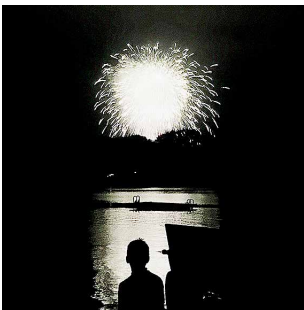
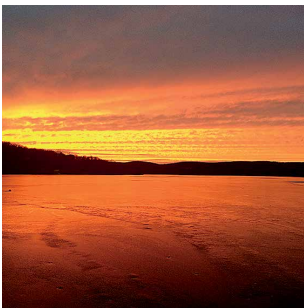


LAKE WARAMAUG ASSOCIATION

Spring 2021



Coming Events

THURSDAY, JUNE 3RD, 7:30PM 104th Annual Membership Meeting

To be held on Zoom. An e-mail invitation will be sent the week of June 1st, so please check your in-boxes! During the meeting, we will update you on our programs for road and water safety, as well as introduce you to our new Board members, Robert Hackney, Chris Spring, and Alan Levande. We will also introduce our new slate of Executive Committee members for your approval by vote, and bid adieu to our outgoing Board members who have reached the end of their terms: Anne Block, Christine Adams, Susie Payne, and Scott Weaver.

SATURDAY, JUNE 19TH Boat Ramp Summer Hours Begin

From June 19th through Labor Day, September 6th.
Town of Washington Boat Ramp hours:
Fridays-Mondays: 6am-Sunset
Tuesdays-Thursdays: 10am-5pm

SUNDAY, JULY 4TH Fireworks Spectacular

They're back! The display is scheduled for 9:30pm, as well as our annual Rim the Lake with Flares at 9:00pm! Details to follow.
Rain date: Saturday, September 4th

CT SAFE BOATING CERTIFICATE License Course

As a part of our new LWA Water Safety Initiative, S.E.A. Safe Boating will hold a private Safe Boating Certificate License course for Lake Waramaug Association members on Zoom for a discounted rate of \$80pp (normally \$100). LWA Members can also take one of their existing Zoom classes for a discounted rate of \$65pp (normally \$85). This 8-hour class is for ages 16+ and includes the Safe Waterskiing Endorsement + PWC Certificate. If interested, please email us at lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com by June 15th and we will get back to you with scheduling details.

PROGRAMMING Book Group

Interested in a lake-themed book group? Want to read books by local authors with fellow Waramaugers? Please contact lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com for more information.

Annual Picnic TBD

Our picnic, usually scheduled for late July, is on hold for the moment. We will continue to gauge our membership concerning their level of comfort in gathering and will proceed with plans when that level rises. Meantime, we will look forward to seeing you all again as we slowly begin to resume our traditional programming. ■

DUES REMINDER

If you have not yet renewed your Annual Family Membership Dues (\$50) or wish to make an additional contribution to the Lake Waramaug Association, you can do so via the enclosed envelope or by visiting our website, www.waramaugassoc.org/support. Your support is critical to the work we do to fulfill our mission to preserve Lake Waramaug and its environs and to promote the safety, health, and enjoyment of those who use the Lake. The LWA is 501c3 non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law. **THANK YOU for your support!**



www.waramaugassoc.org





Waramaug Becomes Year-Round Haven

by Christine Adams



An ad hoc hockey rink was well utilized on West Shore Road, January, 2021.

state of quarantine. Many weekenders decided to remain. New Yorkers were particularly hard hit, witnessing the unimaginable: empty streets, boarded up storefronts, and Samaritan's Purse setting up ad hoc hospitals in Central Park.

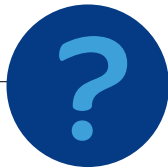
Lake Waramaug abruptly had become a year-round residence. The populations of Washington, Warren, and Kent inched up, and our schools across the board were either at or above capacity. Interestingly, Malcolm Gladwell highlighted the opposite problem in his 2013 book, *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants*. He wrote, "Shepaug Valley Middle School was built to serve the children of the Baby Boom—which came and went. Our bucolic corner of Connecticut where Shepaug is located—with its charming Colonial-era villages and winding country lanes—was discovered by wealthy couples from New York City. Real Estate prices rose. Younger families could no longer afford to live in the area. Enrollment dropped."

Dimitri Rimsky spoke at length of our present hardships, and sited 60 new students at Shepaug in 2020. We are now welcoming a new population to our area, where newcomers have shown their dedication to integration by enrolling their children in our schools, both public and private. For families formerly without a community and suddenly in need of one, they have now found themselves relying on a social fabric not entirely familiar for their well-being. "They are very welcome," Rimsky said. Rimsky is an artist, a long-recognized volunteer, a member of several town committees—including the recently formed COVID response committee in Washington—and a lifelong resident of Washington. He recently moderated a Gunn Historical Museum community discussion on Washington weathering previous storms, including the 1918 pandemic, the polio scare, and the flood of 1955. Incidentally, his father, artist Fedor Rimsky, led a team of volunteers in 1955, organizing tetanus vaccines in preparation for digging the town out of the muck to rebuild our washed-out town.

In many instances, part-time residents became full-time ones: the pandemic acted as a catalyst for a long-contemplated change in habitation. Community Table Managing Partner Joann Makovitzky mentions long-time patrons teetering on the fence of leaving the City tipped over to the countryside once the Coronavirus hit. She also reports selling out of take-away

When asked for our favorite time of year on our pristine pond, different responses are elicited from those of us who know and love Lake Waramaug. Many prefer the anticipation of Spring, when container gardens are carefully cultivated with brightly-colored annuals, refrigerators are stocked with bottles of water, soft drinks, chilled wine, and beer in preparation for Memorial Day weekend. Many look forward to the Fourth of July, when the lake seems more like a resort than it ever does, and loved ones gather for the fireworks spectacle and festive picnics. Others prefer the dead heat of August, when the cool waters of the Lake are revitalizing, and the pressures of the return to work still seem distant. A small subset prefer September above all else, when the sun sets a little further to the South, and the evenings are tinged with the cool suggestion of fall. The roads are quiet, the children have gone back to school, and a relative bucolic calm has returned to our shores.

Alas, our lakeside seasonal cycle was thrown entirely off balance in 2020 by a global pandemic, a public health crisis of grave circumstances that none of us had experienced in our lifetimes. By March, town officials in Washington, Warren, and Kent were shifting to emergency states of civil preparedness. On the 23rd of that month, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Washington, and along with the rest of the world, Waramaugers slipped into a nervous



Did you know?

The LWA collaborates throughout the year with:

- **The Lake Waramaug Task Force**, whose focus is on restoring and maintaining the ecology and water quality of the Lake and its watershed.
- **The Lake Waramaug Authority**, whose focus is public safety.
- **Area Land Trusts**, including Northeast Connecticut Land Conservancy, Steep Rock Preserve, and Warren Land Trust.
- Officials in the three towns that border the Lake: **Washington, Warren, and Kent**



orders most weekends and reinventing their business model by offering outdoor dining.

A partnership between full-time residents and part-time ones is nothing new. Borne of societal transition from a working population made of farmers and small industrialists to that of vacationers, the Victorian Age ushered in a new era of coexistence with the arrival of the railroad to our area. Water-powered industries in New Preston had slowly shuttered after the Civil War, but new life was breathing here as several Inns opened lakeside. Decades later, when cars and planes made further-flung vacation destination more accessible, after two World Wars were waged, the post-war era of the 1950s and 1960s saw a working class influx to our rural area. With the 1980s came an economic shift of wealth, and weekenders became a new norm. The idea of Noblesse Oblige battled with more modern socio-economic principles borne of political impasse. Residents who have lived here for 30 years are still self-proclaimed “newcomers.”

Washington First Selectman Jim Brinton addressed these conflicts in his much-anticipated weekly communications from Bryan Hall in Washington Depot: “Washington is a wonderful tapestry of families who have lived here for ten generations, families who have just moved here, part-time residents, and vacationers—all of whom cherish the beauty, serenity, and culture of this town. This has been the case throughout Washington’s history, and this is what makes ours such a vibrant and special community. While we understand that many of us are nervous about the challenges we are facing, now is not the time for division. The current outpouring of caring

and volunteering is who we are—together we are stronger and will weather this storm.”

Neighbors who knew one another only on the fringes had become intimates on their daily walks, or runs to the grocer in surgical masks and gloves. After dark, lights along the shore were illuminated more brightly than ever before. From a six foot distance, we came together.

Our citizens rallied together during this unprecedented crisis. The National Iron Bank in Washington saw to it that small business owners in town were aware and took advantage of the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act, which offered loans so that our “mom and pops” could stay afloat, covering payroll, healthcare, and rent expenses during the shut down. The Washington Community Foundation, an 86 year-old not-for-profit funded entirely by contributions, found their work intensified by the pandemic. The Fund’s mission is “to help independent and self-reliant individuals in the community overcome financial emergencies.” It has been anonymously reported that a special account was formed through the Foundation to keep local business afloat, and local people employed. Members of our town crews volunteered to deliver groceries and medications to our senior neighbors, both full-time and part-time residents.

Chrissy Armstrong, a local preservationist and Lake resident, rang the bell of the stone church on New Preston Hill every Spring evening at 5 o’clock, and invited first responders to join the Hill Community in a moment of gratitude. On Memorial Day, Lake residents lit flares, made joyous noises by clanging pots and pans,

and invited the same first responders for a lake tour and a tip of the hat. Armstrong mentions with enthusiasm her contentment in personally knowing those that protect us.

We collectively ushered in a busy Summer of outdoor, masked activities. Fourth of July fireworks were replaced with a solitary bagpiper, sponsored by the Association and ushered around the Lake on the Task Force pontoon boat, usually used for field sampling and study and invasive weed harvesting. Businesses that formerly thrived by outdoor features found themselves overrun. The Hopkins Inn filled their terrace every evening, subject to limited capacity. Bliss and Hopkins Road were often clogged with cars hoping to taste Estate-bottled Chardonnay, Schem’s Picnic or the Apple cider wines al fresco. Town and state beaches were clogged with visitors.

There are inevitable problems that come with crowds: sadly, clumps of trash were frozen into the ice at points where the current meets the shore, road and water safety has become on the high list of the Association’s priorities. Still, acts of kindness amongst Waramaugers abound. Joanna Seitz reports that our residents have turned to the local businesses to feather their nests, which in light of the pandemic have become areas of all-importance: a place of rest and respite, but also of work and play. She also reports a gentleness and gratitude from our neighbors, with whom we have become better connected as a result of slowing down.

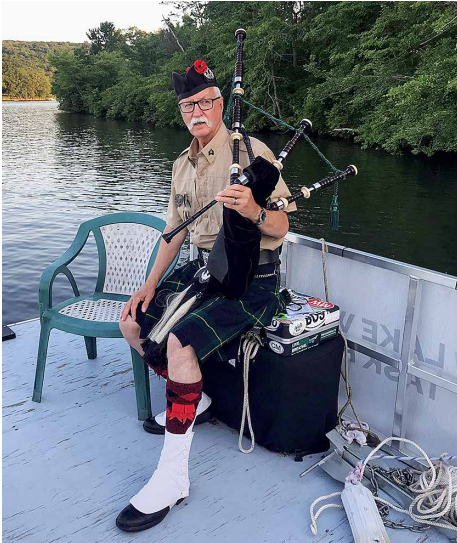
Community support is recognized most eloquently by Eric Salk. A member of the Board of Directors of the Lake Waramaug Task



Duncan and Adam Woodruff, Washington Volunteer Firefighters, attend a 5pm bell ringing at the stone church, which happened daily throughout the Spring of 2020. PHOTO CREDIT: CHRISSEY ARMSTRONG



Local volunteer firemen take a tour of the lake in mutual thanks. PHOTO CREDIT: CHRISSEY ARMSTRONG



Don Hicks, a solitary bagpiper, added a somber tone to our curtailed Fourth of July celebration this year. He performed from the deck of the Task Force pontoon boat. PHOTO CREDIT: CHRIS ADAMS



Contactless trade became the norm in the Village of New Preston in 2020.

PHOTO CREDIT: SMITHY MARKET

Force and an emergency room physician at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington, Salk left his home on Lake Waramaug when the Coronavirus hit our community. He found refuge in a lakeside neighbor's guest cottage, where he isolated himself to protect his family from possible infection.

Regardless of the gruesome realities, Dr. Salk credits the public as the real heroes of combating this insipid disease: by taking all necessary but extraordinary steps to flatten the curve, including wearing masks, staying home, and making financial sacrifices while the medical community scrambled to contain the disease and develop a vaccine. He tips his hat

to market employees who kept their shelves stocked and our bellies full.

Salk is the nephew of Jonas Salk, who developed and successfully distributed the polio vaccine from his immunology and infectious disease laboratory at the University of Pittsburgh. Our community of multi-generational families, weekenders, and vacationers are no stranger to polio, which hit New Preston particularly hard in the 1950s. Long-time residents recall Lake Waramaug as an unsafe place to swim, especially during the later summer months when cases of conjunctivitis would befall swimmers. Many locals preferred Mount Tom Pond as a safer swimming spot.

At the time, septic systems along the Lake as well as the East Aspetuck River were less than rudimentary, expelling sewage directly into our waters. Polio is a viral disease, borne of the body through the mouth through contact with fecal matter, or exposure to an infected person through phlegm or mucus. It isn't hard to imagine how New Preston became a hot zone of polio cases. The same locals who recall Lake Waramaug as an unpleasant place to swim also remember being scolded by their parents if they didn't roll up their windows while driving through the Village after a trip to Waramaug. One former New Preston resident, Charlie Gross, recalls Robert Woodruff contracting the disease and stricken to a wheelchair for the latter part of his life, a stark contrast to the virile and strong owner of the iconic red mill on Route 45. "Woodruff, working for the Defense Department, here manufactured a vital piece for a then highly specialized, top secret automatic gun called the Orlikien, used for both land and marine fighting." (*The Litchfield County Times*, November 6, 1982). He was ostensibly a local war hero.

Sally Woodroofe's family—no relation to Robert, whose surname is spelled differently—has lived for generations in the Cogswell Tavern at the base of Baldwin Hill. As a girl, her family lived in Pittsburgh and summered in New Preston, enjoying the Lake Waramaug Country Club beach as well as neighboring pools as a respite from the mid Atlantic heat. She remembers a particularly warm summer in the 1950s when she was thwarted by a short-lived summertime fever and a stiff neck. Upon returning to Pittsburgh, her mother enrolled her in Salk's vaccination trial there. Woodroofe was found ineligible as she tested positive for antibodies.

There is very little written about the 1918 flu pandemic. Coupled with a World War, one might imagine there was too much despair to record with any enthusiasm. Yet thanks to the excellent research of David Babbington of the Gunn Historical Museum, we know that ten Washington residents died in the Fall of 1918. All of them were under the age of 60, amongst them, Frederick Gunn's granddaughter Abigail

Brinsmade. A Vassar-educated nursing student, Brinsmade also served locally as a Farmerette, growing vegetables to keep our community fed while the farmers were at war. At the time, she was living in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia, training. She attended that ill-fated late September parade, a super spreader that tragically resulted in 12,000 deaths. Abigail was 21 years old.

Crises can elicit the extraordinary in individuals, and the best in communities at large. They also have a way of intrinsically changing our lives. Looking to the future, the Association is contemplating what they will mean to our Lake dwellers, neighbors, and all who love the Lake. Spring and Summer saw more runners, walkers, bikers, cars, boats. Winter may have slowed, but the cold temperatures brought cross country skiers, skaters, and hikers onto the frozen waters. Gone was the sense of desolation after the New Year, when local businesses planned extended vacations in preparation for a new season. Our time-honored annual rhythms quite simply changed this year.

How the pandemic has affected our community long-term is yet to be seen. As of the date of this publication, there have been 7,725 deaths in the State of Connecticut, 281 of them in Litchfield County, but these grim statistics now make room for vaccination rates in the headlines. Connecticut has offered a strictly age-based vaccination rollout to its citizens, which although controversial, has proven efficient. The Association is hopeful that we will be able to resume some of our traditional programming this summer, and are brainstorming ways to support a growing community that may have decided to spend fewer days in their offices and more in their virtual, "Zoomed" Lake-side ones. For if one valuable lesson can be learned from this tragedy: we work to live, not live to work. The Lake beckons us to enjoy what we so gratefully have, and the community reminds us of the complicated yet rich relationships we have cultivated here.

Dimitri Rimsky said, "when you live in a community over a lifetime, you see a lot of its changes. You're more invested in its history because you become a part of it." (*The Hartford Courant*, April 12, 1998). The experiences of those who have lived here during the pandemic are history in the making. The extraordinary efforts required to protect ourselves, our families, and our neighbors have become our collective experience. Perhaps those who have lived in the area for 30 years will continue to call themselves newcomers, but they'll do so in just as they banter with their neighbors who share names with the street signs and bridges. We have formed a renewed coexistence, unlike the one we had before: one of greater understanding and mutual reliance. ■



Land Use News

PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION

by Isabel Murphy

The Lake Waramaug Association Land Use committee has had a busy year! We are delighted to have a group of new and enthusiastic members who are longtime lovers and stewards of the Lake. In July, 2020, I joined the group, followed by Robert Hackney in September, and most recently, Alan Levande in March of 2021. We are deeply grateful to the nine years Scott Weaver has served on the board, and the twenty years Susie Payne has been with the LWA Land Use committee—due to the newly enacted LWA term limits, those two members end their tenure in June.

The LWA is committed to helping the Inland Wetland Commissions and zoning boards protect the rural character of the area by upholding the regulations in each town. We are pleased to have hired Martin Connor, a Litchfield County land use planning consultant, who has served as a Zoning and Wetlands Enforcement Official in both Washington and Kent. He is well respected and has a natural rapport with land use officers in Washington, Warren, and Kent. Marty has done an excellent job at analyzing applications for development and has kept us apprised of ways we can best support our local zoning officials in the review process.

Marty's focus on applications has allowed our committee to think more broadly about expanding our community relationships to create a culture of stewardship among residents and visitors of Lake Waramaug. It is our goal to help everyone around the Lake appreciate the importance of responsible land use so that the Lake will remain healthy and beautiful for generations.

One of our efforts involves sending welcome packages to new homeowners on the Lake.

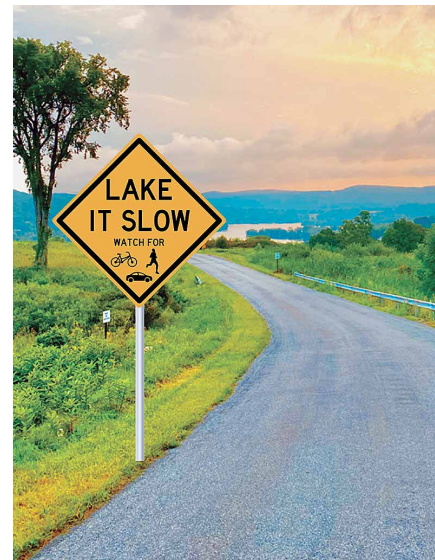
As a public service, we send out notices of public hearings for Lake related land use applications in Kent, Washington, and Warren. To receive these notices, sign up at www.waramaugassoc.org/contact.

These packages provide information on the area and detail best practices for landscaping and home design. To reach existing residents, our communications team will publish regular social media posts that suggest ways homeowners can maintain and improve Lake quality with rain gardens, shore protection, and responsible building.

We are also planning two exciting events this summer and fall. Land Use members and volunteers will refurbish the existing native plant buffer strip on West Shore, removing non-native plants and adding new shoreline native plants. Cynthia Rabinowitz, a soil scientist, master gardener, and Executive Director at the Northwest Conservation District, will speak about why native planting is so critical, especially at the shoreline.

The LWA will also host a talk with Edwin Matthews, owner of Hidden Valley Farm and long-time Washington resident. Mr. Matthews was instrumental in protecting the Shepaug River. He is also a founder of Friends of the Earth International, a world-wide environmental organization. He has served as a trustee of the Steep Rock Association and Earthjustice, a not-for-profit law firm for the environment. Mr. Matthews will talk to us about his passion for conservation as well as his book "Litchfield Country Journal," which will be available for purchase.

The Lake has been a tremendous source of comfort and joy to so many of us during this unsteady year. With an influx of new, full-time residents, we feel the time is right to grow an engaged and environmentally committed culture around Lake Waramaug. If land use issues are of interest to you, please reach out. We hope to see many of you at our upcoming events! ■



LAKE IT SLOW

The narrow roads around the Lake are busier than ever. The goal of our new LAKE IT SLOW road safety campaign is to reduce speeding, and for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians to be more aware of each other and safely share the road. Together we can make Lake Waramaug safer for everyone who enjoys the Lake.

We kicked off our fundraising for this important initiative during the annual Give Local online event on April 20–21, hosted by the Connecticut Community Foundation. Thanks to your support, we raised \$14,890 from 57 donors which will go directly to our LAKE IT SLOW efforts this summer and throughout the year, including:

- Enhanced speed patrols in coordination with our local CT State Troopers
- Roadside/lawn signs and community signage
- A community awareness campaign with outreach to residents, visitors, and companies working in/around the Lake

If you are interested in displaying LAKE IT SLOW signage this summer, email lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com with your name and contact information.

Thank you to our Road Safety Committee: Paul Atkins, Karen Benett, Jennifer Watts, Whitney Lancaster, Audrey Heffeman Meyer, and Kristin Patrick. Our work on this important effort is just beginning, and we need your help. Join our Road Safety Committee today! ■

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you to everyone who responded to our Fall Membership Survey! Your thoughts and opinions are important, and the results have helped us determine where to focus our 2021 efforts. The top categories include boating safety, road safety, land use/preservation, homeowner resources, emergency communications, and managing geese/waterfowl populations.

A summary of the results, data charts, and open ended responses can be found on the LWA website www.waramaugassoc.org/newsletters-reports. If you have any questions, or would like to offer your input about questions you'd like to see on the Fall 2021 Membership survey, please reach out to us at lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com.



Shauna Holiman

ARTIST, MUSICIAN, FREQUENT COLLABORATOR AND FOREVER LOVER OF THE LAKE

Shauna sings classical music, plays the piano and cello, and has done work in oil, mixed media, ink, stained glass, and sculpture from repurposed piano parts. Her studio is right on the water, her favorite place on earth. She has lived on the Lake for many years.

Currently Shauna is working on a bound Sketchbook of all original colored pencil miniatures, each one radically different. It is meant to be a book you pick up from my coffee table, and as you turn the pages, become delighted by each individual and surprising image.

Her Piano as Art project (pianoasart.com), testimony to her gifts in both music and art, has won widespread acclaim, including in *The New York Times* and *BBC World News*. To see more of her story and her work, visit www.ShaunaHoliman.com. ■

Creative Corner is a new regular column featuring Lake Waramaug residents who have artistic vision and work to share. Please contact Mary Jo Keating (keating.maryjo@gmail.com) for more information.



Shauna Holiman, Ice Breaking Up on the Lake, April 2020, Colored Pencil on Paper. Private Collection.



Shauna in her studio on the Lake. PHOTO CREDIT: CARL ENGELMARC

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HELP US HELP YOU

Volunteer Today

We are an organization of volunteers who feel grateful for the enduring peace and beauty of Lake Waramaug. Please consider joining one of our Lake Waramaug Association committees today.

- **Water/Boating Safety**
- **Road Safety**
- **Geese/Waterfowl Population**
- **Events (including July 4th)**
- **Photography**
- **Teens looking for community service opportunities**

COMING
SOON!

PHOTO CONTEST
**LAKE WARAMAUG
MERCHANDISE**

**WATER &
BOATING SAFETY**

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CONNECT WITH US

Instagram: @lakewaramaug—We now have 1000+ Instagram followers! Tag us @lakewaramaug #lakewaramaug—and be sure to tag your canine companion photos #DogsOfWaramaug for a chance to be featured in our story. Find us on Facebook: LakeWaramaugAssociation.

Visit our website www.waramaugassoc.org for tons of Lake Waramaug info, resources, fascinating articles about the history of our beloved Lake, and more.

