

BELGRADE LAKES ASSOCIATION

*To protect and improve the watershed of Great Pond and
Long Pond through Preservation, Education and Action.*

Winter 2019 – 2020



Photo courtesy of Alex Wall

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

2020. No, it's not your vision acuity score! It is the New Year-2020. Wasn't it just a short time ago that we were all worried about Y2K when all the computer systems worldwide were going to crash and wreak havoc on our lives? And now, here we are - 20% through the new century.

We've learned a lot about our lakes during this time. Water quality has deteriorated, and we have learned that part of the decline is the natural cycle of a lake system. We've also found invasive variable leaf milfoil in Great Pond. We have learned that phosphorus is not good for our lakes, is the main cause of algae blooms, and that low oxygen levels are a danger to fish and the ecosystem. Plus, we struggle with the effects of climate change as our waters become warmer for longer periods of time.



Carol Johnson, BLA President

But the good news is with our acquired education have come action plans.

We have been aggressively fighting milfoil for the past 10 years and have been able to prevent it from spreading throughout both our lakes. We are continuing to study the plant and to look for additional ways to manage the invasive milfoil. This year we contributed more than 2/3 of the cost of the battle.

Our partnership with the 7 Lakes Alliance has made great strides in putting "eyes on the water" with Adopt-A-Shoreline and LakeSmart. We have spent almost \$34,000 to make sure we have coverage from 7AM to 7PM from Memorial Day through Labor Day at both boat landings. This is so important to make sure we keep invasive plants from entering or leaving the lakes. Also, we have supported the Youth Conservation Corps' addition of a third team this year to work on improving the waterline by including road buffers to control the damage to the lake.

But here, in 2020, we have a real challenge. Since I know I'm preaching to the choir, as we all know the importance of the work we do, **WE ALSO NEED TO EDUCATE MORE PEOPLE** about the importance of working with BLA to keep our lakes clean and healthy.

Our membership represents about one-third of the landowners on the lakes, but unfortunately we have many members who do not own lakefront property. **WE NEED TO EDUCATE** our friends and neighbors, the other people on the camp roads, as well as guests and visitors. **WE NEED TO EDUCATE** and impress the voters and officials in our towns on the importance of our lakes. **WE NEED TO EDUCATE** everyone in the watersheds to make their properties LakeSmart, to have their septic systems inspected, and remedy any deficiencies. We need to make sure we are doing absolutely everything we can to minimize the phosphorous that runs into the lakes from human activity.

We have a challenge before us. "Us" includes all waterfront and non-waterfront property owners who affect watershed areas.

President Harry Truman said, "A pessimist is one who makes difficulties of his opportunities and an optimist is one who makes opportunities of his difficulties."

Join me in being an optimist in 2020 to make this a great year for BLA and for our lakes.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Johnson".

Carol Johnson



Our beautiful Village. Photo courtesy of Alex Wall.

WHY SUPPORT THE BELGRADE LAKES ASSOCIATION?

By Lynn Matson

The short answer is that it's making a difference.

The long answer is that it is investing the money, that you so generously donate, to help protect our lakes and the land around them which, in turn, will protect your property values and keep our lake community thriving. Here's the full story.

The BLA was founded in 1908 by a small group of sportsmen and fishermen. In those early years they worked closely with our state fisheries people on everything from fish stocking programs to navigational aids. There's even one report in the early board of directors minutes about using dynamite to clear debris from the stream in the village. Can you imagine us trying to do that today?

There are still many BLA members who love to hunt and fish, but the activities of the BLA have expanded considerably over the past 112 years. Today the BLA's mission is to "Improve and protect the watershed of Great Pond and Long Pond through preservation, education and action." That means we are raising funds, sending out educational information, and working closely with the 7 Lakes Alliance to keep our lakes clean and our land and trails open for all to use and enjoy.

Maybe the best way to judge the value of the BLA and to determine if it warrants your continued support is to look at how the money is being spent that comes in from your annual dues, the BLA raffle, the fall annual appeal, and the STOP MILFOIL solicitation.

1. **STOP MILFOIL** – Our biggest single expenditure for the last eight years has been invested in battling the invasive milfoil infestation in Great Pond. In 2019, that expense totaled \$131,828. Most of those dollars were turned over to the 7 Lakes Alliance to pay for our outside contractor, New England Milfoil, and the 7 Lakes Alliance and milfoil staff. They do the actual work of pulling the plants and searching for new outbreaks. This has proven to be a very successful partnership as the Great Pond infestation has largely been kept in check and invasive milfoil has not spread into Long Pond. Since 2012, when the BLA initiated STOP MILFOIL, over \$790,000 of BLA-generated funds have been invested in this program. Thank you for your ongoing support.
2. **Courtesy Boat Inspectors** – Our second biggest expenditure is for Courtesy Boat Inspectors at the Great Pond and Long Pond boat ramps. The goal of this program is to keep more invasive plants from entering our lakes. The BLA spent \$33,880 in 2019 to have CBIs posted at our two boat ramps from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, 7 days a week, from Memorial Day right through Labor Day. In that time the CBIs inspected 3,839 boats at the Great Pond ramp and 3,111 on Long Pond, 1,200 more than in 2018.
3. **Youth Conservation Corps** – YCC is a 7 Lakes Alliance program that the BLA financially supports. YCC workers install erosion control measures using "best management practices," or BMPs, to help reduce the amount of phosphorus entering our lakes. It's a great program for camp owners as the YCC labor is free and property owners only pay for materials used. Last year, the BLA gave \$15,000 to the YCC which installed 54 BMPs on Great Pond and Long Pond properties. The YCC already has 73 property owners signed up for this year.
4. **LakeSmart Coordinator** – For the last several years the BLA has hired our own coordinator to handle all aspects of the LakeSmart program on Great Pond and Long Pond. LakeSmart is designed to help lakeshore property owners identify erosion problems and suggest solutions for remediating them. Last year, the BLA authorized \$10,000 for this effort which resulted in 59 inspections and 15 LakeSmart awards.
5. **Great Pond Survey** – In 2018, the BLA funded and led the effort to survey the entire Great Pond watershed. The purpose of this large



Castle Island in Winter. Photo courtesy of Alex Wall.

WHY SUPPORT THE BELGRADE LAKES ASSOCIATION? (continued from page 3)

undertaking was to identify specific sites where erosion is occurring. Maine DEP requires that this survey be conducted every 10 years. The BLA contributed \$16,450 to this project. 237 nonpoint source pollution (NPS) sites were identified. Plans to provide support for remediating these NPS sites are now being developed in collaboration with the 7 Lakes Alliance.

6. Great Pond Water Management Plan – Once the watershed survey is completed, the state requires that a water management plan be written to address the problems identified in the survey. This whole process is a prerequisite for receiving federal and Maine DEP grant funding. The BLA Board of Directors approved \$5,000 in 2019 to help fund the development of this Great Pond Water Management Plan.
7. Long Pond Survey – The last Long Pond watershed survey was done in 2009, which means it needs to be redone this year. The BLA has authorized \$15,250 for the Long Pond survey, and it will be conducted late this spring. If you are interested in volunteering, please call the BLA office at 207-512-5150 and leave your name and contact information. Thank you.
8. Water Quality Monitoring – The BLA also funds the equipment and materials needed for our volunteers to conduct ongoing seasonal monitoring of key water quality indicators such as dissolved oxygen and gloeotrichia.

For many BLA donors, just the idea of keeping our lakes clean and beautiful is motivation enough to support the association and its work. For everyone else, the BLA deserves consideration for another critically important reason ... the positive economic benefit the BLA is having in our community because here's what could happen if our lakes gets clogged with massive beds of invasive plants, like the invasive milfoil that has infested Great Meadow Stream ... or become overrun with massive algae blooms due to excess phosphorous. First, they will become unsightly and much harder to use and enjoy. Second, they will become much less attractive to prospective property buyers, renters, and vacationers. Those people will simply go to clean lakes to buy property and spend their time and vacation money.

If that happens, shorefront properties here will become harder to rent and sell. Prices will come down. Property values will drop, and so will the tax revenue from those shorefront property owners. That will have a major impact because right now over 60% of all Belgrade property tax revenue comes from shorefront property. In Rome that number is over 80%. If the value of these shorefront properties drops, the tax burden will shift more to non-shorefront properties. Their taxes will likely go up. So keeping our lakes clean and healthy is to everyone's benefit, even for those who do not live on the water. This is not a hypothetical situation. Lakeshore property values dropped 20% on Lake Arrowhead in Limerick, Maine, after it became infested with milfoil.

The BLA is working hard to keep our lakes clean, our property values up, and our local economy strong. I hope you agree that the BLA has come a long way in the last 112 years and that today there are many good reasons to support its work. Our success is only possible thanks to your generous financial donations. Thank you!

We also very much value your ideas and feedback. Please don't ever hesitate to contact BLA president Carol Johnson at 603-828-1252 or any of the BLA board members listed on the back page of this newsletter. We'll look forward to hearing from you.



This motley group of volunteers spent a Saturday morning spreading 27 cubic yards of mulch and a lot of gravel at Peninsula Park in the Village to prevent erosion. Thanks everyone!

DIRTY BUSINESS: SEPTICS IN THE BELGRADES

By Dr. Danielle Wain, Lake Science Director, 7 Lakes Alliance

Well-built and maintained septic systems have long been an effective means for managing household sewage. The basic premise behind a functioning septic is that waste solids and liquids go into a settling tank where most of the solids settle out. The liquids exit the tank through a pipe near the top of the tank. This liquid is then typically distributed into the soil in a leach field where it is meant to infiltrate and eventually enter the groundwater. As the wastewater moves through the leach field and the underlying soil, it is filtered and cleaned by soil microbes. How effectively this occurs greatly depends on the soil composition, slope, and groundwater table.

Around Great Pond and Long Pond, much of the soil condition is considered “very limited” in terms of its capacity to act as a leach field (see red regions in the figure below). The primary issues of concern are high slopes (which can lead to lateral seepage and collection of wastewater downslope) and depth to saturated zone (which means the wastewater enters the groundwater with little filtering). Thus, landowners around the lakes need to be proactive in having their septic systems monitored as they have higher maintenance needs than in other soil types. Otherwise, you could be contributing to the nutrient load in your lake!

New legislation, passed this year in Maine (LD 216), will help address the concern of nutrient loading from malfunctioning or poorly maintained septics. Septic inspections will now be required before the sale of any homes and camps within 250 feet of a great pond (which includes all of the Belgrade lakes) or an inlet or outlet stream to a great pond. This new law goes into effect on January 1st, 2020, but you don't have to wait until you sell your house to find out if your septic is functioning properly! Just because you don't see sewage bubbling up from your lawn doesn't mean that your system is functioning as it should.

As we start to assess possible solutions to reducing the phosphorus load in Great Pond, it is crucial that we understand the contribution of septics. The East Pond Association is taking a lead in the Belgrade Lakes watershed in developing a survey to create a database of septics; poorly functioning systems are a threat to the longevity of the alum treatment. The BLA has also begun a septic initiative and will be working closely with EPA and other lake associations in the watershed on this issue. So please participate in the survey when it is released!



Septic leach field rating from Natural Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture.

*Yellow = Somewhat Limited leaching/ground filtration
Red = Very Limited leaching/ground filtration*

GREETINGS FROM THE BELGRADE INTER-LOCAL DAMS COMMITTEE

By Dick Greenan, Secretary, Inter-local Dams Committee

As I write this update, all of our ponds are in great shape and far better than last year at this time. As we are underway with the 2019-20 Fall/Winter Drawdown, Long Pond is currently 9" below full pond, Great Pond is down 7" below full, and Salmon down 10" from their full ponds. Actually, with the October rains, we have all of the gates open to meet our Drawdown levels by November 1st – a far cry from last year at this time when Long Pond was down a whopping 21", Salmon down 18", and Great Pond down a modest 8".



Wings Mill Dam, January 2019

The Plan now is to maintain our Fall Lake Drawdown schedule (BLA Website: <http://belgradelakesassociation.org/Portals/0/PDFs/General/19.20Fall%20DrawdownWinter%20Storage.pdf?ver=2019-09-11-154015-487>) which calls for Great and Long Ponds to be drawn down to 1.5'- 2.0' and Salmon down to 1.0'-1.5' by November 1st. Weather permitting, the drawdowns usually begin after the Columbus Day weekend which was, again, the process this year. We were looking forward to a slow and regulated process, but the October rains made that a moot point.

The Dams Committee has now received the State of Maine's DEP Tier 3 Permit required for the overhaul of Long Pond's Wings Mill Dam.

If you recall, in November 2018, we temporarily remediated the undermining and leakage of the 100 yr. old dam with reinforced poly, approximately 500 gravel filled sandbags, and 48 sheets of Dura-Guard 5/8" tongue in groove sheathing. As you can see in the January 2019 photograph, the temporary patch held up perfectly despite Mother Nature's plans to the contrary! That one 3" sheet of ice had a sharp point and was over 30' in length, but it broke up after a few minutes against the Dura-Guard sheathing and force of the flow. I had my fingers crossed for a safe outcome, but it was still fun to watch.



Wings Mill Dam, July 2019

In the Fall of 2020, the Dams Committee will begin with the two year 'permanent' remediation project in which most all of the timbers, facing, and deck boards above water will be replaced. Both the Towns of Sidney and Mt. Vernon have since joined the Inter-local Dams Agreement to further support the efforts of the existing Towns of Belgrade, Oakland, and Rome, and have enabled funding for this all-important collaborative effort.

Thank you all for your continued support and enjoy your winter – if that's possible!!! It's supposed to be another classic, but it's always beautiful here in the Belgrades!



Our fearless author, Dick Greenan, ready to sky dive.

JUDGE JOSEPH FORCE CRATER

A Belgrade Lakes Mystery

By Dancy Mason

In the evening hours of August 6, 1930, prominent New York judge Joseph Force Crater walked out of a Manhattan restaurant and was never seen again. His case became one of the most enduring mysteries of the early twentieth century, even as the story has gradually disappeared from public memory. So, what really happened that fateful night?

Looking back on Crater's early life, there's nothing to suggest he would become embroiled in scandal, drama, or intrigue of any kind. He was born in the sleepy town of Easton, Pennsylvania, to a well-off family. As a young adult, he was fairly promising: he attended the private, liberal arts Lafayette College before enrolling at Columbia University. A good old boy, Crater was a member of the Sigma Chi fraternity—and his ability to make connections and please people would soon rocket him to infamy.



Judge Crater enjoying a Maine summer day with his wife.

In April, 1930, at the age of 41, Crater became a judge for the New York Supreme Court. He was relatively young for a role that most men spent their entire lives chasing down, but no one thought much of it—at first. In fact, for a time it seemed like he had it all: a lovely wife, Stella; a summer cabin in Belgrade Lakes, Maine; and the power to hand down policy-altering decisions from his high position.

In mere months, it would all unravel.

Crater, it appears, was in the pocket of the Tammany Hall Society, an infamous New York political organization at the time. Shortly before he became a judge, Crater withdrew \$20,000 from his bank account, a move many people interpret as payoff to worm his way into the upper echelons of the law. Not a great look, and you know what happens when you fall in with a bad crowd...

By the summer of 1930, court was adjourned, and Crater paused his corrupt rulings to retire up to his cabin in Belgrade Lakes, Maine, with his wife Stella. But he couldn't escape so easily. In late July, Stella reported that Crater got a strange phone call. He refused to give her any information about it and only told her that he had to return to the city to "straighten those fellows out."

He kissed her goodbye, left, and arrived at his New York apartment the next day. Curiously, however, instead of taking care of whatever business he had, he decided to go on a little vacation to Atlantic City, New Jersey, picking up his showgirl mistress Sally Lou Ritzi along the way. Yes, of course Crater had a mistress. In fact, he had at least three: Ritzi, June Brice, and Vivian Gordon.

Crater's reasons for going to Atlantic City are hazy: was he trying to escape some shady figures who were waiting for him in New York? Did he just want to gamble? How much did Ritzi know about his mysterious phone call just days before? Whatever the case, Crater was still alive and well when he returned to his wife in Maine on August 1st. There was just one thing: he had to go back to New York. Again. Even so, Stella reported that Crater seemed to be in good spirits about his second trip, and she wasn't particularly suspicious. She should have been; it was the last time she would ever see him.

In contrast to his movements after the evening of August 6th, Crater's actions just before his disappearance are very well documented—but they are also extremely bizarre. Just hours before he vanished, he was seen at the courthouse frantically shredding documents. Crater also had his law clerk cash two checks worth over 70,000 of today's dollars, asked him to bring two locked suitcases over to his apartment and then gave the man the day off.

That night, Crater bought a ticket for a Broadway show and went over to have dinner with Ritzi and his friend William Klein at Billy Haas's Chophouse. Much like Stella, both Ritzi and Klein recalled that Crater was in a good mood throughout the dinner and that nothing seemed to be amiss. But when the three companions exited the restaurant and parted, something—no one knows what—went horribly wrong.

Both Ritzi and Klein initially claimed that Crater got in a cab outside the restaurant, presumably to make it to his Broadway play. Later, after it was clear that Crater had vanished, they changed their story to say they had gotten the cab, while Crater had walked away. These were a crucial few seconds; but how they really transpired, one truth remained: Crater never reappeared.

And so began the long, twisted fallout.

For various reasons, Crater was not officially reported missing until almost a month later, on September 3rd. As soon as he was, police and media alike began desperately searching the cold trail for clues—and what they found was shocking. Crater had emptied out his safety deposit box in his final days, and the two locked briefcases he had put in his house had disappeared along with him. But the worst was yet to come because then police found the mistresses, and one of them was dead.

BLA, AND 7 LAKES PARTNERSHIP REDUCES MILFOIL

By Sharon Mann and Laura Rose Day

In 2019, BLA continued its leadership in the fight against variable leaf milfoil. BLA provided crucial funds and thereby helped support the 7 Lakes Alliance's work to remove and prevent new infestations of invasive variable milfoil, to protect recreation, property values, and the health of our lakes. BLA's investment also leveraged support from diverse sources, including the state, for milfoil removal and prevention in our lakes and in the watershed.

The results were impressive and encouraging. The 7 Lakes Alliance's crew removed 33,435 total gallons of invasive variable milfoil during the summer of 2019! This is the second highest total since the first year of STOP Milfoil. Recent warm, sunny summers likely contributed to



Whorled (native) and variable (invasive)

increased plant growth. The total reflects the milfoil crew's direct removal of plants from Robbins Mill Stream, Rome Trout Brook, and upper Belgrade Stream, and their work with contractor New England Milfoil for 10 weeks - 9 weeks in Great Meadow Stream/North Bay plus one week in upper Belgrade Stream. The 7 Lakes' crews also laid benthic barriers on the lake bottom to stymie invasive plant growth.

This is great progress, but invasive milfoil is aggressive, persistent, and often grows back. So in 2019, 7 Lakes continued to improve its strategies. In 2019, Sharon Mann, Milfoil Program Manager, led the mapping of all of Great Pond and high risk areas in Long Pond and began to study how variable milfoil reproduces in our area. She developed a new method of mapping to track the density and distribution of variable milfoil in Great Meadow Stream to assess progress. More details at www.7lakesalliance.org. Volunteers also keep our efforts strong, so one BLA member John Biddiscombe's help around upper Belgrade Stream and Wings Mills Dam was greatly appreciated!



Volunteer and BLA member John Biddiscombe, Long Pond

Prevention Still the Best Medicine

By preventing and catching new invasive infestations early, the Courtesy Boat Inspection and Adopt-A-Shoreline programs are cost-effective approaches to stopping damage from invasive organisms. 7 Lakes hired and managed Courtesy Boat Inspectors on Great Pond and Long Pond who monitor launches 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. Landowners and other volunteers adopted shorelines to survey for suspicious plant growth. In some cases, such as on Hoyt Island, residents joined together to survey their entire shoreline.

These efforts keep paying off: In 2019, no new infestations were found in the Belgrade Lakes watershed! In July, a CBI stopped variable milfoil – on a canoe - from entering East Pond. It is increasingly challenging, however, to secure full coverage here and throughout the watershed. An infestation anywhere in the watershed increases the risk everywhere.

Without these dedicated volunteer and professional milfoil programs, continued success would be impossible. But with support from Belgrade, Rome, the state, and supporters like you, we can and do our best to protect our lakes from invasive milfoil and other non-native plants.



*The milfoil crew hard at work.
Photo courtesy of Lea Ramirez*

THE BELGRADE LAKES ASSOCIATION'S 100 YEAR AWARD

By Dick Greenan

On July 14, 2019, the Belgrade Lakes Association received acknowledgement from the State of Maine for 100 years of “. . . . making further contributions to the wealth and prosperity of the Great State of Maine.”

The Belgrade Lakes Association was actually founded in 1908, but it was finally incorporated in 1919. After in-depth research into other lakes organizations in the State of Maine, as far as we know, your Belgrade Lakes Association is the oldest.

Thank you all for your continued support to “to protect and improve the watershed of Great Pond and Long Pond through preservation, education, and action.”

Your Board of Directors



LAKESMART IN 2019

By Sabine Fontaine



Red dots indicate LakeSmart surveys in 2019.

Thank you for another great summer to all of you who participated in LakeSmart! This year, 12 volunteers teamed up to perform 59 site visits. Evaluations happened around both lakes, and awards are ready for those who have qualified! The LakeSmart award sign signals to visitors what best practices look like when it comes to protecting water quality.

This year, LakeSmart volunteers also participated in an event at the Travis Mills Foundation alongside the Youth Conservation Corps and Travis Mills Foundation volunteers. We spent two days spreading mulch and planting a buffer garden.

Our LakeSmart program strives to educate property owners on best practices and to connect them with the resources they need to implement them. If you want to do more to protect and preserve the lake, but don't know where to start, LakeSmart is the program for you! Please contact Sabine at lakesmart@blmaine.org to get on the list for next year.

A SUMMER WITH OUR LOONS

By Dick Greenan

In following our loons around in both Great and Long Pond this summer, we have been blessed by our common loons that have shared much of their world with us. And whoever first called them “common” befuddles me as I see them as anything but.

We have all learned so much of their behavior from anecdotal observations and the literature. This all pales to spending a summer following BLA’s Loon Expert, Lee Attix, around as he conducts an important loon research project on behalf of the BLA.

By observing our population I, too, am learning the individual mannerisms of many of our loons. Some will routinely come right up to the boat and preen, bathe, feed, etc., while others are shy and not comfortable enough in our presence to drop their guards.

Unfortunately, much of this behavior is learned. We must keep our distance and if we are occasionally welcomed into their world, then all the better. Observing their behavior from land or a boat with binoculars is, as we all know, rewarding, but I have learned so much more by photographing our subjects. The individual large 40MB photo file sizes allows me to now “see” somewhat of what Lee is seeing. Lee has the trained eyes of a veteran bird watcher and knows loons. Personally in many cases! He has one that he banded over 10 years ago that is still summering in lower Long Pond. I never saw her bands until I began editing that day’s 1345 photos that evening – one of many such rewarding experiences. I see now what has hooked Lee for some 22 years and counting.



Lee recording a nest failure on Great Pond



Banded adult on lower Long Pond

We have been following the six remaining chicks along with their parents this summer on Long Pond. Unfortunately just two chicks made it through the summer on Great Pond, hence our Loon Project. We need to know if this is a trend? Are our ponds representative of New England as a whole? What effect does local predation have on our population? Lee states that the common loon has fortunately shown the ability to adapt to habitat challenges over time, so we’ll have a much better picture as Lee will be crunching and accruing our data with the national data bank over the winter so that we can more accurately assess where we stand. This iconic bird represents our “canary in the coal mine” when it comes to the challenges of water quality and development to name just two, not to exclude their natural predators.

In conducting weekly surveys of both Great and Long Ponds, I have been fortunate to observe their fall molt on a weekly basis, and what an education! In mid-October I thought that we had found a seventh chick on Long Pond. Sue and I were approaching Green Island when we discovered what appeared to be a lone chick out in the



A parent’s job is never done!

middle of the lake – an unusual finding. So once again, I brought out the 400mm telephoto from approximately 100 yds away as this bird was very shy. As I was still uncertain of what I was looking at, I forwarded the images to Loon Expert Attix who confirmed that what I had was just an adult in heavy molt. Can you pick out which one of these two is the chick? “Both photographs were taken approximately 400 yds apart on the same afternoon on October 13th. (*The answer is at the end of this article, but no peeking!)

We all know that our loons fly the proverbial coop before the ice takes over, but where do they go? The parents will have had enough of their chicks by late fall and, in central Maine, usually fly to coastal New England – separately. Apparently everyone has had enough, both the parents and the kids! The chicks will also eventually migrate to the coast where they will hang for several years before they return to one of our many lakes for breeding. Which coastal area and which lake is still a mystery and possibly another objective of our project down the road.

See you on the lake this summer and please remember that our loons were here long before us and have earned their space and our respect.

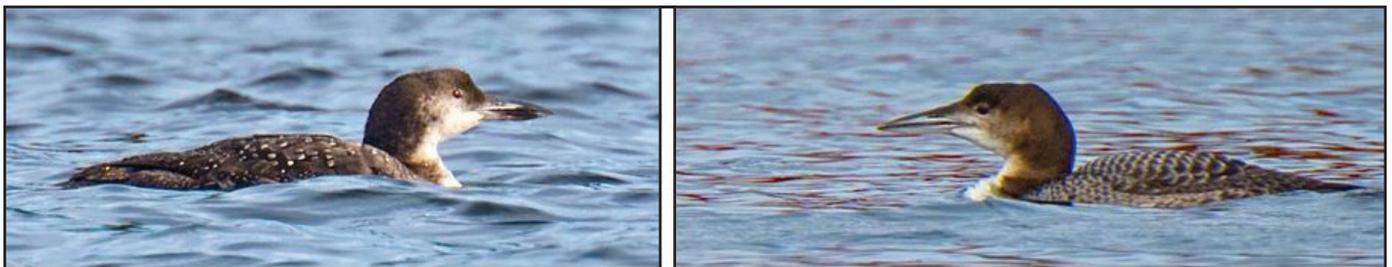
Any support you may be able to provide with this all-important project, from physically helping with reporting nest activity to a financial gift, would be most sincerely appreciated.



Yummy! Photograph by Board member Alex Wall.



This adult in its fall/winter molt will consume an average of 2 pounds of fish each day during its breeding season. Photograph by Lee Attix.



**Which one is the chick and which one is the adult?*

*(*Answer: The adult is on the left and can be distinguished here by its red eyes. Chick's eyes do not turn red until they develop their breeding plumage, sometime between year 2-3. Our chick on the right exhibits a fairly uniform pattern of its feathers which are created by light tips known as scalloping. When you compare this plumage to the adult, notice the adults checkered pattern is no longer uniform, as the white parts are actually fading away.)*

GREAT POND YACHT CLUB 2019 SEASON A 'WIND'ERFUL SUCCESS!

By Matti Bradley

It was an exciting season on the water for the Belgrade sailing community. The 7th and last race of the season was held on September 7th, and there was a definite nip in the air as 15 sailboats rounded Hoyt Island in a flotilla of beautiful white sails.

The Great Pond Yacht Club (GPYC) was founded in 2011 with the mission to spread the love of sailing. It is an informal group with participants ranging in age from pre-teen to mid-90s. Each race is followed by a potluck lunch, lots of stories, and laughter. Not all members are seasoned sailors. Those without boats of their own often crew on other people's boats. Our experienced sailors are generous with their knowledge, and everyone is encouraged to participate when they can and at their own comfort level.



You may have seen these beauties in the stream. Lazy Days, Stormy, Imp, and Rojita are all GPYC regulars!



*All shapes and sizes are welcome to join in...
and that goes for the boats, too!*

For more information on the club, next year's calendar, and our programs, please visit www.greatpondyachtclub.com and friend us on Facebook. Feel free to contact us at sail@greatpondyachtclub.com. Everyone is welcome!

I hope to see you on the water next season,

Commodore Matti

(pictured to the right in her absolutely fabulous Commodore's hat!)

The GPYC partners with the Town of Belgrade and Sail Maine to run the Youth Sailing Program next door to the Center for All Seasons. This program provides professional top-notch sailing instruction to over 60 local children in our community. The life-lessons learned through sailing are too numerous to list in this little article. Suffice it to say, we are doing our part to encourage confident, team-oriented lake stewards! Turn the motors (computers, phones) off, and let's go sailing!



Colby Geology Professor, Bess Koffman, and NFCT Stewardship Director, Noah Pollock, won the Hurricane Cup and the overall 2019 Club Championship trophy this year!

REFLECTIONS ON 1908

by Eric Hooglund, Belgrade Historical Society

The Belgrade Lakes Association was founded in 1908 with a mission to preserve the natural character of The Belgrade Lakes. By then, these lakes already had become regionally, if not also nationally, famous venues for summer recreation. At the time, the term 'The Belgrade Lakes' was the collective name for all seven of the chain of lakes connected by streams, but locals tended to mean Long and Great Ponds when they used the term. Indeed, the purview of the nascent BLA was Long Pond and Great Pond. This perhaps is not surprising, considering that, collectively, these two lakes account for just over 50 percent—10,753 acres—of the seven lakes' total 19,213 acres (of water). The first lodgings for summer visitors were on Great and Long ponds, including the Central House (1874) and The Belgrade (1900), both on Long Pond in Belgrade Mills, whose name was changed to Belgrade Lakes by 1904 at the urgent suggestion of Charles Hill, proprietor of The Belgrade. By 1908, numerous smaller guesthouses (mostly in Belgrade Lakes) and tourist camps with tents and/or small cottages (all around Great Pond, Lakeside [the east shore of Messalonskee Lake in North Belgrade], and on Salmon Lake) had opened to meet the annually increasing demand.



Hillside Camps on Great Pond in Rome provided rustic cabins and a central dining hall for overnight and weekly guests from 1908 until the late 1920s.

A fascinating aspect of the emerging summer tourism was the development of youth camps. The first was Camp Merry Weather, which opened on Great Pond in 1900. At the time, it was only the third such summer camp in the country. Among the middle class, the notion of sending their teen-aged boys for several weeks to a camp run by strangers was still a novel idea in 1900, but it is one that caught on quite fast. Pine Island, also on Great Pond, followed two years later—and it just finished its 120th summer camp season! By 1908, these early boys' camps had been joined by Camp Crystal Spring (Great Pond, later became a tourist camp), Camp Kennebec (Salmon Lake) and Camp Messalonskee (Messalonskee Lake). In addition to all their water sports and hiking, the boys' camps also engaged in competitive baseball games with each other and with Belgrade High School which had opened in 1904 and graduated its first class of 24 in June 1908.

The success of the boys' camps inspired a dream/need for girls' summer camps. Belgrade native Hortense Hersom, who was a teacher at the Friends School in Washington, DC, opened a girls' camp, Hersom's Point Camp, on Great Pond in 1905. Her sister, who had been trained as a nurse, and fellow teachers from Washington assisted the first—and successful—summer. The camp's name was changed to Abena (Ah-bay-nah) the following summer, and soon Hersom's Point also became known as Abena! By 1908, two more girls' camps were in operation: Camp Jo-Lee (which eventually would become the boys' Camp Belgrade) and Camp Runoia, which, like Pine Island, is still an on-going summer adventure after more than 100 years.

ADVENTURE ON GREAT POND

(continued from Summer 2019 newsletter)

By John Gibbs

After reaching the dock I turned and stared back at the Hoyty, its big white belly floating above the water and two parallel vertical white daggers reaching skyward, but still saw no boats anywhere on the horizon. Happy not to be tired after the swim, I started to jog northward along the waterfront on mostly pine needles and mossy ground. The camp, where I first swam to, had no inhabitants, nor did the next one, but the third camp had a voice hailing back to one of my yells of, "Is anybody home?"

Luckily the people in this camp were a hardy can-do couple whom I later learned were Bob and Irene Nelson. At first a woman yelled back, "Yes, we are home," and then a man yelled something from the camp asking, "What can I do for you?" To which I replied, "Sorry to bother you, but I am shipwrecked and could use some help." Bob came to the porch and said, "Hold on, I will be right down." I must have looked a bit funny soaking wet, standing in the rain, wearing only a Maine cap and a swimsuit, but apparently, I was not scary-looking enough for them to lock their doors as both came out to help. After introducing ourselves I asked Bob if he could give me a ride back to my camp and explained I would then come back later in my boat to right the Nomad. He agreed to do so and as we walked toward the dock, I asked him if he was handy with a boat and lines to which he said yes as well as to my question if he could to help right the sloop with his boat. I did not know it at the time, but Bob was also a sailor and had lots of experience on the water. So it appeared in retrospect that I had washed ashore close to the right camp with the right kind of folks.

As we headed out to the Hoyty in the waves, we lashed two lengths of rope together making about twenty feet of very strong rope (of course once it touches a sailboat it immediately turns into a line). I stood on the bow as Bob moved the boat downwind to the lee side of the sloop which was still perfectly 90 degrees across the wind from stem to stern. As Bob edged the bow closer, I stepped off onto the sloop's gunwale with the line (see how fast that changed). I yelled back to Bob that I was going over the windward side into the water to tie off the line to a side-stay turnbuckle, now underwater, which I did and swam back around to climb up on the hull and grabbed the centerboard; you see, I've done this before, but never in such stormy conditions. With line straight across the hull and to the bow side of the centerboard tied off to the motorboat's bowline, Bob slowly and gradually applied power while I pulled with all my might on the centerboard. We were now moving faster downwind in a turtled position, but the Hoyty was not giving it up easily. About a minute went by and the windward gunwale started to rise out of the water, but it was in no hurry. The line was now stretching and creaking under the tremendous strain just 10 inches from me. I was only hoping it would not break, snapping into my body or my face. I could hear Irene say, "Oh, my God," in amazement that we were pulling so hard for so long, and the boat would just not pop up.



The Hoyty Toyty underway.

Finally, the deck was now vertical to the water and I thought for sure it would roll right over, but instead it started to plow forward gaining speed as it caught the wind and seemed for second or two it was going to flip back upside down. At this point I had my chest on top of the centerboard which was now parallel to the water, and my feet were swishing through the water behind me as I got dragged along. I was hanging on and pulling with all my might because I did not want to see the bottom of that sloop for a long while. Bob's boat was still full throttle in reverse as I rode the tip of the centerboard right into the water as we continued to drag along and did not let go until it appeared the Hoyty was about to land on my head. I swam away toward the stern and grabbed onto the transom. Then I pulled myself aboard into a foot of water that was fighting to get out the scuppers. I furled in the jib and sheeted out the main as far as possible, but the wind, the waves, along with the fact I had not disconnected Bob's line right away caused some havoc with the two boats. Irene was a busy woman doing a great job in fending off the two vessels as they gravitated toward each other bouncing angrily in the waves.

After swinging the centerboard all the way up, dropping the mainsail and attaching the tow line to the bow eye, I sat at the helm and steered the Hoyty



Captain John in his Maine cap.

ADVENTURE ON GREAT POND (continued from page 14)

behind Bob and Irene's boat just as more dark waters were ripping down the lake signifying another set of leading high winds. Loud cracks of thunder and flickering lightning were coming right toward us as we headed into their camp which certainly added to the drama. I later found out that Irene is dreadfully afraid of lightning but was showing nothing but courage at the time.

We tied the sloop to their swim float and then headed quickly up to their camp, Little Norway, to dry off from the second storm's rain. Irene gave me a tee shirt (Trek Across Maine Staff shirt from 1995; my friend Kevin Shea of Ipswich, MA would have liked that), and we sat out on the porch drinking hot coffee and talking about our families, our lives, where we had lived, where we now lived, and how much we loved Hoyt's Island. The rain was pelting the camp pretty hard, and the lightning was shooting about to which Bob appropriately said, "I don't think you would be having fun out there in this one." I could only imagine how another round of rain, waves and lightning would have taken its toll on me, but now I was very comfortable in a very charming camp at my favorite place in the world. What could be wrong with that? Bob revealed he had retired from the NYC Fire Department at the age of 48, and then went into commercial fishing and clamming on the New Jersey shores for several years afterwards. He spoke kindly of that time in his life living and working outdoors every day and raising the last of their six children with Irene. I exclaimed, "Six kids! That's a lot!" to which Irene said she had always wanted 12. Bob smiled back and said he wanted only one; so they compromised.

Deep down inside I loved the whole event because of the spontaneity and purity of what we had done and how we did it. I was not happy to have inconvenienced Bob and Irene; however, I was sure their Norwegian heritage made the event a passable experience. Maybe their Viking ancestors were smiling down on them for handling the situation so well by heading out onto the water in less than acceptable conditions to help a fellow seaman save his boat. I would like to think so.

Bob and Irene are two very wonderful people who are in love with the nature of Great Pond and Hoyt's Island. They live up here from June to October and still can't get enough of it; it must be their Norwegian blood. After all she was an Olsen before a Nelson and Bob should have been a Samuelsen if it were not for a typically impatient immigration's officer on Ellis Island just two generations ago. In any case, I owed Bob and Irene my gratitude and some of my best grilled smoked cedar plank salmon sometime later in the summer.

After an hour of talking, the storm abated, and Bob offered to tow me home to the west side of the island and, of course, Irene enthusiastically jumped in the boat with Bob for the ride and two mile cruise to my cove. I sat in the Hoyty Toyty

and steered while making the observation that not one other camp was occupied on the entire east side of the island nor was one other boat anywhere to be seen on the water. Needless to say, it would have been a long walk if the Nelson's weren't home, or a long night on that hull if I had chosen to stay.

The storm had passed, the sunset colors to the north and west were absolutely beautiful as we rounded the northern tip of the island. It was a very peaceful moment in conclusion to a couple hours of wild adventure. I was just waiting for some soft Chopin music to accompany the scene. You can't find that kind of excitement or those kinds of people sitting in the office, on the couch, on a computer game, or watching television.

I truly experienced a wonderful Maine day on Great Pond; doing some camp work, visiting with cousins, relaxing on a sail for a while, getting thrown into an extremely challenging boating situation, successfully solving the problem with lots of help, and meeting some wonderful new friends. What more could one ask for other than a wag, a smile, a lick, and a snuggle from my patient, loyal, black lab, Gracie?



Captain John's Route

The End

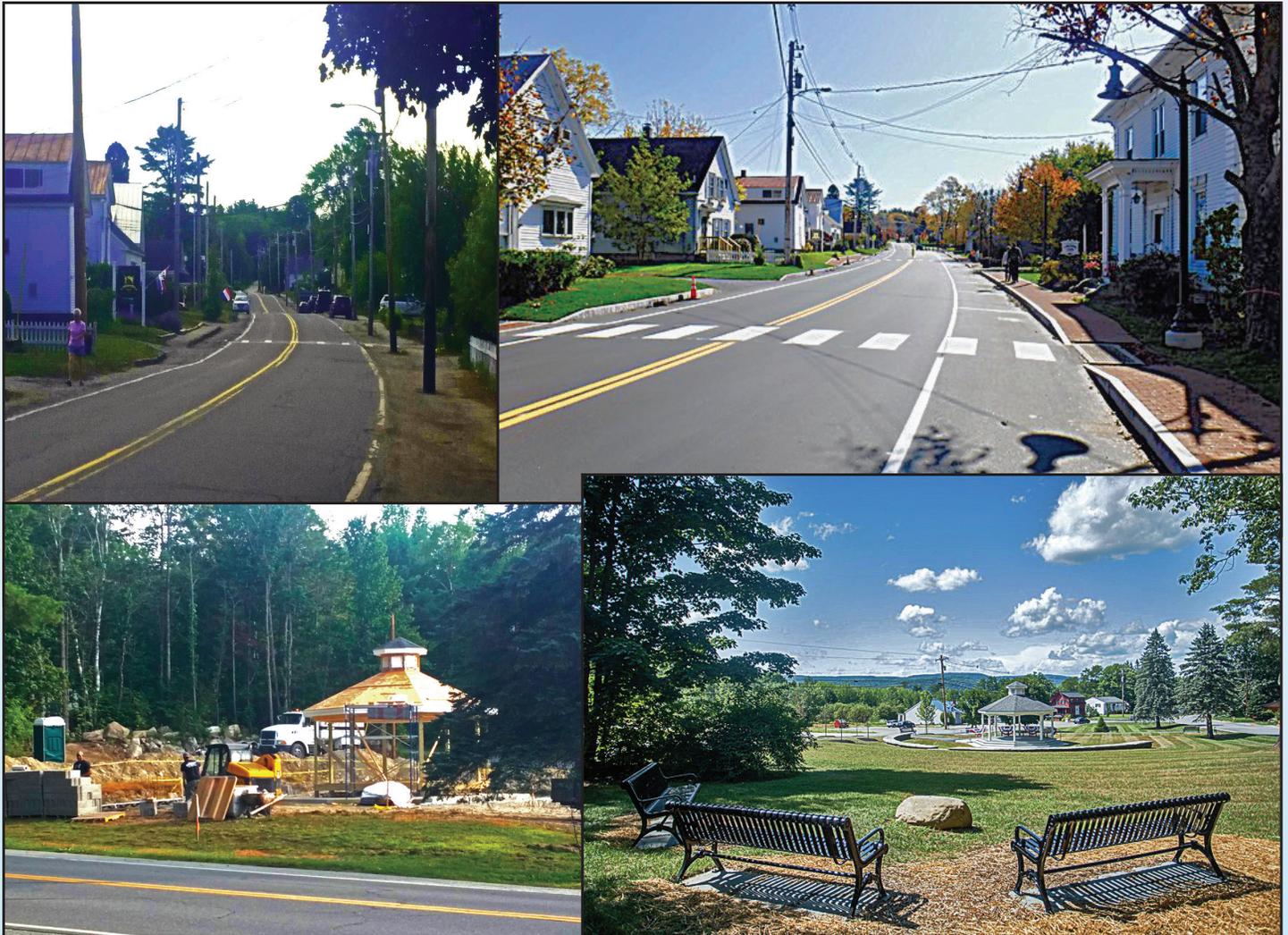
WE DUG AND DUG, BUT DIDN'T FIND THE JUDGE

By Carol Johnson

We dug and we dug and looked everywhere.
We dug up the road with nary a care.
We dug on the left and we dug on the right.
We dug most of the day until almost night.
We looked to see if we might find
The missing judge from another time,
The one who's never been found and rumor has said
was put on a train in New York and ended up dead.
Drowned was the gossip from some local folk,
Saying he was taken off the train-it wasn't a joke,
And all this time he's been here at the lake
and someday would be found-there was no mistake.
Digging around we found many boulders and
Dragged them aside to sit on the shoulders.
We found lots of old culverts and pipe,
and even a couple of gas tanks and the like.
We found dirty dirt that got hauled away,
and more than once caused a delay.

We took our time and made sure to look
under every cranny and every nook.
But, alas, at the end of the day,
there was no judge hiding away.
So the roadwork continued for these two years past
The sidewalks were built and paved so they'd last.
The lights were installed to brighten the way,
and benches were added so rest you may,
When you stroll through the town
from the bridge to the park,
You now can enjoy this long after dark.
And if you should bike to the village one day,
there are new bike racks along the way.
They all have a plaque with a saying to read -
A story, a memory, a name, or a deed.
But look as you may and look as you might,
There are none that will say Judge Crater's in sight.
So the mystery continues, the story goes on,
and our village is beautiful all day and night long!

BEFORE AND AFTER



2019 BLA RAFFLE – ANOTHER WONDERFUL SUCCESS!

By Andy Cook

We anticipated that the construction, traffic delays, and loss of parking spaces might adversely impact the 2019 BLA raffle. We had even considered canceling the raffle. Boy, are we glad that we reconsidered...It Was A BIG SUCCESS!

The raffle is very important to our lakes. The raffle funds, in addition to our membership fees, grants we have received, and many generous donations, are used to support research and programs on lake water quality, the Youth Conservation Core erosion control work (!), our loon population study, and our overall advocacy for our beautiful lakes and their water quality. In fact the raffle tables may do more for us all in terms of bringing attention to lake water quality than almost anything else we do. Many times, at the raffle table, we met people from Colorado, Virginia, New York, Connecticut... We shared with them information about the lakes, phosphorous, algae blooms, the Colby work, milfoil, loons, and all the issues we are working on. A usual response was, "Wow! I had no idea. We come here every summer. We love these lakes; thank you for your work. Here is \$100; will it help?"



Andy Cook announces a lucky raffle winner.

Our prize donors came through with wonderful and valuable prizes. Hammond Lumber has been great; they provided the boat lift and dock sections – a big deal! The Matson's provided a beautiful (and expensive) Kamado Japanese smoker grill, Steve and Anne Smith donated a week at their beautiful camp, Lynch Landscaping (a new contributor) joined in supporting us, Lakeside Cottage Rentals came through again (we love them!), as did Day's (great neighbors). For the bonus raffle we once again thank Lakepoint Real Estate, Gail and Frank Rizzo, and the Village Inn for their wonderful and enduring support. These companies, businesses, and people have all been true partners with the Belgrade Lakes Association in helping to keep our lakes preserved and protected. Please thank them if you see them and take them your business- they deserve our support just as they have supported us.

So we held the raffle. Several BLA members jumped in and volunteered to man the tables. Some really took the bit in their teeth and were enthusiastic advocates and salespeople, often achieving over \$1000 in sales over a four hour shift. We also had a table at the grand opening of the "Matson Park" (across from Hello Good Pie), and kept the tables open over the long holiday weekends.

Though we did not set a new sales record, as done year over year under Dick Greenan's leadership, it was still a very good and solid effort. It was especially exciting given the Village construction and disruption. We are proud of what we collectively achieved, via the raffle, for the lakes. Our winners were happy with the wonderful prizes they won. It was, despite our initial concerns, well worth the effort.

We thank everyone who purchased tickets or gave other support. We especially thank those volunteers who manned the raffle tables. It is a lot of fun and you get to speak to our mission for the lakes. It was all just great and far exceeded our expectations. Thank you all!

Protect and Preserve – if not us, who?



Impromptu meeting of newsletter staff and contributor, Maggie Shannon. Happy 80th, Polly!

NEW FACE AT MLS

Maine Lakes Society (MLS) is pleased to announce that Brooke Hafford MacDonald from Levant, Maine, has joined its staff as the LakeSmart Program Manager. LakeSmart is MLS' signature program that works with lake associations and volunteer evaluators who meet with lakefront owners to help identify ways they can reduce runoff and erosion on their property to protect lake water quality.



Brooke Hafford MacDonald

MacDonald recently completed an MS in Ecology and Environmental Sciences at the University of Maine where she studied lead poisoning in Maine's Common Loons and attitudes about lead tackle. She has worked as a ranger in Acadia National Park and as a field biologist with Biodiversity Research Institute.

Brooke brings to MLS a deep knowledge of social science and an understanding of the many factors that motivate, or limit, behavior change. Her energy and enthusiasm for working with people and volunteers, along with her background in ecology and conservation, make her an incredibly valuable asset for the LakeSmart program and a great new addition to the MLS staff team," said Susan Gallo, MLS' Executive Director. "LakeSmart had its most active year in 2019, with more than 250 evaluations; and as MLS enters its 50th anniversary year, we are looking to expand the program even more."

MacDonald replaces veteran LakeSmart Program Manager, Maggie Shannon, who has retired after more than 15 years with MLS. LakeSmart was established by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2003, but was transferred to MLS in 2013 after Shannon, then Executive Director of MLS, worked tirelessly with the DEP staff on a successful plan to use volunteer evaluators. Under Shannon's supervision, the program has grown exponentially.

"I'm excited for this opportunity to lead LakeSmart and build on the momentum Maggie has built over the last seven years," said MacDonald. "LakeSmart is unique in its use of trusted community members from local lake associations to deliver messages to neighbors and friends about best practices for pollution reduction. The neighbor-to-neighbor transmission of information is the key that motivates behavior change. I'm excited to work on this innovative program that has already been replicated in other states like New Hampshire and Vermont."

A SPECIAL GIFT



I took this photo of my Husband Kenny & our Goldendoodle, Maizey at Belgrade Lakes, Maine on Great Pond. Kenny and his family are originally from Maine and moved away but always keep it a priority to come back to Maine as often as they can. They have been going to this same vacation spot for over 28+ years. I personally have been going for the last 8 years and Great Pond is one of my favorite places to vacation out of all the places I've been. I posted this photo on Instagram and tagged the brewery- "Peak Brewing" (the beer Kenny is drinking in the photo). The brewery saw the post and reposted it. This won photo of the month and I was able to select any Environmental Charity of my choice to donate \$500 in our names on behalf of Peak Brewing! So, without a doubt, we decided to pick the Belgrade Lakes Association for the Loon Preservation Project! So excited to be able to give back to such a Special Place we love so much.

2019 YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

By Lauren Pickford

This 2019 summer season, the 7 Lakes Alliance Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) completed more projects than ever before! The YCC provides high school and college students summer employment work to protect the water quality of the region by decreasing soil erosion.

After much consideration, the 7 Lakes' YCC Committee deployed an additional third crew of hard-working youths to address the increased demand around the lakes. With the additional capacity, the YCC completed 119 erosion control projects throughout the Belgrade Lakes Watershed.

With the addition of a third crew, the YCC was able to tackle completion of large projects like Pine Tree Camps and Crystal Springs Camps. We were also pleased to end the season in a new collaboration with the Travis Mills Foundation, BLA, and LakeSmart. 7 Lakes' final YCC project of 2019 was the installation of a large buffer garden at the foundation's veterans' retreat on Long Pond. This project was a great example of what can be accomplished through the long-standing collaboration between 7 Lakes, LakeSmart, and the BLA!



Connor Grindle, Courtney Richard, and Michael Chavez are installing a rain garden at Pine Tree Camps in Rome.



Soil erosion carries excess phosphorus into the lakes threatening algal blooms and impaired water quality. The YCC is a cost-effective prevention for erosion-related algal problems. The YCC team works throughout the Belgrade Lakes watershed and is generously funded by Belgrade Lakes Association, East Pond Association, North Pond Association, McGrath Pond Salmon Lake Association, surrounding towns, and private donors.

Sabine Fontaine, LakeSmart Coordinator, Belgrade Lakes Association, and Amy Soper, Conservationist, 7 Lakes Alliance, work together to water a newly installed buffer garden at the Travis Mills Foundation retreat on Long Pond.

JUDGE JOSEPH FORCE CRATER (continued from page 7)

Both Sally Ritzi and June Brice had fled New York after Crater's disappearance, though both of them later denied having anything to do with it. Ritzi was tracked down at her parents' house in Ohio and claimed she had returned home to care for her ailing father. Police never quite believed her, but they couldn't get anything satisfactory out of her.

June Brice was found in a mental institution decades later. During the height of Crater's case, lawyers argued that Brice's mobster boyfriend had blackmailed and then killed the judge. By the time police found Brice, however, she was in no state to give testimony on these events.

And then there was Vivian Gordon. Gordon was a high-powered call girl who knew the kingpins of New York's underworld intimately. In 1931, she offered to testify about government corruption in light of Crater's disappearance—and was murdered just five days later. When police searched her house, they found a disturbing item: Judge Crater's coat.

All of these leads are tantalizing—but none of them ended up leading anywhere definitive. Gordon was dead. Ritzi and Brice stayed quiet. Crater remained missing.

Though his body was never found, Crater was officially declared dead on June 6, 1939, almost nine years after he vanished. In a trial concerning his disappearance, the jury's only certainty was that they could not determine what happened to him, and though promising evidence has come out as recently as 2005, it has amounted to nothing. Sadly, we have no further clues about Judge Crater's ultimate fate—though most assume that he was murdered. But by whom? For what purpose? How, and where? What were Crater's mistresses not saying? We may never know.

<https://www.factinate.com/editorial/what-happened-judge-crater/>

The newsletter staff (Polly Beatie, Liz Fontaine and Marcel Schnee) hope you enjoy this edition.

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**BELGRADE LAKES
ASSOCIATION**

137 Main Street
P.O. Box 551
Belgrade Lakes, ME 04918

PHONE:
207.512.5150

EMAIL:
info@blamaine.org

WEB:
belgradelakesassociation.org

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Dedication ceremony for our new Village Green on a beautiful August day

