

Seymour Lake Association Annual Meeting Minutes July 25, 2009

A **brief meeting of the full board** was held prior to the start of the annual meeting. The purpose was to update the board about the agenda, speakers, and to assure that the meeting would run as smoothly as possible by having everyone up to date with information. All members of the board except Kalman Samuels and Erik Lessing (both out of town) were able to be present. The board members also provide food for the membership and set up the food items, as well as the meeting room, prior to the start of the meeting.

The Annual Meeting was **called to order** by the President Lyman McWain at 9:06 AM.

The **secretary's report** from the July 26, 2008 Annual Meeting was given by Jean McKenny. On a motion made by Ken Jenness and seconded by Ted Jewett, it was accepted.

The **treasurer's report** was given by Janet Selby. She reported a balance of \$4,962.06 in the check book and of \$40,107.18 in the money market account. She provided a 2008 and 2009 (to date) comparison of income for donations (\$10,916.78 / \$5,825.00), membership (\$6,520 / \$6,120), ice out (\$985 / \$1015), maps (\$808.50 / \$125) and milfoil grant (\$15,649 / \$6899). Expense comparisons for 2008 and 2009 (to date) were also given for swim lessons (\$2185.60 / \$845). The reasons for some of the changes are explained in committee reports later in the meeting. On a motion made by Ken Jenness and seconded by Bruce Remick, the treasurer's report was approved.

The **auditor's report** was given by Steve Massicotte. He reported that he had reviewed the 2008 accounting entries and bank statements and found everything to be in order. He also thanked Janet for all of the work that she does as treasurer.

The **president's report** was given by President Lyman McWain. He stated that the SLA has a good statewide reputation and that Seymour Lake is one of only a few lakes in the state without a milfoil infestation. He gave a quick overview of the volunteer work done by Tom Emery and the secchi disk sampling of the lake as well as work done by the the VIP program volunteers. He mentioned the newer stream sampling program in the tributaries flowing into the lake. He feels that "education is what it is about" and it is important for everyone to understand how water quality is impacted by construction of hard surfaces. When hard surfaces (buildings, roads, etc.) are built, they accelerate the speed of the runoff water (carrying nutrients as well as pollutants) into the lake. The lake shoreline needs plants to absorb the water and to slow the runoff so that the water will go into ground water (not the lake). As Lake Seymour is about 65% "built out" he feels that we need a big effort educate property owners about what they can do (as well as some things that they should not do) to help keep the quality of the lake high. The SLA board is working to build up a contingency fund (about \$75,000) so that funds would be available if an infestation (such as milfoil) was ever discovered in the lake. He cited examples from other lakes of how expensive it is to try to correct a problem once it is there. He stated that we need continued donations to build up the balance to this amount. His feeling is that the current membership drive is to increase involvement (not just money) and bring in others for education and involvement in the work of the association. Lyman stated that the membership percentage of lake front property owners has been "lousy" compared with other lake associations around the state. He is very appreciative of the membership committees' work in trying to raise this percentage. He also complimented Allan Wolley for his great work with the website, all of the volunteers (names listed on posters hung up around the room), the Wayeeses Grant project, and the Seymour East Grant project (Beth Torpy) for all of their efforts. He mentioned multiple Vermont State Grant opportunities that are

and may be available for the work of the association. He complimented Ron Kolar for doing a great job working with the state, and mentioned the new swim program instituted this year as an example of positive change. Lyman expressed his thanks to board, all of the volunteers, the town, the state, the farmers, the inspectors (Reed Hubbard and Bud Bergh). He concluded by saying, "It's what we are all about. We are expending much effort but the water quality is not up to what it should be. We have to fight to stay even and that is more expensive than the prevention of problems. I am happy with our progress, but the SLA needs all of you to recruit members and volunteer to help."

Guest Speakers

At this time the guest speakers were presented. They were Homer Selby and Bob Partridge of the Vermont State Police Auxiliary and they discussed two new boating regulations in Vermont. The first is that personal watercraft are only allowed to operate from sunrise to sunset. The second is that if a motorized boat is in Vermont for 30 days it needs a "validation" sticker. They responded to questions from the membership including questions about "reckless boating" and youth boating regulations. They pointed out that the Handbook of Vermont Boating Laws and Responsibilities is the place to look for answers to boating questions. The handbooks were available to anyone who wanted a copy and are generally available either in hard copy or electronically by visiting www.vtsp.org/boat. Lyman thanked them for coming to the meeting and said that he appreciated them patrolling the lake.

New Business

Ron Kolar spoke for the **nominating committee** and pointed out the list of officers and directors. Currently serving. He then asked Tim Buzzell to speak about the process of how the nominating committee has found people willing to serve as either officers or directors on the SLA board. Tim explained that the nominating committee uses the other board committees as a "farm system." This has been past and probably will be future practice. Ron announced that the nominating committee this year recommends that the current officers be re-elected and that the directors whose terms are expiring be re-elected for another 3 years. A motion made by Ted Jewett and seconded by Ken Jenness to this effect passed.

Committee Reports

The **membership committee** report was given by Bruce Barter and Ted Jewett. Bruce reported that there are 254 members as of yesterday and that there were 217 at this time last year. The membership committee is trying to improve the totals this year. The percentage of lake front properties joining the association is 51% at this time. Donations along with membership fees have been received from 109 this year (100 last year). Ted then reported that the committee has met six times and plans four more meetings in the coming year. Twelve members of the committee each have specific territories of the lake to contact. A new member packet has been prepared with 400 lake properties the initial target. The committee has a goal of 100% membership for all of the lake front properties. The committee views this as a three year project. Ted informed the members present that the membership committee has made a recommendation to the board. It is that a personalized letter be sent to the membership (and others) starting early in 2010 asking people to join the association. That allows the summer months as a good time to contact (in person) the people who did not join in response to the letter. The exact form of the letter is still being worked out but it is thought that it will contain a message from the president and a summary of what the organization did the past year. Some questions surfaced from the membership regarding the need for change. Ted explained that it was felt that more of a system was needed. In the past some people have not joined and others have actually joined more than once in a

year. Jim McWain expressed thanks to Ted and his committee saying that he felt that they have gotten a handle on how to start to improve the process. Bruce expressed that the letter would eliminate the need for people to fill out the membership information each year as the information would be there in the letter. Janet Selby expressed that memberships “dribble in” all year long and that if we got the bulk in the spring it would help a great deal for planning. Other discussion centered around who gets the information about the association and how to incorporate more landowners (people not on the lake). Ted expressed that all stakeholders are needed. Bruce stated that currently about 40 members are not actually on the lake. Allan Wooley pointed out that the SLA website contains links to other associations of people who might be interested in joining the SLA.

Ron Kolar presented the **dam/lake level** report. He reminded the membership that the dam was in bad condition for a number of years. The new dam was built in 2004. Ron met with the State of Vermont and Green Bay Hydro this past Tuesday. Our water quality certificate commits them to evaluate with a final report to the agencies and we have been asked for input into that report. We want to make certain that the gate remains. Ron stated that with a severe weather system the gate is needed. It could be raised to lower the lake to make room for an impending deluge. The committee will recommend this to the state by summer's end. He encouraged the membership to call or e-mail him at any time. A question was asked about how information would be disseminated prior to any event. Ron stated that was a good point and that we need a plan. The SLA would take responsibility for preparations for an event. The lake lowering rate of 1” per 24 hours is all that is possible and we need a process in place for this contingency. Rob Guyer asked about how to notify people and would we coordinate with Echo Lake. Ron stated that the state mentioned that and that there would not be any more flow than when Citizens Utilities opened the gate. Lyman expressed kudos to Ron Kolar and the others who have been involved, including Jim McWain and Jim McDonald Construction Company. Discussion then centered around several projects where the conservation of lands are taking place. The Nature Conservancy and the Vt Land Trust were both mentioned. The VLT was said to be involved in placing the Hatton parcel in trust and also a recent project at Echo Lake for the purchase of the Moulton Farm property so that it can be preserved. Both organizations were stated as having done a good job with preservation. Then someone else mentioned 1500 acres in Charleston (owned by a lady in Southern Vermont) has been placed in trust by the VLT. A question was raised about if the towns lose the tax income from properties in these situations. Someone from Northwoods said that the new landowner has to petition the town for tax release.

The **swim program** report was given by Janet Selby. She described the change to IROC from the public beach this year and mentioned that due to the weather this was the perfect year to try it inside. There were 34 children participating last year and the number was down to 18 this year. The full cost this year was \$845 down from \$2185.60. This year the children were all Morgan children or grandchildren whereas in other years some had been from Island Pond, Charleston and other towns. Some of the cost savings were because we did not need to hire police (\$1200 last year because of the location of the public beach site). Janet stated that the instruction this year was excellent with the children in small groups. A “parent” survey done the last day indicated that, by in large, all were happy. Janet expressed thanks to Jean McKenny and Carol Pombar for being at IROC on some days to help supervise. She feels that the program was safer this year as the children did not have to cross the road which is necessary to get to the public beach.

The **milfoil programs & inspection** report was given by Janet Selby. There have been 706 boats inspected this year down from 797 inspections as of this date last year. Twenty-nine cases of harmless vegetation were found on vessels. Nine cases of milfoil were found and that number is up from 7 at this same time last year. Janet made available a handout including information about the milfoil

program and grant. The handout also expressed thanks to all of the volunteers and the inspectors (Reed and Bud) for the work that they have done. She mentioned a new plant survey happening this year through the water quality committee and mentioned the need for more volunteers for some sections of the lake for milfoil inspections. In response to a question posed about how sea planes are inspected she had done some research and found that there is a national educational campaign taking place for sea plane pilots regarding this concern.

The **boating safety** report was given by Tim Buzzell. He said that there was no report except to state that the boating booklets are available at the meeting. There will not be a boat show at the outing this year because of a lack of dock space. He stated that a boating parade was considered but will not happen this year. He also mentioned that “courtesy inspections” of boats are available from that State Police. They cover 30 lakes and have been on Seymour Lake at least 6 times this season.

The **fishing** report was given by Janet Selby for Homer Selby as he had to leave the meeting early. She said that the same stocking as usual has taken place this year.

The **water quality programs** report was given by Peggy Barter. She handed out a detailed one page report. The report stated that the number one lesson learned is that excess phosphorus and sediment entering the lake in large part comes from the lakeshore. Disturbed land, human-made hard surfaces, and removal of natural vegetation all are major contributors. The report detailed all of the many efforts that have taken place in the past year and the new initiatives that are either under way or in the planning stages to protect the lake. She mentioned the July 29 meeting as the SLA is hosting the MWA and it should provide an educational opportunity for all. Many questions were asked by association members regarding specific areas of the lake and changes that they have observed. Among the responses to questions it was stated that there is a law and if someone is altering the shoreline of the lake (below the mean water level) a permit is needed. It was stated that on brooks there is no law and emphasized that hard surfaces change the entire situation for the lake. It was also stated that the Department of Environmental Conservation website as well as the Agency of Natural Resources are good sources for information. Another question was raised about if there is any recourse when property has been damaged. Peggy responded that this question was out of her area of expertise but Ben Copans would like to find a law, but there may be no recourse. She also stated that the Federation of Lakes and Ponds is trying to improve the law and that civil action is always an alternative. Lyman McWain stated that the SLA needs to get more knowledgeable about the law. Lyman followed with mentioning many initiatives and plans that are underway as well as people involved. Those included the Wayeeses project and Linda Broadwater, the MWA, and Tom Emery's role. In doing so he referenced the charts prepared by Peggy and posted around the room. He stated that the trends are important and the monitoring has been going on since 1979. He continued to cite Ron Kolar for his work with agriculture, etc. and Erik Lessing for preparing the brochure and for beginning a project relating the rate of development and the effect that development has had on the lake. He mentioned Tracey Shadday for the work that she is doing in educational outreach, and Gil Wierschke with streams. He said that we all need to take stuff to our neighbors and friends as we need more people to work on surveys and private roads and to get grant money and also that more stream samplers are needed. Four handouts were mentioned. Those include a sheet of tips for replanting, lists of various things that can be done to help the lake, and a list of plants suitable for lakeshore planting. Linda Broadwater mentioned that water bars on roads as make a big difference. A description of water bars, as well as testimony about their effectiveness followed. Discussion about some of the charts (nitrogen) followed. Peggy was thanked by a member for the Morgan School summer program and received a round of applause for all of the work that she has done.

Old Business

The **ice out contest results & awards** report was given by Janet Selby. The first place winner was Gerry Cahill. She was present at the meeting and generously donated her winnings back to the milfoil project. The second place winners were Harvie and Betsy MacDonald and the third place winner was Mark Sills.

Lyman reminded members present of the **outing** August 1 “on the rocks” at the McWain/Colby properties. A new initiative is to have SLA have shirts and other items available today and at the outing as well as at the store later. Details about the outing were provided.

Other **community calendar** items, times and locations were listed.

Lyman **concluded** the meeting by reminding the members that as the Governor said, “You can make a difference. Only you can prevent poor water quality.”

Respectfully Submitted by Jean McKenny, Secretary