

# “Our Glimmerglass”

A Newsletter from the Otsego Lake Association



Vol. 2013-Issue 3

[www.otsegolakeassociation.org](http://www.otsegolakeassociation.org)

Autumn 2013

**Board of Directors:** David Sanford, Paul H. Lord, Scottie Baker, Carl Good, Martin Tillapaugh, Joseph W. Zarzynski, Pati Grady, Emily Davidson, and Wayne Bunn. Directors represent the Towns of Middlefield, Otsego, Springfield, the Village of Cooperstown, a Student Director, and two At Large. **Officers and Support:** Mickie Richtsmeier (President), Scottie Baker (Vice President), David Sanford (Treasurer), Emily Davidson (Secretary), Joseph W. Zarzynski (Newsletter Editor), Tom Horvath, Ph.D. (Technical Advisor), and Tim Pokorny (Webmaster)

## **From the OLA President**

Thank you all for your support of OLA during the past year. Our annual meeting at Camp Minnetoska was one of the best attended yet. We all enjoyed the wonderful images and reminiscences of times gone by as well as the opportunity to meet lake neighbors and be updated on current challenges facing the lake and its environs.

After years on the Board, and serving as Secretary and Vice-President, I am stepping up as President with Scottie Baker as Vice President and Emily Davidson as Secretary/Student Representative. David Sanford remains Treasurer/Representative from the Town of Middlefield. Pati Grady represents Springfield. Paul Lord and Carl Good represent the Town of Otsego, and Wayne Bunn is Director at Large. We are also extremely fortunate to have Joseph W. Zarzynski as our Newsletter Editor and Tim Pokorny as our Webmaster. We have vacancies on the Board for directors from Springfield and Middlefield. I enthusiastically encourage members from these areas to consider volunteering for a board position. We also welcome members' involvement on OLA committees and of course, as participants in our programs!

We are looking forward to 2014 and planning many exciting events. The first annual “We Love Our Lake” boat parade is scheduled for the evening of July 4. This should be a fun event which everyone can enjoy, whether from the water or on the shore.

Our annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 9, and will focus on another area of historical interest as well as providing an educational session on the state of the lake. More information will follow in the Spring Newsletter. A membership application for the 2014 season will also be included in that newsletter; however, we welcome donations at any time of the year!

This is a crucial time for Otsego Lake. Our newsletter highlights some of our current projects and also areas of intense concern. Please take time to read the newsletter and to check out our website. I speak for the entire OLA Board in thanking you for your ongoing support in preserving and protecting our Glimmerglass through the OLA.

Sincerely,

Mickie Richtsmeier (President, Otsego Lake Association)

### **Otsego Lake Association Website**

By Tim Pokorny (OLA Webmaster)

After many years of dedicated OLA website design it was time for Burr Southworth to put down the computer mouse and retire from his duties. We should all be thankful for the many hours he volunteered to keep our website updated. With that being said we have an informative website ([www.otsegolakeassociation.com](http://www.otsegolakeassociation.com)) right now but as with anything there's room for improvement. I've been making some changes including a "news" section for those interesting topics happening in and around our lake and an "upcoming events" section both located on the homepage. On the "Who we are?" page you might notice some recent changes to our board of directors including long time President Wayne Bunn stepping down from his duties. As always there's a downloadable application form on the "Application" page for new members, members who missed the annual meeting, and past members who may have been absent for a few years. Visit our "Documents" page to keep up with our board meetings minutes, member meeting minutes, treasurer's report, past newsletters, and much more. Keep checking back with the website as small changes are being made monthly. Within the next year there should be a few select pages of a new modern OLA website to keep members and non-members informed on what's going on in and around Otsego Lake. Happy browsing.

<p><b>HELP OTSEGO LAKE by providing ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SUNY-ONEONTA 2014 SUMMER INTERNS.</b> These interns will work at the Otsego Lake Boat Inspection Stations that are our best defense against the threat of invasive species. If you think you can help, please contact: Mickie Richtsmeier (<a href="mailto:mickierich@stny.rr.com">mickierich@stny.rr.com</a>).</p>
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### **Report on the 2013 OLA Annual Meeting**

Saturday, August 17, 2013 was the annual meeting of the Otsego Lake Association. If you were unable to attend, here is a report. The meeting was held at the historic Camp Minnetoska, formerly the old Girl Scout Camp, at 759 Hwy 31 in Cooperstown. Thanks to the Clark Foundation for providing the meeting venue. Approximately 100 people attended to hear and see "A Morning of Lake Reminiscences and Nostalgia." This was one of the largest crowds to ever attend an OLA annual

meeting. The meeting started at 8:30 am with complimentary coffee and breakfast treats, followed by a formal OLA meeting and programs. The following is an edited version of Secretary Mickie Richtsmeier's minutes from the meeting:

**The Otsego Lake Association 2013 Annual Meeting** was called to order by President Wayne Bunn. Wayne welcomed all in attendance and introduced the Board of Directors. The board members present were Scottie Baker, Wayne Bunn, Mary Crumenthal, Pati Grady, Paul H. Lord, Carolyn Mook, Mickie Richtsmeier, David Sanford, Carl Good, and Joseph W. Zarzynski.

**Treasurer's Report** – Treasurer David Sanford reported that our current balance was approximately \$16,000 including the buffer strip fund.

**Election of President & 4 Directors** - Wayne Bunn presented the following nominations for the slate of officers:

Nominated: President – no nominee

Director (Otsego) – Scottie Baker

Director (Springfield) – Pati Grady

Director (Middlefield) – David Sanford

Director (Cooperstown) – Martin Tillapaugh

Since there were no nominations from the floor, it was moved and seconded that the secretary cast one vote for acceptance of the slate.

**Special Announcements, Photo Contest Winners, & Lake Citizen Award** - Wayne gave “Special Thanks” to the Clark Foundation, NYSHA, CGP, OCCA, Cynthia Falk, Suzan Friedlander, Richard Duncan, Paul Lord, Will Walker, Chobani, Stagecoach, Price Chopper, and Otesaga for their contributions to the program. He also recognized Pati Grady who chaired the event and her team of board members (among others - Carolyn Mook, who organized the food, and Mickie Richtsmeier, who organized the silent auction).

Wayne reminded the group about our OLA Website: [www.otsegolakeassociation.org](http://www.otsegolakeassociation.org) and that our E-Mail addresses of OLA members are used only for newsletters and announcements.

Attendees were encouraged to purchase OLA merchandise and to take advantage of membership applications that were available from the treasurer. Wayne also encouraged the membership to support the silent auction.

Mickie took the opportunity to recognize the individuals and businesses who donated to the silent auction: Natura Productions/Scottie Baker, Doubleday Cafe, Cooperstown Wine & Spirits/Andrew Oberriter, Ann Kiehm, David Kiehm, Mt. Wellington Market/Will Gibson, Joseph W. Zarzynski, Lake Classic Outfitters/Blue Mingo Grill, Firehouse Market Gourmet and Gift, Otsego Golf Club, Otesaga Resort Hotel, Cooperstown Gift Bags, Paul H. Lord and the BFS, the Gradys, and Richtsmeiers.

**The Otsego Land Trust/Otsego Lake Association Photo Contest Winners** were recognized by Wayne. The youth winner was Lizzy Falk who won four tickets on the *Glimmerglass Queen* and a one year membership in the OLA. Donna Greene was the winner in the amateur category and was given a guided tour of Otsego Lake on the BFS barge. Sam Ross won in the professional category and was given a gift certificate to the Blue Mingo and a copy of Richard Duncan's book—*Otsego Lake: Past and Present*.

**The OLA Lake Citizen Award** went to Doug and Donna Greene for the design and construction of wetlands for storm water run-off at their home in Pierstown.

Carol Seaver requested an opportunity to speak about **the NYSDOT Project on West Lake Road**. She told the group that her property was one of three camps above 5 Mile Point that the State plans to demolish for repair of Rte. 80. She reported that there will be legal issues about this, but that her purpose in speaking to OLA was to bring the State's design plan to the attention of the public. Carol raised concerns about the stripping and filling of the shoreline with no long-term sustainable plan for landscaping/erosion. She raised concerns that choices were being made for financial rather than ecological reasons.

A motion was made by Springfield Director, Mickie Richtsmeier, seconded, and unanimously passed that **the Town of Springfield repass a No Wake Zone Law with no Sunset Clause**. This would be to replace a previous no wake zone law that had expired and would be in keeping with the other municipalities around the lake.

**Proposed Otsego County Invasive Species Transport Law** – Paul H. Lord made a motion that it would be illegal to move any living invasive species material by boat and trailer in Otsego County. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed after a discussion about the lack of local legislation to address concerns regarding the spread of such invasive species as water chestnuts.

**Award to President Wayne Bunn** - Paul H. Lord called for a point of order, at which time he surprised Wayne with a framed certificate thanking him for his longest served presidency of the Otsego Lake Association (2008-2013). The certificate also recognized Wayne's development of programs with relevancy to lake residents. Scottie then presented Wayne with a special OLA T-shirt and Mickie also presented him with a framed vintage lake postcard. The membership expressed their appreciation for Wayne's service with a warm round of applause!



Paul H. Lord (right), an OLA board member at the 2013 annual OLA membership meeting, presents outgoing OLA President Wayne Bunn (left) with gifts of appreciation. Wayne served as president from 2008-2013 (Photo courtesy of Paul Donnelly).

**The program – “Otsego Lake Nostalgia and Reminiscing” - began with a great slide presentation of Historic Camps** compiled by Cynthia Falk (Cooperstown Graduate Program) with **Contemporary Views** by photographer, Richard Duncan. This was followed by a presentation on **Overnight Children’s Camps** by Sue Friedlander, Museum Consultant. After Sue’s presentation, Wayne opened the floor for people who shared many personal reminiscences and old photographs.

Wayne reminded folks there were stations to sign up for **Otsego Lake Oral Histories** with Will Walker (CGP) as well as examples of dive equipment and video of **Underwater Archaeological Finds** by Paul H. Lord (BFS Volunteer Dive Team), and a photo scanning station with Sue Friedlander. Everyone was encouraged to explore these.

### **Departing OLA Personnel and New Ones Come on Board**

Wayne Bunn has retired as the OLA President. Mickie Richtsmeier, who previously served as vice president and secretary, has replaced Wayne. Emily Davidson, a SUNY-Oneonta student, is the OLA’s new student board member and also is the OLA’s new secretary. Regrettably, two longtime board members, Carolyn Mook and Mary Crumenthal, have recently retired. Wayne Bunn has agreed to come onto the board as a director. We want to thank the recent retirees for their dedicated service to the OLA. There is a list all the current officers, board members, and other key OLA personnel on page one of the newsletter.

### **A New Reason to Fight AIS Spread: Waiting on Ecosystem Adaptations**

By Paul H. Lord

Folks who really do love our Lake sometimes wonder aloud about the point of our efforts to protect Otsego Lake from aquatic invasive species (AIS). After all, “They are coming anyway.” Certainly the history of invasive species spread supports their contention, but there are good reasons to “fight the good fight.” Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels have unquestionably changed our lake, and yet we fight to keep quagga mussels, Asian clams, spiny waterfleas, and water thyme out of our Lake. In the years since 1988, zebra mussels have spread from their North American beachhead in the Great Lakes, south to Texas, and west to California. These AIS appear unstoppable, but we fight on. Traditionally, we justify our efforts to thwart the spread of AIS as necessary to prevent widespread damage by AIS, to provide time to develop new control methods, to protect pristine waters, and to delay AIS management and property devaluation costs. We have recently focused on an important new justification for our AIS control efforts: to provide native organisms and ecosystems time to adapt to the AIS.

We have examples from 70 years of Eurasian watermilfoil research for the traditional justifications. We now know we can deny Eurasian watermilfoil a competitive advantage by denying it silt laden stormwater and salt laden meltwater. Without the silt and salt that buries and burns our native aquatic plants and insects that eat milfoil, native plants do compete well with the invasive Eurasian watermilfoil. We have chemicals that can kill 90% to 99% of the Eurasian watermilfoil in a waterbody while allowing most native plants to survive. We have local lakes with restricted access that still have native milfoils and no Eurasian watermilfoil with none of the costs of management or the

\$65,000 average depreciation per lakefront property caused by canoping Eurasian watermilfoil.

We have examples from the last 25 years for the ecosystem adaptation argument. Shortly after Eurasian watermilfoil was noted to be invasive and a nuisance interfering with fishing, boating, waterskiing, swimming, and any number of other lake activities, the Federal government sent a team of biologists to Europe to learn about managing and living with Eurasian watermilfoil. European biologists were puzzled at the interest, but cooperated. (In Europe, Eurasian watermilfoil is a rarely noticed plant.) They worked with their American counterparts and identified 25 small animals that ate Eurasian watermilfoil and kept it from forming the canopies that make Eurasian watermilfoil invasive and recreationally impeding. The American biologists returned home pessimistic about the possibility of controlling Eurasian watermilfoil because the small animals were not found in North America. Since that time, first a moth, and then a weevil, and then a fly and then another fly and then two different caddis flies have been found eating Eurasian watermilfoil. We are now manipulating lake fish populations to ensure small fish don't eat the insects that eat the milfoil.

Eurasian watermilfoil is not the AIS threat-of-the-year for Otsego Lake. With water thyme now in the Erie Canal, in ponds south of us along Rte. 17, and in the NYC metropolitan area, we appear surrounded by this new lake polluting threat. Possibly, we can keep water thyme out of Otsego Lake indefinitely. Even if that proves impossible, upstate New York initiatives have already identified herbicides that impact water thyme selectively. We have, this summer, noted two different aquatic insects eating local water thyme. Let's continue to thwart the spread of all new threats, but let's ensure we are ready for occasional losses knowing that the extra time will ensure each threat is easier to manage.

### **Submerged Cultural Resources Found in Otsego Lake by BFS Volunteer Dive Team**

Over 2012-2013, the BFS Volunteer Dive Team has found several shipwrecks and a sunken plane during the first two years of a multi-year submerged cultural resources inventory of Otsego Lake. The dive squad primarily conducts a variety of SCUBA and scientific diving tasks including installing navigation buoys, eradicating zebra mussels from Cooperstown's water intake pipe, and research dives to benefit the health of the nine mile long lake. Paul H. Lord, a scientist at SUNY-Oneonta, a Master SCUBA instructor, and OLA Board member directs the dive team. Most significant of the underwater heritage resources that were discovered are a wooden boat dating from just before World War II (1939-1945) and a sunken plane that crashed into the lake in 1948.

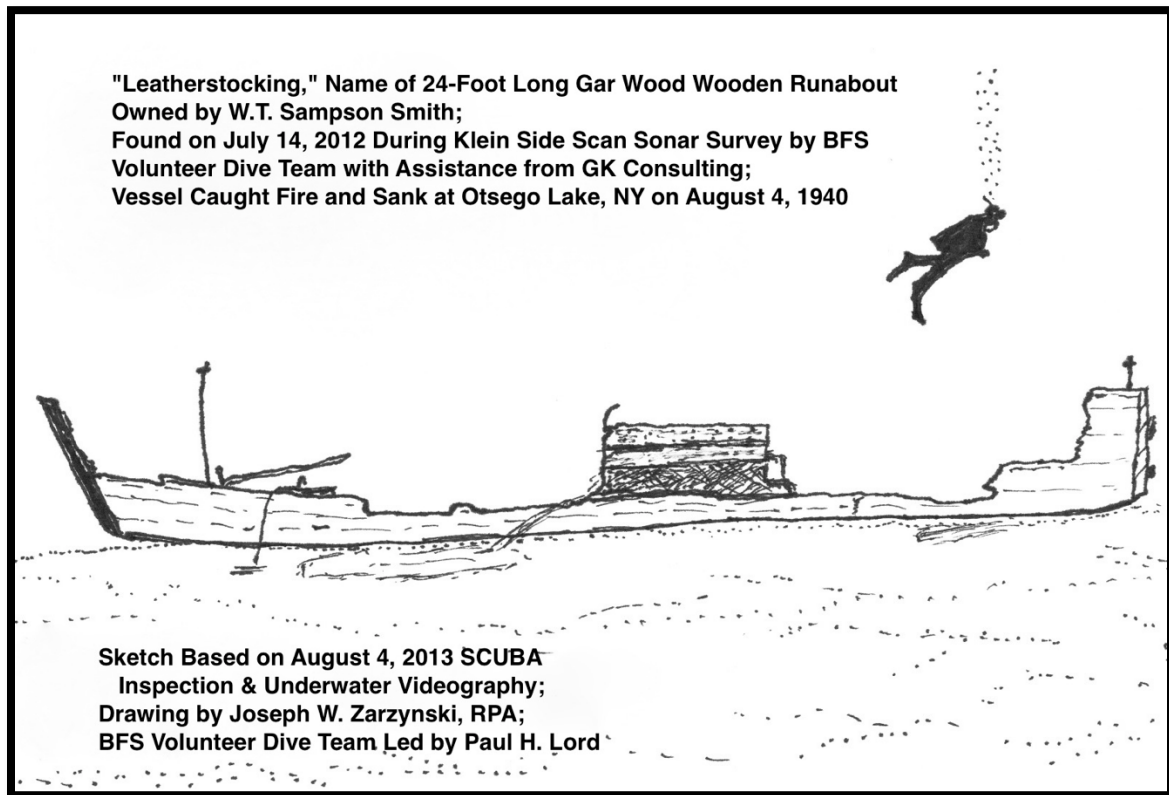
The sunken boat, 24 feet long, shows evidence of a catastrophic fire. The shipwreck was found in July 2012 during a Klein side scan sonar survey conducted by GK Consulting, a New Hampshire remote sensing company. Underwater archaeologist Joseph W. Zarzynski, a BFS volunteer diver, funded the sonar survey. The BFS provided the vessel and boat pilots. The sonar survey and dive work is part of a long-term project to map the lake to gain a greater understanding of its cultural and biological resources.

It was not until early August 2013, that BFS volunteer divers Bjorn Eilertsen, Zarzynski, and Lord first visited the 24 foot long shipwreck.

The historic record indicates that 73 years ago, on August 4, 1940, the *Leather-*

*stocking*, a wooden runabout, caught fire after leaking gasoline and burned for 45 minutes before sinking. Renowned Otsego Lake boatman W.T. Sampson Smith owned the vessel. Earlier that day in 1940, Smith's wife took the watercraft with some passengers out to patrol a Star-class sailing race. When those onboard the motorboat smelled gasoline, they returned the vessel to its dock. Sherrill Woodbeck then took the boat to motor it to the Smith boathouse for repairs. After departing the dock, the boat caught fire and drifted northward. Woodbeck fought the blaze with a fire extinguisher, but jumped overboard as the flames grew. A passing boat rescued Woodbeck. The boat burned nearly to the waterline and sank. A local newspaper reported that W.T. Sampson Smith said there was enough boat insurance to cover the cost of the 1938 vessel.

The *Leatherstocking* sits upright on the lake bottom. Its metal cutwater in the bow stands erect, but the fore deck is nearly burned away. The transom is burned, but is largely intact. The vessel's large engine block shows signs of the hot fire. Hull and deck debris lie inside and outside the sunken boat.

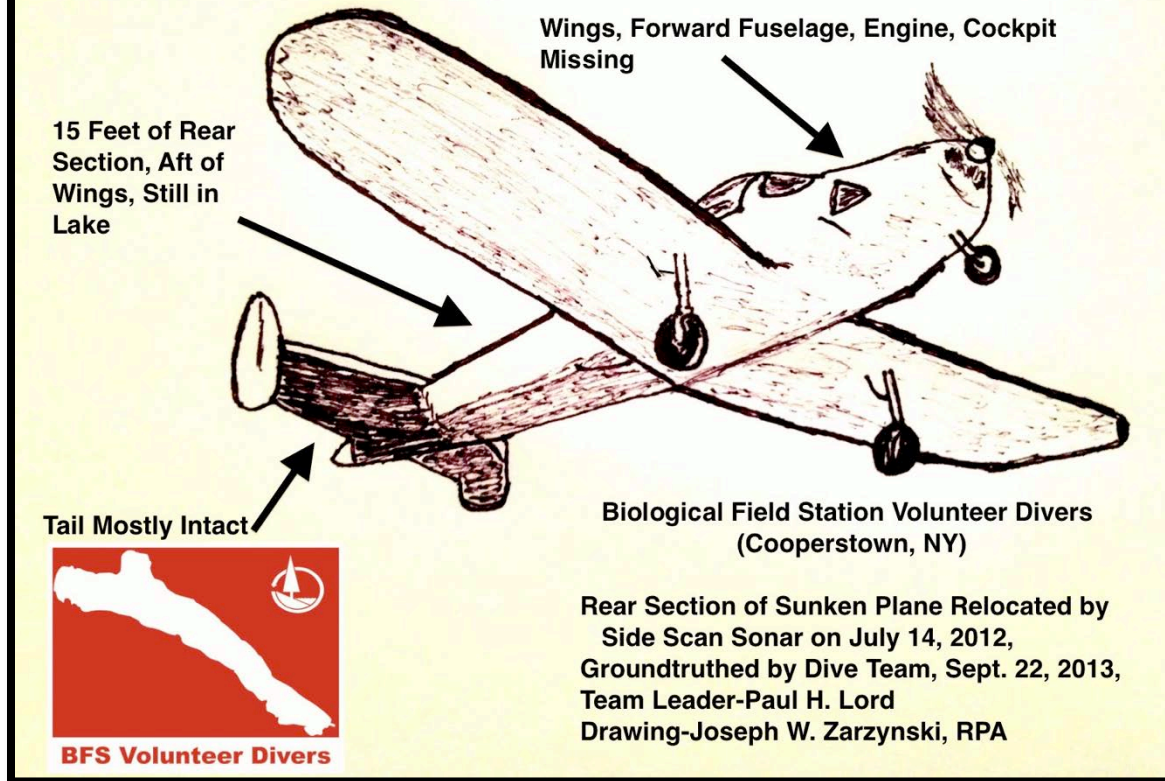


Because of its age and its role in the maritime history of the lake, the sunken vessel is considered "historic" and thus is protected by state and Federal laws. The vessel's name, *Leatherstocking*, is synonymous with Otsego Lake's distinct history.

The team shot video of the shipwreck, but did not disturb it. Shipwrecks fill in missing pieces of the lake's history and also attract a variety of biota. The BFS dive team hopes the shipwreck will not be damaged so that researchers in the decades ahead can use yet-to-emerge technology to gain greater information about the sunken watercraft.

On September 22, 2013, the dive team was investigating other side scan sonar targets from the July 2012 remote sensing survey when the group located the heavily damaged remains of an Ercoupe single-engine airplane sunk in Otsego Lake.

## Otsego Lake, NY: 1948 Ercoupe Crash in Lake



The aluminum aircraft, distinguished by its unique twin-tail configuration, crashed into Otsego Lake around 3 pm on July 13, 1948. Two World War II veterans, Edward Francis and Harold Caulkins, both aged 24, were killed in the aviation accident.

A pilot in another aircraft flying nearby saw the Ercoupe as it began a deadly tailspin from an altitude of 2,500 feet before hitting the lake surface. The bodies of Francis and Caulkins as well as some parts of the plane were recovered in 1948. Francis, a flying instructor, had taken off from the Cooperstown airfield. The Ercoupe was a lightweight, low-wing monoplane that started production shortly before World War II.

In 1964, 16 years after the crash, a Richfield Springs diver named Lee Couchman and his son rediscovered the sunken plane. Couchman reported he had been looking for the sunken aircraft “on and off for the better part of 10 years.” Couchman told a newspaper reporter that he brought up parts of the small airplane on the first dive. Couchman and another Richfield Springs scuba enthusiast, Terry Crandall, later made dives on the sunken plane wreck. Crandall reported that in 1964, they attempted to raise the sunken aircraft using a metal barrel and tire inner tubes as flotation. However, as they were towing the plane by boat toward the south end of the lake, it broke from its towing harness and sank, to become a legendary mystery of the “Glimmerglass Lake.”

“For decades this sunken plane has been a bit of a ‘phantom’, part of the lore of our picturesque lake,” said Lord. “I was wondering if our dive team would ever come upon it.”

The BFS Volunteer Dive Team and boat support personnel involved with the September 22, 2013 dive inspection were Lee Ferrara, Chip Dunn, Jim Vogler, Kaylee



Herzog, Dale Webster, and Joseph W. Zarzynski. Paul H. Lord oversaw the dive. Following the SCUBA unit's non-invasive inspection, the divers reported that about 15 feet of the rear of the aircraft, the section aft of the wings, is all that remains. The twin-tail is partially intact, but the fuselage is severely broken apart. Parts of the sunken aircraft were reportedly recovered during the 1948 and 1964 salvage efforts.

Because of its age, over 50 years old, and since the 1948 plane accident is significant in local history, the sunken aircraft is protected by state and Federal historic preservation laws. There are no plans to recover it. Following this season's shipwreck inventory fieldwork, the team will report to New York State the locations and details of the several shipwrecks and the sunken plane discovered the past two years.

### **OLA's "Most Wanted" Gifts for the Holidays**

Take advantage of our \$50 Holiday Special Gift Package: An OLA T-shirt and cap in a tote bag or a denim shirt in a tote bag. Contact: Scottie Baker (607)-547-5356.



This is a sample of some of the OLA items for sale (Photo courtesy of Scottie Baker).

### **Request for Seasonal Holiday Donation to the OLA**

Please consider making a seasonal donation to the OLA. Your donation goes directly into projects for the welfare of Otsego Lake. Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law. Mail your check, made out to the **Otsego Lake Association**, to: David Sanford, OLA Treasurer, P.O. Box 13, Springfield Center, NY 13468. Thank you.



**Announcing the First Annual “We Love Our Lake” Boat Parade for the Summer of 2014** As Otsego Lake lovers say goodbye to the 2013 boating season, the OLA has some exciting news for you to look forward to in 2014—the First Annual **“We Love Our Lake” Boat Parade**. The tentative date is July 4, 2014 at 6 pm. The judged decorated boat parade will have prizes in many categories. Boats of all sizes and shapes, powered by wind, electric, oar, paddle, and motor are welcome. Help us celebrate our waterway, Otsego Lake. More information will follow in the next issue of the newsletter. See you next year, together, on our lake!!!

### **New Policy on OLA Membership**

At the September 2013 OLA Board meeting a change in the OLA membership was approved. The membership will be July 1-June 30. Therefore, there will be no membership renewal form in this issue.

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