# “Our Glimmerglass”

**A Newsletter from the Otsego Lake Association**

Vol. 2012 – Issue 1 www.otsegolakeassociation.org Spring 2012



Editor’s note: All the articles in this issue were contributed by OLA President Wayne Bunn unless otherwise noted by a different byline.

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP & INFORMATIONAL MEETING
## SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2012 at 9:00 AM

Coffee & Donuts at 8:30 AM
Main Building – SUNY/Oneonta’s Biological Field Station
5838 State Highway 80, Cooperstown (north of Fenimore Art Museum)

## Main Topic
## “Hydrilla in Cayuga Lake – The New Threat To Otsego Lake”
## Presented by Dr. Robert Johnson of Cornell University
## (Dr. Johnson is a recognized expert on Hydrilla)

Hydrilla is a terrible non-native invasive plant recently discovered in Cayuga Lake, one of the nearby Finger Lakes, which forms dense mats of vegetation that interfere with recreation (i.e. boating and swimming) and destroys fish habitats. Once introduced into a lake, it grows and spreads very quickly and requires expensive manual harvesting to remove it. The best solution is not to have Hydrilla introduced into Otsego Lake in the first place. Find out how you can help.

For more information on the annual meeting, please contact OLA President Wayne Bunn by telephone at (518) 542-6630 or by e-mail at kwbe@hotmail.com.

**President's Message – "As Viewed From The Lake"**

First of all, I would like to say "WELCOME" and "THANK YOU" to all of the new members of the Otsego Lake Association who joined for the first time in the autumn of 2011 as a result of our membership campaign led by OLA member Jeff Reynolds. Jeff did a wonderful job putting on paper what we all feel and love about Otsego Lake. Thanks, Jeff! I would also like to thank everyone else who renewed the membership in OLA. We look forward to your participation this summer. If you joined or renewed in the fall of 2011, you do not owe dues for 2012. However, if you did not join or renew in the fall of 2011, please do so using the membership form in this newsletter.

OLA is a very active group of "lake minded" citizens, both lakeside property owners and those interested in the lake, who are very concerned about the present and future health and condition of Otsego Lake. Our basic mission is to implement "A Plan for the Management of the Otsego Lake Watershed" which was initially adopted in 1998 by the four municipalities that surround Otsego Lake – namely, the Towns of Otsego, Springfield, and Middlefield and the Village of Cooperstown. The Plan's major goals include: (1) ensuring the quality of drinking water drawn from the lake, (2) preserving the lake's natural beauty and its viability as a tourist attraction, (3) protecting the lake's fishery, (4) ensuring the safety of recreational users of the lake, and (5) preserving the lake as a recreational facility. Much has been accomplished since OLA was founded in 2002 and even more will be accomplished in the future, but we need your help and cooperation.

We are primarily concerned with educating the general public and the municipalities surrounding the lake about the various issues that affect Otsego Lake. These issues include sediment and nutrient loadings (mud, road salt, phosphorous, wastewater, etc.) being discharged into the lake, non-native invasive plant and animal species (zebra mussels, milfoil, water chestnut, etc.), no-wake zones (boat speeds less than 5 miles per hour within 200 feet of the shoreline), and buffer strips along the shoreline (to reduce erosion). OLA is a 100% volunteer organization.

You can help Otsego Lake by joining OLA, coming to our general membership meetings, and volunteering to help with our various projects. Please contact me (contact information noted on page 1) if you have any questions, suggestions, or need additional information. I look forward to hearing from you and meeting you this summer.

Wayne Bunn, OLA President

**New OLA Board Members, Newsletter Editor, Webmaster, and Technical Advisor**

We are very pleased to announce that Carolyn Mook and Joseph W. Zarzynski have joined the OLA Board of Directors – Carolyn as Director from the Town of Middlefield and Joseph as Director at Large. Joseph has also graciously agreed to serve as our Newsletter Editor. Carolyn replaces Burr Southworth, a charter member and Director of OLA since 2002. Burr decided to retire from the Board this year, but will remain active in OLA. Burr also served recently as our Newsletter Editor. We wish to thank Burr for his many years of service to OLA and look forward to his continued involvement in OLA activities. Joseph replaces Tom Horvath, most recently a Director at Large, who has agreed to act as the Technical Advisor to OLA so we can

still take advantage of Tom's expertise on Otsego Lake. Our new webmaster is OLA member Tim Pokorny who is currently working on upgrading our website. Please check on the progress in the coming weeks (website address is noted on page 1).

**Personal Watercraft ("Jet Skis") Operator Rules**

Effective January 1, 2009, no one under the age of 14 is allowed to operate a Personal Watercraft (PWC). PWCs are sometimes referred to as "jet skis." Previously, youths between the ages of 10 and 13 could operate a PWC if they obtained a boating safety certificate and were accompanied by an adult. This new law only affects the operation of personal watercraft. Anyone over the age of 10 that holds a boating safety certificate can still operate a motorboat.

**Life Jacket Laws**

A new law in New York state now requires all boaters on recreational watercraft less than 21 feet in length (including motorboats, canoes, kayaks, rowboats, and sailboats) to wear a securely fastened, U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) of the proper size from November 1 to May 1 while on New York state waters. New York State law already requires PFDs for all children younger than 12 years old on boats less than 65 feet - with life jackets on board for all others. They must also be worn by anyone in tow, including water skiers and tubers, and by all riders on personal watercraft. It is reported by the State that immersion in water colder than 40 degrees F. can lead to hypothermia and passing out within 15 minutes.

**Otsego County Sheriff's Department - Boat Patrols**

The Otsego County Sheriff's Department will have boat patrols on Otsego Lake during the 2012 boating season. The boat patrols are not only to enforce the marine laws in New York state, but also to provide information on safe boating and provide assistance in case of an emergency.

**Zebra Mussel Control Devices Available Locally**

Zebra mussel control devices for lakeside property owners' water intake lines and systems are available locally at Bruce Hall Corporation, Haggerty Ace Hardware, and Hascup Plumbing - M.A.R.K. Lake Services. The representatives at each of these establishments can advise you on the best solution for your particular water system. It is better to prevent the zebra mussels from entering your water system in the first place rather than trying to remove them later.

**Annual Reminder: Don't "P" In The Lake**

When you purchase lawn fertilizer and/or dishwasher detergent for your camp or lakeside home, please think about Otsego Lake and buy phosphorus free fertilizer and dishwasher detergent sold in local garden supply stores, super markets, and health stores. Phosphorus (chemical symbol "P") is a huge food source or nutrient for the algae and weeds in the lake and OLA encourages everyone to do their part to reduce the amount of phosphorus that ultimately may end up in the lake. You can still have a beautiful lawn by using phosphorus free fertilizer or simply not using fertilizer at all. You can also have clean dishes by using phosphorus free dishwasher detergent.

**OLA Merchandise For Sale**

If you are looking for some gift ideas, please consider buying OLA's ever popular, but inexpensive, high quality and stylish short sleeve tee shirts (lake map on the back), long sleeve

denim shirts, caps, and tote bags which proudly show your support of Otsego Lake. Purchases also help OLA to raise money. We also have a 175 page lakescaping book to help you design your own buffer strip. Call Scottie Baker at (607) 547-5356 to order.

**Otsego Lake Has Special Fishing Regulations**

Fishing in Otsego Lake is regulated by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. There are statewide angling regulations that cover licenses and such local fish as largemouth and smallmouth bass, walleye, pickerel, perch, lake white fish, etc. There are Special Regulations for Otsego Lake as noted below:

| Fish | Open Season | Minimum Length | Daily Limit | Ice Fishing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brown Trout | All Year | 18” | 1 | Yes |
| Land Lock Salmon | All Year | 18” | 1 | Yes |
| Lake Trout | All Year | 23” | 1 | Yes |

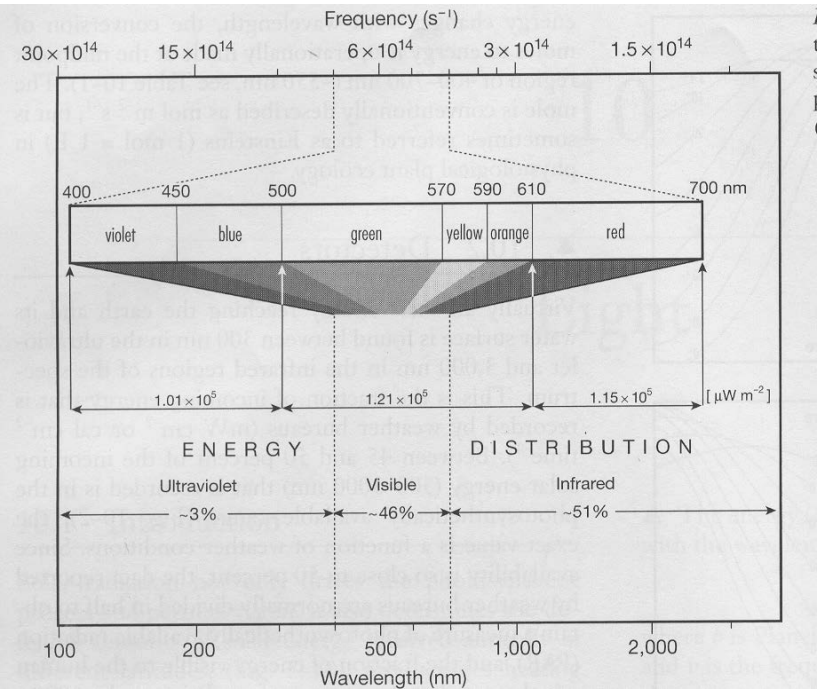
**Understanding Your Lake**

By Tom Horvath, Ph.D., Aquatic Biologist & Limnologist

What happens when you jump into a lake? You get wet. What happens when light jumps into a lake? You get color. But how?

Light is made up of a spectrum of wavelengths, some of which our eyes perceive as colors. For example, light in the wavelength 475 nanometers (1000 nm = 0.00004 inches) appears blue to us, while light in the wavelength 650 nm appears red. In fact, we only perceive light in wavelengths from 400 nm to 700 nm (see Figure; from Kalff 2002, Limnology).

It’s the fate of light after it enters a lake that determines the color of a lake. Light can be either 1) reflected, 2) absorbed, 3) scattered, or it can continue to move through the water (called transmission). **Reflected light** is light that strikes something but gets returned in a specific direction (for you physics buffs remember the angle of incidence equals the angle of reflection). A good bit of light is reflected from the lake’s surface (more so when it’s wavy because of the increased surface area). Generally, all the wavelengths of light are reflected, so the light appears white (or colorless), and hence doesn’t affect color much. **Absorbed light** is light that strikes something and is lost. For



example, if an algal cell is hit by light, it will absorb light in most of the spectrum except green, which has the chance to get back to our eyes. So water that has a lot of algae growing in it appears green to us. **Scattered light** is light that strikes something and heads in a random direction. From physics we know that the smaller wavelengths (blue) are scattered more than larger wavelengths (green through red). Water that is almost pure will look blue because all the wavelengths are absorbed and lost except blue, which is scattered. Some of the scattered blue light exits the water and reaches our eyes, hence the water appears blue to us. This is also why the sky is blue, at least on clear days.

Lakes come in many colors – some are blue, some are green, some are brown, some are even red - and the color of the water can tell us quite a bit about the lake. "Glimmerglass" got its name because the water was at one time crystal clear and appeared a deep blue. This was because very little stuff was in the water to absorb light, except the natural absorption capacity of water. There are times in the summer when Otsego Lake takes on a shimmer of green (almost fluorescent at times). This is because the lake is experiencing an algal bloom, which absorbs all the light except green, which is scattered back to our eyes. If you travel into the Adirondack Park, some of the shallow lakes along the roads look rather tea-colored. This is because the water has a lot of dissolved organic matter in it, which comes from the decaying plants all around the water. Dissolved organic matter absorbs light in blue to yellow range, so what gets scattered back to our eyes is the orange to red light, which looks brownish to us.

I hope you are now more familiar with your lake. Keep looking for new articles in future OLA Newsletters. However, if you have specific questions about limnology and Otsego Lake, I will try to address them as well. E-mail questions to me at: (horvattg@oneonta.edu). I will post both questions and the answers in this newsletter.

**Active Members of SUNY-Oneonta Biological Field Station's Volunteer Dive Team**

By Paul Lord, BFS

The Biological Filed Station volunteer divers support the BFS and Otsego Lake all twelve months of every year. From April through June the team deploys no-wake zone buoys (NWZBs) around Otsego Lake and retrieves spar buoys. From May through October the team regularly opens the water intake gate for the Village of Cooperstown's water supply to allow scrubbing of the interior of that line. From September through December the team retrieves NWZBs around Otsego Lake deploying spar buoys. The team maintains buoy systems all year and performs underwater sampling as required. Additionally, the team retrieve BFS equipment lost in the lake as may be required and trains continuously for diving in all local conditions. The current active BFS team members are:

**Jim Vogler:** Open Water SCUBA Instructor. Jim has been diving with us for the last four years and assists Paul Lord with all aspects of BFS diving. He is the first of the BFS volunteer divers to earn a dive leadership certification. Jim works for the biology department at SUNY-Oneonta and he is married to Donna Vogler, a biology professor at SUNY-Oneonta.

**Dale Webster:** Master SCUBA Diver; 14th year as volunteer diver; Dale's request to become involved with BFS research through diving prompted establishment of the team in 1998. Dale works on campus at SUNY-Oneonta as a carpenter and sells real estate.

**Lee Ferrara:** Master SCUBA Diver who is in his 12th year as volunteer diver. Lee is a high school science teacher in Oneonta.

**Ed Lentz:** Rescue and Ice Diver. Ed has been diving with us for the last six years and still does ice dives in a wetsuit. Ed is a patent attorney and a past recipient of the OCCA conservationist of the year award.

**Bjorn (BJ) Eilertsen:** Rescue, Multilevel, and Ice Diver. BJ has been diving with the BFS for the last four years. He owns and manages a construction company.

**Joseph W. Zarzynski**: "Zarr" is a board-certified underwater archaeologist, scientific diver, author, documentary film producer, and former educator. He has been diving with us for the past two years.

**Krista Ransier:** Currently working on requirements for divemaster certification. Krista is a senior at Milford High School and started diving with us in 2011.

**Robert Eklund, Jr**: Advanced Open Water Diver and nitrox diver levels. Bob has been diving with us for the past two years.

**Simon Thorpe**: Simon is an Advanced Open Water Diver. Simon has been diving with us for the past two years.

**Antonio Carrasquillo:** Open Water Diver. Antonio tends for the team and operates a personal services business.

**Wayne Bunn**: Recently retired civil engineer and NYS certified boat operator. Wayne tends for the team.

**Jeremiah Wood**: Recently completed academic and pool training for SCUBA certification. Jeremiah tends for the team and assists in underwater video file management.

Master SCUBA divers all have Advanced & Rescue training and training in at least five specialty diving areas. Our Master SCUBA divers are all ice, deep, and night trained. Their other training includes a mix of search and recovery, drift diving, multilevel diving, altitude diving, dry suit diving, wreck diving, boat diving, buoyancy diving, and equipment specialist.

******WANTED.*** *BFS seeks the donation of usable pontoon boat to be used for science research and service work. A tax letter will be provided.* For more information contact BFS's Paul Lord at (Paul.Lord@oneonta.edu).

## Otsego Lake History and Science Tidbits

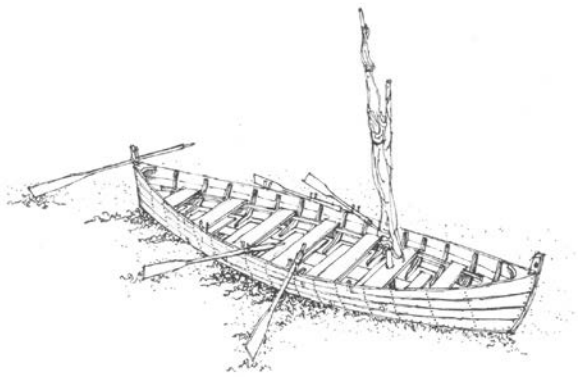
By Joseph W. Zarzynski, RPA (Register of Professional Archaeologists)

Later this year, on September 25, is the 20th anniversary of the release in the USA of director Michael Mann's **"The Last of the Mohicans"** movie that starred London-born actor Daniel Day-Lewis. The 20th Century Fox motion picture was a film adaptation about Cooperstown's James Fenimore Cooper's 1826 novel about the 1757 fall of Fort William Henry (Lake George,

NY) during the French & Indian War (1755-1763). Ironically, Mann's movie was not filmed on location around Lake George or at Otsego Lake. It was shot in North Carolina.

The 1920 silent film version of James Fenimore Cooper's book, *The Last of the Mohicans*, was listed on the **National Film Registry** in 1995. It is considered to be the best film edition of Cooper's historical fiction novel. This film registry began in 1989 and each year the Library of Congress lists up to twenty-five American-made films onto this prestigious roster.

The most common type of colonial American watercraft was the **bateau** (French for "boat"). The colonial Dutch, French, English, and Americans used these flat-bottomed vessels. These were essentially oversized rowboats, about 25-40 feet long. Bateaux were pointed at bow and stern. They were generally rowed and a paddle or oar latched at the stern was employed for steerage. In the American Revolution (1775-1783) during the **Clinton campaign** in 1779, there were over 200 American military bateaux on Otsego Lake. Many of these bateaux (see image below) were built in Schenectady, brought west on the Mohawk River, and then transported overland in wagons to the north end of lake (illustration credit: Mark Peckham).



In the autumn of 1894, a local man unexpectedly pulled an "old Indian canoe," a dugout, from the north end of Otsego Lake while fishing using a large net. The watercraft, caught in the fisherman's net (seine), was 16 feet long. Today, historic shipwrecks such as this Native American watercraft would be protected by state and federal laws and such a retrieval would only be lawful after acquiring a permit from the State Educational Department.

In the late spring of 1895, during the height of **steam-powered vessel transportation** on Otsego Lake, area newspapers listed five excursion steamboats on the lake—the *Natty Bumppo*, *Mabel Coburn*, *Cyclone*, *Gem*, and the *Water Witch*.

The June 7, 1935 issue of the *Otsego Farmer* newspaper (Cooperstown, NY) reported that a four-person team with the "New York State Conservation department" began a **fish study and survey** at Otsego Lake. The scientists were based out of a tent set up at Three Mile Point and they were under the supervision of Dr. Emmaline Moore, chief aquatic biologist who lived in Cooperstown. The team expected to be at the lake for three weeks before moving to other area waterways to conduct research.

**OLA Membership Renewal**

A Membership Application is included in this Newsletter. We encourage all present OLA members to renew their membership annually (except as noted below) and for all non-members to join. If you joined or renewed in the fall of 2011, you do not owe dues for 2012. However, if you did not join or renew in the fall of 2011, please do so using the membership application in this Newsletter; OLA membership application is found on page 8.

## OLA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**If you are not a current member of OLA, please consider joining or renewing now.**

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - OTSEGO LAKE ASSOCIATION - 2012**
Please complete this application whether you are renewing or joining for the first time.

**NAME**: _____ **Date:** _____

**PREFERRED MAILING ADDRESS:** **E-Mail Address**: _____
(Only Used For OLA Announcements)

_____

_____
**(City/Town)** **(State)** **(Zip Code)**

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** (Check One): __ Renewal __ New Member
__ Individual $25.00 __ Couple/Family $35.00 __ Business $50.00
__ Annual Endowment $75.00 and Up __ Additional Donation $ _____

**Please make your check payable to Otsego Lake Association and mail form and check to:**
David Sanford, OLA Treasurer, P.O. Box 13, Springfield Center, NY 13468

**OTSEGO LAKE ASSOCIATION – "HELPING TO PRESERVE A LOCAL TREASURE"**

Otsego Lake Association
P.O. Box 13
Springfield Center, NY 13468