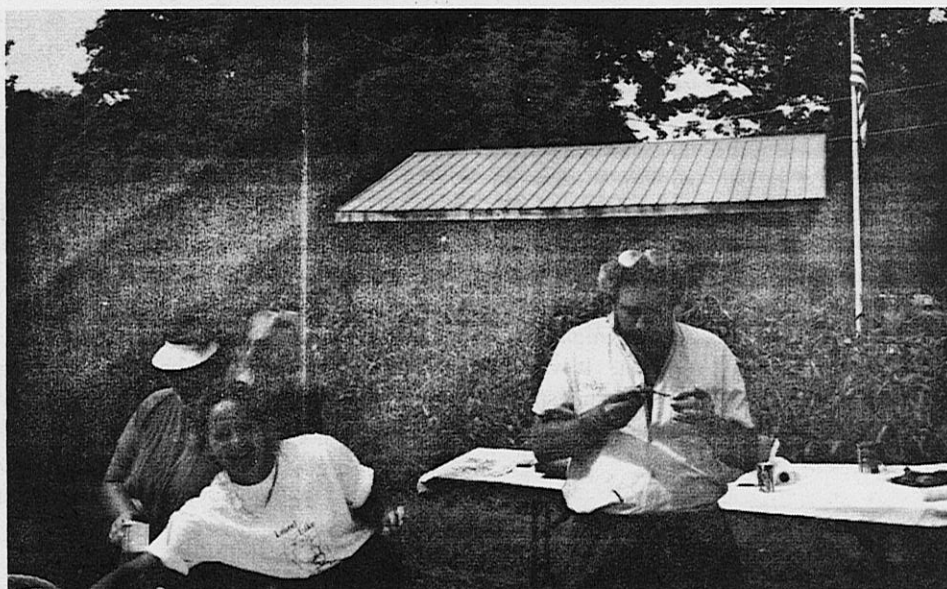
Let's hope, for all our sakes, that the government that does such a good job collecting our taxes will also do a good job providing us with the services.

The town has since hired a health inspector and it appears they may now respond to the water quality problems. See article "Leaking Septic Systems".

long discussion about how the dam is being bypassed and the water is going under a lakefront cottage instead. There is also stagnant water at this cottage and there may be a problem with its septic system. The Association talked with the owner who is willing to cooperate in solving the dam problem.

The selectmen said that they would have to know what the town's legal rights were, since the state owns the lake, Fleur-de-Lis Camp appears to have the water control rights and the leakage problem is on privately owned land. The selectmen said they would look into the matter and Susan Link will write Bruce Knight, President of the Lake Association, with the results.

Names of property owners have been deleted because information is not conclusive. The Town Selectmen are: Susan S. Link, Chairman; Thomas F. Parker; and Thomas B. Lacy.



Gale Bailey (Chairperson of the Chicken Bar-B-Que). Left: Bernie Feldman samples chicken, right.

SIMPLE PLEASURES

By Phyllis Chase

Each summer, our family enjoys discovering simple pleasures of the lake area. Some of our favorite activities have included exploring the back roads by foot, bike and trusty old station wagon. Three destinations we've particularly enjoyed, we share with readers below:

(1) Bike hike down Fish Rock Road to the shore of Sportsman's Pond: From the Girl's Camp end of the lake, travel west along Howeville Road, continuing on where its name changes to Putney, soon turning left on Fish Rock Road. This bumpy, woodsy stretch ends at Sportsman's Pond where the view is quite pristine and one may startle large water birds unused to having many human visitors in this unspoiled spot. Halfway down Fish Rock Road, one passes over some wide smooth stone. Local folklore says a large outline of a fish has been engraved upon it, handiwork of long ago Indians. Fun to look for. This excursion is a good walk.

(2) Twinkletown Miniature Golf and Batting Cages, Rte. 12 on the way to Keene, just before the Cheshire Fairgrounds: This lovingly constructed miniature golf area has intergenerational appeal and makes a good outing for tots, teens and grandparents alike. In

addition, the price is right! It costs only 50¢ for those age 15 and under, and one dollar for older folk. Batting cages are a good bargain, too, (50¢ for 12 pitches), and provide both softball and fastball opportunities. Sodas are only 40¢, and ice cream treats similarly priced. Mr. and Mrs. Mike Thomas are the proud proprietors and congenial hosts. This "simple pleasure" has never ceased to be a hit with even our most sophisticated and jaded visitors!

(3) Doane's Falls: This real jewel is found only 12 miles south of the Lake in the Massachusetts border town of Royalston which abuts Fitzwilliam. A granite gorge with a series of 3 waterfalls, also known as "Root Beer Falls" because of its deep brown water colored by tannic acid from fallen leaves, is located on Athol Road, Royalston. This makes a fine place for short hiking, old-fashioned picnics (no grills available), and great photo opportunities. The 31-acre site is free and open to the public, courtesy of Trustees of Reservations, a private conservation group over 100 years old. One route to Doane's Falls is via Royalston Toad, (Left off Rte. 119W). When you enter Royalston Center, turn right and travel a few miles up the hill to the parking area, plainly marked, on the right hand side of the road.

LETTERS TO THE SECRETARY

February 28, 1991

Dear Mr. Dumont,

Someone in Florida mailed me a copy of your Laurel Lake Ledger for Winter 1991.

I was a summer camper in White's Grove from about 1937 until I moved West in 1956. Three generations of our family summered there every year.

Now the nearest family member is my sister in York Harbor, Maine, but none of us can ever forget the joys of Laurel Lake.

In August 1989, the Willard Family Association had their annual meeting in Keene, NH. I stayed at the Fitzwilliam Inn and met my sister and her husband for a swim in Laurel Lake.

I've been a newspaper adman all my life and am now Association Editor of the Mobile Park Magazine where I live, so I can appreciate the hard work and success that Larry Friedman has put into the Ledger.

Please accept my membership fee and send me the Ledger. I'll be sending some Laurel Lake memoirs to Larry soon.

Congratulations to all of you,

Arthur J. Willard

P.S.: I hope to be at Laurel Lake again next October. My 50th High School Reunion in Fitchburg, MA.

January 29, 1991

Dear John,

Enclosed find \$5 annual dues for the Laurel Lake Association. The Newsletter is wonderful, I hope you will continue the good work.

I have a few thoughts on property taxes in Fitzwilliam that I would like to share with you. Having been a selectman in a small town in Maine, I know that vacation homes on lakes are very good targets for increasing tax revenues. The Selectmens' logic often runs like this: there is little opposition at town meetings, few services required, and people with two homes can afford to pay heavily, etc. As individuals, it is difficult to get anywhere arguing with the selectmen over the taxes that we pay to the Town of Fitzwilliam. As a group, we might have some impact.

My suggestion is that someone in the association, with time, energy, and proximity to the town tax information, compile a list of the property owners on Laurel Lake and the total of what we all pay in annual property tax. This figure might at least make the year round population more aware of the considerable percent of the town's taxes that are paid by Association Members. I admit that it is unlikely to have much effect, but individual complaints seem to have no effect. We are sitting ducks for continued property tax exploitation unless we can muster some organized opposition.

Cordially,

David Greeley

GRANITE LAKE LANDOWNERS FORM A VILLAGE DISTRICT

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By Jeff Rapsis
The Keene Sentinel Staff Writer

By his own recollection, Leonard F. Frazier has maintained the dam at one end of Granite Lake for the past dozen years. As needed, he's added or removed wooden planks on the dam's lip to adjust the water level, drawing it down in wet weather or building it up in dry spells.

But this summer, the dam may bring more than just changes in the lake's water level. For people who own property on or near Granite Lake, the issue of who's responsible for the dam could lead to a new arrangement to manage it, and a new way to tax the property around it.

It's an issue that property owners at other lakes may find themselves confronting soon, too.

Say you're a member or officer of a lake association that maintains a dam or beach. Someone on your dam or beach slips, and is injured. With liability insurance premiums beyond the reach of your association, how do you protect yourself from being named in expensive personal injury lawsuits?

At Granite Lake, the plan is to create a village district -- a new municipal authority made up of property owners surrounding the lake, which straddles the Nelson-Stoddard border.

As proposed, owners of lakeside property or land with access to the lake will still be part of either Nelson or Stoddard. But if the plan goes through, they'll also be part of a special district created to look after Granite Lake.

The new village district, as proposed, would have the power to raise funds by taxing the property within it to keep up the dam. In theory, the district would spread out the cost of maintaining the dam evenly among all those who benefit from it.

More importantly, it would allow the residents to take advantage of much cheaper premiums for liability insurance, and at the same time shield lakeside property owners from being caught in expensive lawsuits.

Supporters say creating such a district is the best -- and cheapest -- solution to a number of problems at the lake, such as how to share the cost of dam maintenance, or how to pay the skyrocketing premiums of liability insurance.

"You own a property on the lake," says David L. Knight, a dentist who's been president of the Granite Lake Association for the past three years. "What's it really worth to you to take care of the lake?" he asks.

But opponents are afraid of setting up another level of bureaucracy with the power to raise property taxes.

They're also afraid a new village district will run short of volunteers to run it, which means selectmen will inherit the job of taking care of it.

While Nelson selectmen have reservations about the idea, Stoddard selectmen are opposed to it.

"You'll be left with a bureaucratic entity that will live forever, without the volunteers necessary to keep it afloat," says Nelson selectman Ethan C. Tolman, who hasn't made up his mind on the idea yet.

"We've got to be sure that isn't going to happen before I cast my vote for it," Tolman says.

The plan to form a village district grew out of a problem that became acute in the mid-1980s. That's when officers of the Granite Lake Association, a non-profit corporation made up of some property owners around the lake, found that premiums for liability insurance to protect them and the association if an accident occurred, were prohibitively expensive.

The only property the association owns is the dam, which was built for a chair factory over a century ago, and a small island in the northern end of the lake.

The only income the association has is annual dues from some -- but by no means all -- lakeside property owners, which are \$15 per family. It's never had an annual budget of more than a few thousand dollars. Nobody is paid any salary; the only expenses are dam maintenance and insurance, if any.

Premiums for liability insurance used to run a few hundred dollars each year, tops. But in 1985, they suddenly ballooned into the tens of thousands of dollars, way beyond the group's resources. The officers let the policy lapse while they figured out what to do.

Today, insurance premiums for the Granite Lake Association would run between \$25,000 and \$40,000 a year, Knight says. Though they're still without insurance, it's a must. Without it, officers of the association, and perhaps even members, could possibly be held personally liable if the dam broke and caused damage downstream, or if -- more likely -- someone was accidentally hurt on the property.

There's even a chance someone could sue the association if an injury occurred anywhere on the lake. The injured person could say the association didn't maintain the proper water level in the lake, and the injury was the result of shallow water.

That's what happened in 1987, when Swanzey resident Ricki Fish dove into Swanzey Lake and struck his head on a rock just below the surface. Fish was paralyzed from the neck down after the accident.

In 1988, Fish sued the owners of the lake's dam, Homestead Woolen Mills Inc. of Swanzey and Robert A. Bennett of Keene. Fish alleged their negligence allowed the dam to deteriorate, causing the lake to fall below its normal water level, and therefore causing his injury.

The case was dismissed last July in Cheshire County Superior Court. Fish appealed to the N.H. Supreme Court, which upheld the decision to dismiss.

Because the state government regulates dam maintenance and because Granite Lake is a public body of water, the first plan was to let the state government take over the dam. But the state, cash-strapped and short of labor, isn't interested in acquiring and taking care of dams any more. Officials in Nelson and Stoddard don't want any part of the dam, either.

After a lot of research, Knight and other officers found a solution. It was in a little-used section of state law that spells out how people can form a village district within a town.

Among the reasons for creating a village district is the "impoundment of water," which means maintaining a lake. If legal residents who own property around a lake decide to form a village district, they can raise money through

property taxes for projects which benefit all. In the case of Granite Lake, that means taking care of the dam.

More importantly, a village district could also take advantage of cheaper liability insurance rates through the N.H. Municipal Association -- about \$1,500 a year, instead of \$40,000.

Still another advantage for a village district is that it would be eligible to contract with the state for any maintenance work at the dam at favorable prices. Typical chores are cutting brush and shoring up supports.

So instead of spending a relaxing summer on the lake, Knight and other supporters of the village district idea have been working hard to convince the resident lakeside property owners and selectmen to go along with the plan.

Their work may be paying off. At a meeting on July 14, association members voted unanimously in favor of the village district. But roughly a third of the property owners around the lake aren't involved with the association, and there's still some resistance among those who would be eligible to establish the district.

Though some are concerned about taxes, the plan doesn't involve big money. The district would have an estimated annual budget of between \$2,500 and \$3,000 a year, Knight says.

Maintenance of the dam would run about \$500 each year. Insurance premiums would be between \$1,000 and \$1,500. An extra \$1,000 would be set aside each year in a reserve fund for major work on the dam in the future.

That works out to a tax of about \$12.50 on property assessed at \$100,000, Knight says. For the average property owner, it would be about the dues paid by association members.

And residents won't likely see the village district attempt any other projects that could jack up their tax bills.

"We can't build a school. We can't pave a road. We can't do a damn thing," except care for the dam, Knight says. "If people realize that the district can't do anything other than this, they might rest assured."

Some selectmen are against the idea, though no formal statements against it have been issued yet by either town.

"What good is going to come out of it that benefits everyone?" Stoddard selectman John D. Halter asks. "We just prefer not to deal with it."

Creating a village district isn't hard. Under state law, residents who want to start one must collect ten signatures, then hand them over to selectmen -- in this case, in both Nelson and Stoddard.

It's then up to the selectmen to set the boundaries of the proposed district. Based on two other districts that exist already in the state, Knight says the best plan for Granite Lake would include all lakefront properties and all properties with rights of way to the water.

At Granite Lake, Stoddard selectmen would set the boundaries for the half of the lake that lies in their town; Nelson selectmen would handle their half.

After that, selectmen must hold a meeting of all voters who live in the proposed district. Voters then have their say. It's not yet clear whether each town would hold a separate meeting, or if the two towns would meet together. But if a majority of voters support the idea, the new district is born.

There's no timetable set for that to happen, but Knight hopes everything can be done a year from now.

If the village district doesn't take shape, things will likely get even more complicated. For starters, Granite Lake Association officers might be personally liable if an accident happens at the dam or on the island.

If the plan fails, Knight won't leave himself open to the danger of lawsuits. He says he'll quit, and the other officers probably would too.

"I shouldn't be doing it now," he says.

Even if it has no officers, the association will still own the dam. If an accident happens at the dam or the island, no one's certain what would happen then. It might mean any member could be named in a lawsuit.

"It's a real sticky mess," Knight says.

And the association, like any property owner, has to pay property taxes on the dam. If property taxes go unpaid for three years, the dam will then revert to the town of Nelson, which doesn't want it.

Because town officials don't want the dam, one option would be to just let it fall into disrepair. But the state might then possibly intervene and order the town to take care of the dam.

"It's a situation that nobody wants to have happen by default," says Thomas R. Hanna, a Keene attorney working for the association.

Knight hopes it doesn't come to that.

"That's not the gentlemen's way out," he says. "It defeats our goal of maintaining the quality of the lake."

State officials support the plans. In a letter to Knight written earlier this month, Delbert F. Downing, director of the N.H. Water Resources Division, said forming a village district is the only way for residents to involve the state in the upkeep of the dam.

Instead of the town taking over the dam, it makes sense for the residents to form a village district because they're the people who benefit from maintaining the dam, state officials say.

"They're the ones enjoying the lake," says James Leung, an engineer with the division. "It makes sense for them to pay for what they're enjoying, instead of the whole town."

Meanwhile, Leonard Frazier keeps an eye on the water level. He's lived on the Nelson side of the lake nearly his whole life -- long enough to remember the chair factory for which the dam was built.

To Frazier, it's sad. The need to create a village district is just more proof that Granite Lake isn't immune to a society that's turning suit-happy.

Until recently, this wouldn't have been a problem, he says. People used to trust each other. Now, all they want to do is sue each other.



From left to right: Larry Friedman, Bruce Knight, Milt Posovsky, Jack Dumont, Charley Brackett, Don Treat, Don Austin, George Graf and Midge Deyo at the September 7, 1991 Board Meeting. Home of Bruce and Joan Knight.

By John H. Dumont

The Laurel Lake Association's Board of Directors Meeting was held on Saturday, September 7, 1991. In attendance were Bruce Knight, Don Austin, Phyllis Chase, Jack Dumont, Jim Baldwin, Don Garland, Milt Posovsky, Shirley Quinn, Rob Prunier, George Graf, Don Treat, and Charles Brackett.

The meeting was called to order by President Bruce Knight at 9:15 a.m.

Secretary, Jack Dumont, read the minutes of the June 15, 1991 Board of Directors Meeting. It was motioned by George Graf, and seconded by Don Treat, that the minutes be approved as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

Don Austin, Association Treasurer, reported on the current operating funds of the Association. It was motioned by Rob Prunier, and seconded, that the report be accepted. Motion passed unanimously.

Bruce Knight reported on the outcome of the Chicken Barbecue from information provided by chairperson Gail Bailey.

Larry Friedman, Editor of the Laurel Lake Ledger, presented information about the newsletter and suggested topics for future issues.

Milt Posovsky, Chairman of the Membership Committee, reported on the total membership for the 1991 season. He also announced his resignation as Chairman, but stated he would participate on the Committee.

It was motioned by Larry Friedman, and seconded by Rob Prunier, that Milt Posovsky be made a life member of the Association and given the position of Director Emeritus in honor of his past services as Membership Chairman. It was motioned by George Graf, and seconded by Don Treat, that the matter be tabled. The motion passed unanimously.

It was motioned by George Graf, and seconded by Jim Baldwin, that the President appoint a Committee to consider Special Categories of Membership and this Committee report back to the Board of Directors by the next meeting. The motion passed unanimously. President Bruce Knight appointed Shirley Quinn as Committee Chairperson.

Charles, Brackett, Chairman of the Canoe Race, reported on this year's event. It was motioned by Milt Posovsky, and seconded by Shirley Quinn, that Charles Brackett be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the canoe race. Motion passed unanimously.

Rob Prunier, Chairman of the Labor Day Sunfish Regatta, reported on the participation and highlights of the race. He recommended a \$2.00 registration fee for all participants. It was motioned by Milt Posovsky, and seconded by George Graf, that participants in the Sunfish Regatta be assessed a \$5.00 registration fee in addition to being a member of the Association. Motion was defeated.

Rob Prunier announced his resignation as Chairman of the Labor Day Sunfish Regatta.

It was motioned by Don Treat, and seconded by Milt Posovsky, that the Laurel Lake Association, through its President, request a meeting with the Town of Fitzwilliam Board of Selectmen, to convey concerns about problems highlighted in the following reports/studies: (1) Septic System Study for Town of Fitzwilliam-East Lake Road Laurel Lake; (2) Graf Report on Preservation of Laurel Lake (Letter of Selectmen); and (3) Graf Report on Control of Water Level and Drainage of Laurel Lake (Letter to Selectmen). Don Treat and Milt Posovsky agreed to withdraw the Graf Report on Preservation of Laurel Lake from the original motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board of Directors discussed the location and time for the 1992 Annual Meeting.

It was motioned by Larry Friedman, and seconded by Jim Baldwin, to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously and meeting adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

OBITUARY

EMIL VAIDA

Emil Vaida, 76, of 24 Melrose Street, Worcester, died of cancer on May 2, 1991. A prominent claims adjuster in New England, he founded the Vaida Adjustment Service in 1954, and was its president until his retirement. Mr. Vaida was a summer resident of Laurel Lake, Fitzwilliam, NH.

Born in Phoenixville, CT, he was the son of James Vaida and Elizabeth (Kalman) Vaida. He graduated from Putnam High School in 1931, the University of Alabama in 1936, and Fordham University Law School in 1940. During World War II, he served in the Army as a Coastal Artillery Officer. Before establishing the Vaida Adjustment Service, Mr. Vaida had been employed for fourteen years as a claims adjuster and supervisor by the Travelers Insurance Company in Lake Charles, LA, and Worcester, MA.

By Larry Friedman

If you've never been to the Cheshire Fair, you don't know what you're missing. We try to go at least one night a year, usually on Sunday night, for the Demolition Derby.

This year, we went on Saturday night. The feature event was the rodeo. The grandstands have a limited capacity and we were too late to get a seat. I did notice Rob and Gretchen Prunier had front row seats so I know they got there early.

Front row seats might be good for a rodeo but don't choose these seats for the demolition derby. During that event, they water down the dirt surface to slow the cars down. It's nice to be able to duck behind the person in front of you when the mud flies. Hence, the front row seats don't offer you that protection.

It didn't bother me that we couldn't see the rodeo. My son, Michael, and two of his friends wanted to enjoy the Midway. I wanted to check out the farm animals and Marilyn was willing to go along with me. It was a beautiful evening. Saturday's rain had cooled the air and the typical summer humidity was temporarily absent. We walked through the sheep barn. This was the finest collection of animals I have ever seen. Their wool was white as snow (where have I heard that line before?) They were all ready for the Sheep Show on Sunday. Many were covered from head to tail with special garments to keep them clean. I'm told children raise these sheep from birth and put a lot of time in to win blue ribbons at the fair. It was a wonderful sensation to feel the closely sheared wool on their backs.

Next, we walked through the cattle barns. There were Guernseys, Jerseys, Brown Swiss -- you name it; if it was a cow, they had them. They are really good looking animals. Two young kids were shearing the coat on a cow. The cow's head was locked in a pipe rack to keep it from moving. I suppose this grooming was necessary to win a blue ribbon, although it appeared that the cow didn't believe this.

On our way back to the Midway, we stopped at the Horse Show Rings to see the competition. The horses were magnificent and the riders were dressed in those formal black riding outfits with tails and riding hats. It was impressive.

We met Michael and his friends at a predetermined spot on the Midway. He

tried to convince me to ride "The Zipper" with him, but I passed. He did convince me to see the 2,000 lb. pig (a 50¢ side show) so Marilyn and I went to see the big pig. It was worth it to see a pig that large! The pig was about as large as a Mazda Miata. Unfortunately, he was eating the entire time I was watching him. The food trough was on the back wall of the trailer so I never really got to see his face. The end I did see was not a pleasant sight. There were signs that calculated how many pounds of bacon and how many pounds of ham he could be made into. What a pig!

There are lots of things to see and do at a county fair. It's a real happening! There are all kinds of games to separate you from your money. There are tractor pulls, pig and calf scrambles, 4-H beef shows, ox pulling and antique tractor demonstrations. Usually, there is a trailer where you can get tattooed, but I didn't see it this year.

This year, they had a blacksmith demonstrate how to manufacture a horseshoe. He used a portable furnace to heat the metal. A volunteer was chosen to crank a fan which forced oxygen into the flame while the metal was heating. After about 10 minutes, the smith withdrew the metal from the furnace and began pounding it with various hammers to form the shoe. I was impressed by the muscle tone in the blacksmith's arms. He was a thin man with arms like Popeye. It was exciting to watch him hammer, trying to get the job done quickly while the iron was hot.

Marilyn found herself watching a woman spin yarn from wool on an old-fashioned spinning wheel. The boys were doing another type of spinning on "The Zipper."

By this time, there were plenty of seats available at the rodeo. Marilyn and I watched the cowboys try to ride the bronco bulls. Professional cowboys flown in from Texas couldn't stay on the bulls long enough to qualify, yet a cowboy from Brookline, MA was able to take the event!

I'm sure the various food concessions were outstanding, but my new low-cholesterol diet wouldn't allow me to sample the doughboys or fried clams. I did settle for a real fresh lemonade made from real lemons ... very refreshing.

I don't know what more I can say to get you to go to the 1992 Cheshire Fair. There is something for everyone. It's a real slice of Americana.



Emil Vaida

A good neighbor ...
A great friend.

Mr. Vaida was a member of the United Congregational Church in Worcester, the Worcester Insurance Society, the National Association of Independent Insurance Adjusters of Massachusetts, and the Worcester County Casualty Adjusters Association. An avid sportsman, he supported numerous conservation groups.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Pearl (Bordelon) Vaida; two sons, James E. Vaida of Hubbardston, MA, Thomas P. Vaida of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada; one daughter, Elizabeth V. Samuels of Providence, RI; and four grandchildren. Mr. Vaida is also survived by his seven brothers and sisters: James Vaida, Jr., of Great Barrington, MA; Ethel Larkin of Hampton, CT; Albin Vaida of Manchester, CT; Frank Vaida of Danielson, CT; and Lillian, Charles and Mitchell Vaida, all of Phoenixville, CT.

YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

By George L. Graf, Jr.

Waste water leaving your house comes from the shower or tub, kitchen sink, toilet, wash bowl, clothes washer and dish washer. It carries chemicals, solids, oils, grease, dirt, bacteria and viruses. A good septic system treats and disposes of this waste water and all that it carries. A failing septic system can result in pollution of ground waters, wells, drinking water, lakes and streams. There is the potential for disease when a septic system malfunctions.

Another effect of failing systems is the addition of nutrients, similar to those found in commercial fertilizers, to nearby lakes and streams. This contributes to excessive plant growth in lakes which upsets the natural balance and results in unsightly appearance, unpleasant odors and, in extreme cases, may produce fish kills.

Proper maintenance of a septic system can prevent these problems and save you money. Replacing a septic system can cost thousands of dollars. By keeping damaging materials out of your system, and by having the tank pumped out regularly (every 2-5 years depending on usage), you can protect your system from premature failure. The cost of pumping (with the costs in the hundreds of dollars) is cheap insurance to protect your health and your investment.

What is a septic system? It is a two-part sewage treatment and disposal system that is usually buried in the ground. The treatment system is a tank. The disposal system is usually a tile or drain field.

The conventional septic tank is usually a concrete box divided into three sections where the waste water collects. It should have a capacity to hold the water for three days. During this time, most of the heavy suspended material, such as feces, soil and food particles, sink to the bottom of the tank forming a sludge. Lighter materials, including grease, fats and paper products float to the surface to form a scum.

Bacteria living in the tank breaks down some of the organic solids in the sludge and the scum into smaller particles or liquid. A baffle keeps the scum which has not been digested by the bacteria from entering the drainage field where it would quickly clog the soil.

Between floating scum and settled solids is cloudy water with many small particles and dissolved material called effluent or grey water. After being conditioned or digested in the septic tank, the effluent flows into the drain field, as additional waste water enters from the house. This input/output balance means that the daily flow rate of waste water determines how long the waste stays in the treatment unit. The retention time must be long enough (usually 3 days) to assure adequate digestion of solids and scum. If all is working well, your septic tank digests the wastes and discharges liquid to the drain field or disposal system. Problems with disposal systems will not be addressed

here. Some problems with the septic tank will be considered. Here are a few facts for you to think about.

When grease is introduced into the septic tank, it becomes part of the scum. Grease is not readily digested in the system. Other scum particles which become coated with grease are also protected from the digestive processes. The net result is a build-up of scum which ultimately can be discharged into the disposal system. Then the drain field becomes clogged, leaching of effluent into the soil stops and operation of the whole system stops. Here is a major reason for having your septic tank pumped out periodically.

Let us consider a problem which arises from sludge. It is inevitable that sand and other heavy, undigestible materials will be discharged into the septic tank. As the sludge builds up, it reduces the holding capacity of the tank. This reduction in effective volume means there is less time for bacteria to act on the waste water. Then the quality of effluent declines and the service life of the drain field is reduced. Tank pumping at regular intervals avoids problems due to sludge build-up.

The matter of tank hold-up or digestion time has been mentioned several times. This point leads us to the questions: Is your tank of adequate capacity? Was your tank installed 25 or more years ago? How many people used your facilities then? Did you have a shower, clothes or dish washing machine? Older systems do not have the waste water retention time required for adequate waste water digestion. Consider our current life style and the sanitary facilities in our cottages. Your tank is most likely grossly undersize. Further, if the tank was of the old coated-metal type, it probably has rusted through and is leaking.

In the first paragraph of this article, it is pointed out that chemicals are in the waste water. The chemicals referred to here are salt, vinegar and other seasoning agents used in moderation in preparing our meals or washing clothes, etc. However, occasions arise when we may unthinkingly add large amounts of "chemicals" which can upset or destroy the delicately, biologically balanced system which is digesting the various materials in our wastewater. Several things which you may unthinkingly empty into your sink or toilet are Clorox (bleach - sodium hypochlorite) or drain cleaners containing sodium hydroxide (caustic) or sulfuric acid. Don't put them in your septic system!

In conclusion, we urge you to have your septic tank pumped frequently, keep grease out of the system and don't add large amounts of concentrated, strong chemicals. Also, if you have an "older" system, consider increasing its capacity.

Contains excerpts from:
Extension Bulletin 126, Dept. of
Agricultural Engineering, University of
Delaware, Newark, Delaware

THE MCGUIRE SISTERS

By Donn Brackett

It was the early sixties when Calvin Perry, Shirley Teeter, I and a few others, whom I can't recall, stood under the garage balcony of the Teeter cottage and sang HAPPY BIRTHDAY (her 40th) to Christine Teeter. The oldest of the sisters had married Jack Teeter some time before this, and by this time, she was a regular at Laurel Lake, especially on weekends.

More than one Saturday night, she walked from the cottage, with Asa by the hand, to attend one of my Saturday night shows in White's Grove. This was in the real early fifties.

The Coke Room and my summer business did not start up until 1957, and it was a couple of years later (in the sixties) when all three of the "girls", as we referred to them, came into the "three-stool Coke Room", and had soft drinks,

WHERE HAVE ALL THE RESTAURANTS GONE?

By Larry Friedman

I was surprised to see so many restaurants out of business in the Fitzwilliam area. When I arrive early in the Spring to rake leaves, I always have lunch at the Troy Family Diner. This year, I was greeted with a "For Rent" sign on the door. The Troy Diner was a good place for "cheap eats." The food was good, the prices were right, and the motif was early garage sale. I'll miss the old Troy Diner.

Further down Route 12 you'll find that Christmas In Keene is also out of business. This restaurant had changed hands and names a few times in the last 7 years. I knew that with their low prices and free meals with newspaper coupons, they wouldn't last.

Just before you get to Keene, the Seafood Connection has also bitten the dust. We ate there one night. The buffet was a good value but the temperature in the restaurant was about 60° -- too cold for me so I never went back.

In Keene, Butternuts is also out of business. This was a real upscale menu with excellent service but I doubt there were enough local people willing to pay the high prices.

The Old Forge on Route 202 is also out of business. This restaurant reminded me of several old landmark restaurants that my parents used to take me to on Sunday afternoons -- white table covers, relish trays, cheese and crackers. I must say we ate there in 1985 and never went back.

The restaurant business has always intrigued me. My father has been a restaurant supplier and builder for over 50 years. I became involved with his business 18 years ago. Over the last few years, we've seen hundreds of restaurants go out of business, mostly because they could not achieve enough volume to cover their overhead and debt service. Many new restaurants are undercapitalized and cannot withstand the months of losing money while building a customer base. The recession of 1990-1991 has made many profitable restaurants unprofitable. Often, people just don't have the extra dollars to go out to eat more than once a week. Restaurants cannot survive on just weekend business.

I was going to critique several area restaurants in this article, but I have decided only to talk about the ones I feel are good. I don't want to damage anyone's business just because I happen not to like a particular restaurant.

The Monadnock Inn has the best country inn food. It's quite expensive but well worth it if you want to celebrate a special occasion. This restaurant is about

15 minutes from Laurel Lake on Route 124 in Jaffrey.

The John Hancock Inn in Hancock is also a "fine dining" experience but is about 45 minutes from the Lake.

If it's pizza you like, the Fitzwilliam Apizza Center, at the corner of Route 12 & 119, has an excellent pizza. If you don't mind the drive, Foodees Pizza on Roxbury St. across from the YMCA is about as good a pizza as you'll find anywhere. Foodees is more of a designer pizza while the Apizza Center is more of an old world pizza. Both are good.

Henry David's on Main Street in Keene is one of the best casual restaurants in the area. There is something for everyone on their menu and the waitresses are pretty ceds from Keene State.

Libby's, on Route 12 outside of Keene, is an old favorite of mine. Recently, Libby's tore down their ice cream stand and added a casual family restaurant to their already successful coffee shop style restaurant. Now they run two successful operations side by side! I continue to frequent the old side. I have never been disappointed. Servings are large; prices are low.

The Boiler House at Noone Falls, Peterborough (Route 202), has a gourmet-style menu. I call it designer food. It's good food but the service can be slow. The menu is "pricey."

The best diner food is at Lindy's Diner in Keene. I have always loved to eat in diners. Try their stuffed peppers and homemade apple pie.

Buenas Cosas, on Winchester St. in Keene, has excellent Mexican Food.

Don't underestimate the cuisine at the Food Court in the Colony Mill Marketplace. This is a good place to have a nice lunch. They often have a piano player.

Have you had a dining experience worth writing about? Send your comments to The Laurel Lake Ledger.

Update: We came up again on Columbus Day weekend and found that the Troy Family Diner is open again and so is The Old Forge in Rindge. The Ambrosia restaurant in Jaffrey has changed their name (and hopefully their food). I'm sure by springtime there will be other changes. It's going to be a long, cold winter for the restaurant industry.

parking their bikes in front. It was on this first occasion, where I had the pleasure of meeting all three of these talented and famous performers. I have been a fan ever since.

It was a few years earlier, when swimming on a Sunday morning, a friend called me to the shore at Sandy Beach and told me that Jack Teeter wanted to know if I would pose with the girls for a Cosmo edition. They did not have to ask me twice! I met with them, a photographer from the magazine, and along with Bill

Perry, spent the rest of the hot day in an equally hot seat of Jenny Fisher's four-door convertible, on loan.

A few months later, the publication came out with the spread. Some time later, many of the pictures were published in a "Teen Movie" magazine; copies of all I still have.

All in all, over those years, the still active McGuires added life, excitement, and class to Laurel Lake ... God bless 'em!