

## LAON 2016 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Sal Girifalco, LAON Board President, **welcomed a room of 60 attendees** to the annual meeting held from 1:30 to 3:00 pm at Town Hall on Saturday, July 9, 2016 and introduced the LAON Board members to the group. He also thanked two people for their service to LAON: Tom Curtis, stepped down as Secretary, but is remaining on the board, and Myron Kassaraba who is stepping down as a Director. Pat Daniels is our new Secretary, so all four officer positions are filled. We do, however have a need for more Directors, especially for Lake Penneesseewassee.

The **minutes of the 2015 Annual meeting** were approved by all in attendance. Sal suggested that everyone at the meeting visit [norwaylakes.org](http://norwaylakes.org) to learn more about LAON and to utilize multiple resources on the site that relate to protecting our lake water quality. He also encouraged everyone to sign up for volunteer opportunities on the attendance sheets that were circulated.

Tom Webster, LAON Treasurer, presented the **Financial Report** (as of July 8, 2016). In comparing the 2016 results with 2015, he noted our financial health is improving, but we need ongoing support. He also encouraged attendees to support and thank these sponsors.

He also reminded the group of the revenue opportunity available thru Amazon Smile: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/30-0034585>. This link is easily accessed directly thru the LAON web site. LAON receives .5% of the total sale amount for purchases made thru Amazon Smile. This is a donation from Amazon **at no cost to the purchaser**.

Tom thanked Steve Zeeman for the water quality testing and equipment he has provided. The savings from LAON doing its own water quality testing has allowed us to fund Courtesy Boat Inspections. Tom pointed out that LAON is going to set aside money for two funds. One is to purchase water testing equipment. We are currently using Steve's equipment, and should not rely on that forever. The anticipate cost would be \$6,000, with \$2,000 set aside this year. The other fund is for emergency remediation. We are continuing to learn from other lake associations about the costs and impact of invasive plants. We also learned that a diver and removal boat costs \$1,000/day and that it is key to respond quickly to such problems to reduce their spread. Having money reserved for such a contingency could save precious reaction time and significantly reduce total costs. \$9,000 was set aside this year, with our initial goal being \$20-25,000. In response to a question from the floor about the town payment Tom explained that the Town understands the impact of water quality on real estate values (and thus tax revenue) and that last year LAON received \$8,500. The payment for 2016 has not yet been received but we hope to receive a comparable amount.

Sal reinforced the need to acknowledge our Business sponsors and recognized: Ari's Restaurant, Bisco Properties, Cafe Nomad, Dow's Law Office, Norway Savings Bank, Oxford Federal Credit Union, Norway Laundry Services, Woodman's Sporting Goods, Edward Jones Financial Services, Paris Cape Realty, The Lake Store, and White's Marina. He asked LAON members to say express their thanks to these sponsors. He also stressed that the Town has been a wonderful partner and supporter of our efforts in many ways. **Protecting our lakes helps the whole town!**

Steve Zeeman covered our various programs to preserve water quality.

- He told the group that the money saved by doing our own water testing has allowed us to start the Courtesy Boat Inspection program (CBI). This has been a good early line of

defense in checking that entering boats are not bringing in any plant parts into the lake. It is not a 24/7 operation, so it is not a guarantee, but it does provide a high level of protection during our busiest times.

- Another program, Invasive Plant Patrols (IPP) is in its early stages, and needs to grow. It trains volunteers on how they can spot and identify potentially harmful plants in our lakes while routinely enjoying the lakes. It is part of a concept called "Eyes on the Lakes". A training session, known as "Plant Paddle" was held last year at North Pond. We would like to hold additional training in August for the other lakes, but need volunteers. Steve encouraged people to take photos of any suspicious plants and send them to him at the LAON website.
- There are five watersheds in our area (2 at North Pond, and one each at Penn, Hobbs and Sand Ponds; Hobbs and North Ponds feed into Penn). Our first full watershed survey was done at North Pond this June. Volunteers walked all properties and found issues, and identified potential issues and opportunities. This was covered in more detail by Michele Windsor later in the meeting.
- Steve reviewed the water quality report (see the LAON site for full details and ongoing information related to water quality). He highlighted concerns about oxygen depletion, water clarity, algae and phosphorus. He talked about the Secchi Disk readings and encouraged residents on all of the lakes to volunteer to help with water sampling. These samples are taken once each month on each lake from May-September. It takes approximately one hour to grab the samples. There was a good discussion amongst attendees about the test sampling and the work done by LAON as well as DEP and Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program to keep an eye on the quality of our lakes' water.

The LAKE SMART brochure was mailed with the annual newsletter. Everyone is encouraged to read this and use it as an ongoing reference. A copy is also on the LAON web site. Steve mentioned some highlights from this brochure noting the importance of buffers and other things residents can do on their property.

Susan Jacoby talked about the importance of being advocates with our neighbors and helping to educate people on lake quality. She reminded people to: give LAON their email addresses so that they can receive information; visit the LAON website; talk about LAON with their road associations (LAON Board members are available to meet with these groups); be present at public events. She asked for volunteers for the Oxford Food Festival to be held on Saturday, August 13. **LAON Outreach activities** include the distribution of rack cards at various locations around town, the LAON decal for members and sponsors to display in their car windows and the newly-developed information packets for new homeowners in the area. A suggestion from the floor was made for LAON to sell LAON-logo t-shirts or collared golf shirts. A show of hands of those in attendance indicated strong support for this and many potential buyers.....watch the LAON website for developments on this!

Sal polled the group to see if they felt LAON was doing the right things, and there was strong support. He then stressed the ongoing need for volunteers and specifically requested that anyone on Lake Pennesseewassee who would like to become involved with LAON as a director should let us know as we need more representation from this lake on the Board. **He stressed that without more volunteers, LAON might not be able to keep all its efforts going.** A lot is falling on the shoulders of a few. In addition to working on the many programs already described, we specifically need help with both our website, and our Facebook presence.

Sal also asked those in attendance if it was helpful to receive the LAON newsletter via email and the group responded quite favorably! He polled the group about the meeting date for the

LAON Annual meeting. After discussing having the meeting on the same date as the Norway Arts Festival, it was decided that having the meeting in July is a good idea since it allowed people who came to their camps late to attend, but that it should not be on the same day as the NAF as there are likely people who were unable to attend the meeting since they were busy at the Festival all day.

A concern about a feeling that the ordinance prohibiting fireworks was not being enforced was raised from the floor. Tish Carr offered to send LAON information about possible damage being done to lakes and wildlife by fireworks. Sal said the board would have to look further into lake impacts to see if it was an issue we should get involved with.

**Michelle Windsor from the Oxford County Soil and Water Conservation District** joined the meeting to talk about the **results of the watershed survey and planting to protect the lakes**. A copy of her presentation will be posted on the LAON website. Some of the highlights include:

- Goals of the surveys (awareness of our impact on the lakes; reducing erosion; improving water quality)
- Impact of gravel roads, loss of shoreline vegetation, erosion and unstable path access
- Driveways and parking areas (define, minimize, stabilize areas of erosion)
- Structure (drip line trenches, septic maintenance and protected exterior fuel tanks)
- Yard and recreation areas (limited/no fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides; minimal lawn; stable pathways; defined recreation areas)
- The potential for grant funding

Michelle talked about the importance of buffers along shorefront and beach areas. She also talked about the LakeSmart Program which is run by the Maine Lakes Society. She recommended using native plants, but avoiding invasive ones. She shared with the group **Bulletin #2500 published by The University of Maine Cooperative Extension entitled Gardening to conserve Maine's Native Landscape: Plants to Use and Plants to Avoid**. It is on our website, and copies are available at the Oxford County Cooperative Extension Office at 9 Olson Road in South Paris (phone 207/743-6329)

For individuals wishing to contact Michelle with specific questions, her work phone number is 207/743-5789 extension 101. Her email address is [oxfordcountyswcd@outlook.com](mailto:oxfordcountyswcd@outlook.com) and her office address is 17 Olson Road, South Paris.

The meeting concluded around 3:00 pm with many people staying for discussion with LAON Board members and Michelle Webster.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Daniels, Secretary for LAON Board