

# *Friends of Lake Winnecook*

## *Newsletter 2006*

### *Let it melt!!*

Well its March and I'm getting ready for a association meeting next week. It occurred to me that I had better start on a newsletter. To be frank, I hadn't even thought about it since Pam told me in October that I had to do one and that unlike all the other things she does, she wasn't writing this one for me. I tried to explain that I'm much better with the verbal language then the written but received no sympathy. So here we go!! The lake froze over in the northern basin in front of the house on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November which is several weeks early. The main part of the lake followed freezing over around the 1st of December. My son and I went out the day after Christmas and chiseled through 12 inches of solid black ice. In January, we received all that rain and I received three confirmed cases where ice fishing shacks falling through the ice. During this time of incredibly warm temperatures and about nine inches of rain in a week's time, it reached the point where we had spring level flood waters in January. All three of the shacks were removed from the ice. While they had melted through, there was six inches of ice around the shacks with about a dozen people trying to save each one as they were bobbing in their own holes. All I could think of was my son's game Don't Break The Ice.

Fortunately no one did break the ice and all the shacks were rescued from watery graves or at the least from washing up on our beaches. Speaking of being frozen in, don't forget the ice out contest. The prize has been increased to a forty dollar gift certificate. Last year, we only had three entries so put your entry in. Entries are free and give us something to talk about on those long days before the middle of April. Oops? Ice out is when you can navigate a boat from one end of the lake to the other without being obstructed by an ice pack. Its mid March and has been very warm. Maybe the first week of April someone will make the attempt to navigate the waters; "oops" maybe not. Let's have some fun with it and don't forget to put a morning or afternoon on your entry as I think it just might be that close.

*We need you!!* On a more serious note, as many of you have heard that a water chestnut was in fact found on a boat this past summer in a location where it would have been deposited into our lake had it not have been discovered by one of our volunteer boat inspectors prior to the boat being launched at the Kanokalus boat landing. If it wasn't for these inspections a infestation of waterchestnut could have caused within a few years an unnegotiable waterway and drive all of our property values down to the point of being unmarketable. We were very lucky to have found this and truly believe we are in desperate need of more volunteers to do the courtesy boat inspections. We paid Harry Watson only \$600 last year for performing boat inspections in addition to his duty for the town. Harry is not able to be there every single day and I believe we do need at least two people performing these inspections during peak hours of 6am to 10am and 4pm to 8pm on the weekends. So with that said, I have enclosed a sign up sheet for you to schedule a four hour block. Please sign the date or dates which would work for you. If every adult member volunteers just one four hour block, then we will be able to have two volunteers performing these boat inspections on every weekend and holiday of the boating season. I realize that it is unrealistic to expect a hundred percent involvement but before you ROUND FILE the sign up sheet, think of the financial investment you have made in your property to date. Not taking into consideration the actual value of a home or camp on the lake in today's real-estate market, four hours of your time one morning or afternoon on a weekend is about the cheapest insurance you can buy to protect a investment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. There is not a lot of training needed. Basically, you inspect the boats for any type of vegetation attached to the boat and or trailer before the boat is launched and fill out a simple form with the boats information. We will send a list of instructions out after we receive the sign up sheets back along with a training date if it is requested but it will not be mandatory. I'm quite confident we will not get 136 volunteers so if anyone can do more, it would be graciously accepted. As a final point, please thank David Potter and Harry Watson, the two volunteers that found the waterchestnut and did without elaboration, saved the lake last summer as we know it.

Delicious annual meeting. The lobster bake /annual meeting was a great success which was a considerable relief for those of us who initiated it. While it was not much of a joyous occasion for the 90 some lobsters that participated in the event however. We did in fact serve 90 lobsters to 70 or so people without any comments of either overdone or crawling off the plates crustations and did in fact receive multiple compliments along with the request that it be repeated this summer for the 2006 annual meeting. This was the first year since I have been involved with the association when people had plenty of time to mingle and meet other members of our lake community. The meeting was quiet short, lasting about a hour, with the next three or more hours spent socializing and doing our part to ensure that the lobster is not the next organanizum to take over the world, at least while the Friends of Lake Winnecook have anything to say about it. With this said we do plan on having a SECOND ANNUAL LOBSTER BACK ON THE LAKE, this summer and hope we can have even a larger turn out. Members don't have to come to the meeting part of the day if they don't want to, all we request is that you can consume your share of lobster and get to know some of your summer time neighbors. The meeting will be in the morning with the dinner to follow around noon, the time and date to be set this spring. I do ask that in order to ensure that the board members are not single handedly responsible for the stock holders of TUMS, please –please send in your reservations with payment in early so we know how many lobsters to buy. Last year I believe we only had eleven conformations the month before the event, I truly believed that we were going to be the cause of the financial ruin of the Friends of Lake Winnecook. I plan on purchasing the lobsters at boat prices to keep the cost down, but must make the order a month ahead. We can't be left with the cost of a large number leftovers. I believe we had about twenty lobsters left over last year, all of which we were able to auction off at the end of the day and it was completely unexpected when Joe informed us that were had made a profit on the event. So not to beat the preverbal dead horse, please RSVP as soon as you can, the twins are keeping me up at night enough as it is.

New ideas for 2006. The Board is researching the feasibility of a power wash station for the Kanokalus boat launch. This is the next step to ensure that Lake Winnecook remains free of evasive plants such as water chestnut and milfoil. It is next to impossible for a courtesy boat inspector to remove or even see if there are any plants trapped under a boat and its trailer rollers or skids. A wash station would have a high pressure washer which would be able to remove plant fragments that could not be removed by hand as well as give us the convenience of washing our boats off as we pull them out of the lake in the fall after a summer at the mooring. The problems which have been identified are: land dedicated to the wash at the launch, water supply, power, DEP regulations, maintenance cost, construction cost and MONEY to fund it. Pam has advised me that there is a grant of \$2500 through L.L.Beans which we will be looking to apply for. This grant would at least get us started if we can solve these other obstacles. Last year grant money paid for practically our entire boat inspection program. We do have money which was given to us last year that needs to go towards a project that will have a continuing benefit to the lake. We haven't decided if this is the right project for this money and until we know the total cost we will proceed with caution. The other program that has been discussed is supplementing the cost of replacement of grandfathered septic systems to members of the association who are willing to take on the cost of this for the betterment of our lake and its water quality. Anyone who may be interested in replacing a grandfathered or defective septic system please let us know in writing because there may be money available to alleviate some of the financial burden. All letters of interest will be for the sole purpose of this program and will not be shared with any State or local agencies or agents.

We are also looking into the possibility of constructing some floating loon nests which have been successful on other water bodies increasing nesting and survival rates of juveniles.

The root of all evil. Money. This year the general membership voted to increase our contributions to organizations at the annual meeting by a considerable amount, this being 10% too 20% of our yearly operating budget. To date, the money that we have been giving out to these organizations is more than what we have taken in from dues. We operate on a small budget of only \$1500 –\$2000 dollars a year. This limitation is obviously prohibiting us greatly from being able to fully implement the above programs or projects. We have kept the membership dues down to encourage participation but if you have a pet project or would like to give a little extra we do have some great ideas to utilize the money, all of which will be only used to benefit the lake and /or the people who enjoy it.

By laws. We will be sending out a copy of the new proposed by- laws, there are only a few small changes if any one has a problem with these changes please mail us your concern and a short reason why so we can make changes prior to the annual meeting to avoid what happened two years ago, thank you.

*See you soon.* I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable winter and look forward to seeing people back out on the water. Until then send in your entry to the ice out contest, along with the boat inspections sign up list, your membership dues, and with any suggestions. My wife tells me I have a problem letting things go- imagine that. And don't forget the lobster reservations!

Send all requested information to:

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Faithfully Submitted,  
Micah P. Thurston