



INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION *in the Adirondacks*

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2017

2017 ANNUAL MEETING/PICNIC

Please join us for the 2017 annual meeting and picnic Saturday August 5 at the Byron Park pavilion. This year we will be discussing the management of target lake levels, invasive species prevention, water quality, and other topics of interest to the membership. Our guest speaker will be Erin Vennie-Vollrath, the Aquatic Invasive Species Project Coordinator of the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP). Her work has taken Erin to lakes throughout the Park leading APIPP's early detection and monitoring programs for aquatic invasive species, managing volunteer groups and surveys, and providing training. She will update us on the battle against the spread of invasives in Adirondack lakes and will comment on the recent discovery of spiny waterflea in our lake. The grills are fired up at 4:30, dinner is at 5:15 and the annual meeting starts at 5:45 over dessert. So please see the information about the meeting on the back of this newsletter and RSVP with the enclosed mailer or by e-mail.

A NEW NAME

This past winter we converted our association into a New York not-for-profit corporation. This change has been in the works for a couple of years and was approved by the membership at the annual meeting last summer. The official name of our organization is now "Indian Lake Association ADK, Inc." When we first applied for the name "Indian Lake Association, Inc.", we discovered that the name had already been taken by a lake association in Putnam County New York. We decided that given the numerous Indian Lakes around the country, we should highlight our distinguishing feature – our location in the uniquely beautiful Adirondacks. Hence the "ADK" in the new name, and the subheading "in the Adirondacks" in our banner.

The conversion to corporate form does not change membership terms or expiration dates, and the

directors and officers retain their same terms in office. Initially, this will not be a 501(c)(3) corporation, but the certificate of incorporation is written to allow application to the IRS for 501(c)(3) qualification later if it appears to be worth taking on the ongoing extra administrative work involved. Thanks to the generous, free legal work that Paul Kietzman provided, the cost of incorporating was less than \$300. The Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws are posted on the ILA website: www.ilaadk.org.

2016 ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW

The Association held its 38th annual meeting and picnic on August 13 at the Byron Park Pavilion. Joe Hancock and Pete Sinski manned the grill with superb results. As dinner wound down we started the business meeting. We recognized Joe Hancock as his final term on the board expired after nine years of service. Joe will continue to conduct the annual water quality testing program with Russ Evatt. The members elected Gail O'Brien to fill Joe's position on the board. Gail has spent almost every summer at the lake and for the last 18 years has worked at Timberlock in various roles. She is now the Assistant Manager at the camp.

The treasurer, Rich Vincelette reported that for the year ending June 30, 2016, revenues were \$1,906.00 and expenses were \$1,211.83, yielding a cash balance \$4,319.32 as of the meeting. The main expenses were for the annual meeting and picnic, printing of the newsletter and boaters guide, testing of the lake water quality, and the Association scholarship. There were 114 memberships as of the meeting, up from 109 the previous year. This included 37 renewals and 5 new memberships.

In the middle of the meeting, the skies opened up unleashing a steady downpour and driving winds. But the pavilion managed to keep us dry and the show went on as it must. Our speaker, local author and amateur

historian Roy Reehil presented a slide show featuring vintage photographs of colorful Adirondack hermits of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including French Louie, Noah John Rondeau and Old Lobb, narrated with humorous and informative stories about early back country life.

The minutes of the 2016 annual meeting are available for your review on our website.

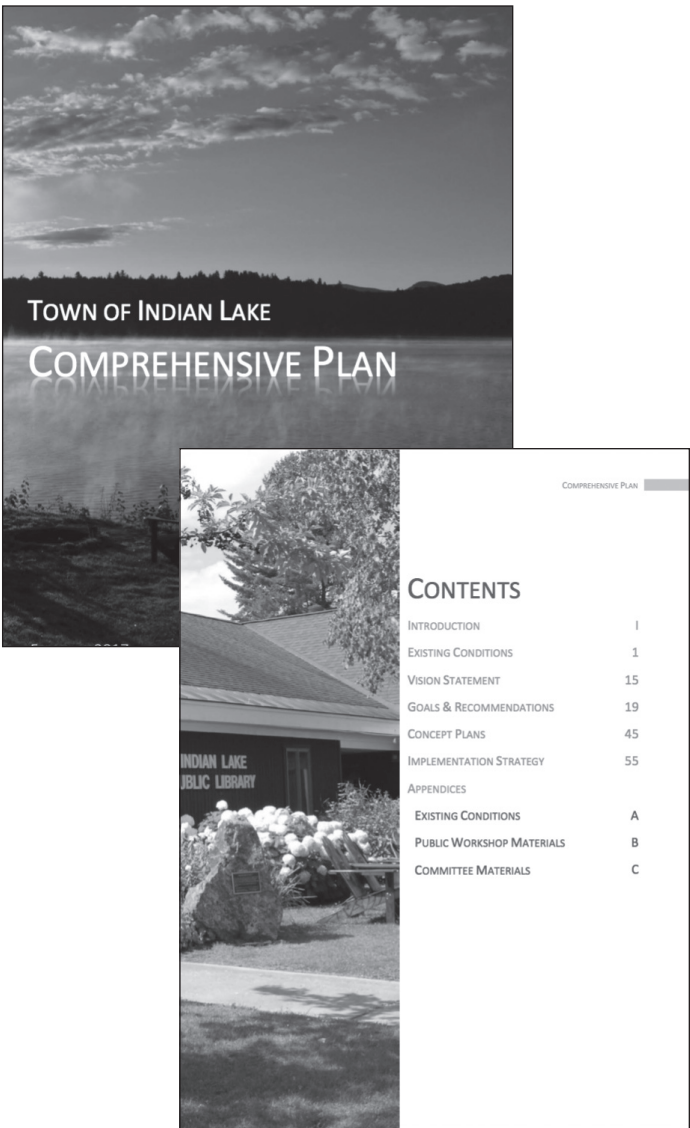
LOCAL NEWS & VIEWS

~ Jon Voorhees

While the rest of America consumed itself in political rancor during the past winter, Indian Lake remained an island of relative calm. No one here was pummeled for their political perspective or even had their lawn signs disturbed during the election. A vanishingly tiny fraction, compared to the national average, were condemned as “Hitler” or “Stalin”. Not many people even bothered losing their tempers around the old town.

Meanwhile, the functions of local government plodded along, unfazed by the national hue and cry. Property and school taxes for the coming year should not raise any eyebrows. Perhaps the biggest change you may notice is that recycling will be simplified so that all plastics (numbers 1 through 7) can be dumped into a single receptacle, regardless of whatever tiny numbers are embossed in those hard-to-read little triangles. Hamilton County isn’t sure yet when this change will be phased in, but it could well be in time for summer. The old system of separating and recycling only number ones and twos seemed to cause a lot of confusion, due to the fact that that’s not the way folks do it back home. In either case, no one makes any money recycling plastic. They simply lose less money by keeping it out of the landfill waste stream.

Indian Lake did complete a first draft of a new Comprehensive Town Plan, which includes many suggestions for sprucing up the town and making it more appealing to visitors. Not many of the suggestions will likely be affordable from local resources, but given the culture of New York State’s carefree largesse, funding will inevitably be sought from higher up on the food chain. The plan is available for inspection on the Town website. <http://townofindianlake.org>



What was all-in-all not a bad year for the town, did produce one very sour note: the discovery of spiny water fleas in Indian Lake, which had hitherto been the largest body of water in the entire Adirondack Park to be unaffected by invasive species. Although not a flea that bites humans, it is a food chain interrupter and a nuisance to fishermen, one of whom undoubtedly imported the beasts in their tackle or bait well when they put in at the State launch ramp. How the State, operating under a banner that proclaims the “Department of Environmental Conservation”, can justify operating this potential conduit for invasive species, without taking the responsibility for its safe operation is surely something that members might wish to take up with their respective State legislators. The amount of money devoted by NYS to resist the onslaught of aquatic invasives is a pittance; and Indian Lake has certainly not been very carefully protected to date.

A controversial proposal to convert the former Indian Lake Market (formerly Tops) building to a new, expanded firehouse was resoundingly defeated by voters last fall, due in large part to a decisive letter to the editor written by former Supervisor Dick Purdue, maintaining among other things that this was not the best use for the Town's premier commercial location and that it would screw up the parking for the Indian Lake Restaurant and Pine's Country Store. Public opinion was further inflamed by the fact that many townspeople were not even aware that the vote was taking place until Purdue's letter was published.

After the vote, the building's owner apparently abandoned hope of profiting from its sale and simply gave the Fire Department the building. There are no plans announced at this point of reviving the idea of converting the structure, but stay tuned for further developments.

Nature also continued its whimsical ways, and the past winter was another dry one, extending the year long semi-drought through another season. But it was not quite as bad as the previous winter. The lake froze before the holidays and to an almost normal depth of about two feet. Just enough snow managed to fall to get skiers and snowmobilers out onto the trails, and local businesses all seemed to survive the season to fight another day. After many years in a row of "too rainy", "too foggy", "too icy", or "too much 30 below zero", Winter Carnival/SnoCade seemed to hit it just right in 2017. 14" of fresh snow and sunny days in the +30s produced a glorious start for the many Presidents Week events. Eventually, though, it turned into too much of a good thing, when by week's end, temperatures soared into the 50s and a huge, early thaw began. People pulled their fishing shanties off the ice a month early, and the Golf Course and parts of Big Brook Road and Jerry Savarie Road flooded.

On the night of February 24 hundreds of Canada Geese were heard flying north. By the 26th temperatures plunged again, the runoff froze in place, and the confused geese were nowhere to be found. The flooding caused the gates to be closed at the Indian Lake dam, and the water (and ice) rose dramatically here. By late March it remained much higher than normal, and it's extremely unlikely that any draw down will bring it back to normal winter-end levels. A huge 30" dump of snow on March 14 brought seasonal totals to near normal. Although it came too late to be a substantial benefit to business,

it did restore sufficient snow pack for a normal spring melt. So, look for very high water this spring and possible damage to docks, resulting from that February rise of the ice. In addition to delivering more snow, March proved to be colder than December, January or February.

The Abanakee dam rebuild continued to be plagued with delays and mishaps, causing a succession of missed deadlines by the contractor, who failed to anticipate the vagaries of Adirondack weather. Work there has yet to be completed, and will necessarily be even further delayed so that spring rafting on the Hudson can be conducted.

Meade Hutchins, the town's tax assessor and building inspector announced that he will be retiring in June. The Town Board has appointed Peter Ghostlaw as his replacement as building inspector, and the two have been working side by side for the last few months to ease the transition. Hamilton County has decided to create a position of county-wide assessor, which the various towns will presumably utilize one after another as their aging assessors also reach retirement age. Meade was a familiar figure to many members. Well schooled in his trades and diligent, he was invariably the first person to work at Town Hall each day. Although his two positions are extremely challenging and not designed to win him any popularity contests, Meade always went about his business patiently and fairly, despite people's often irate responses. If any of you ever tried to protest your assessment, you know that he always dealt with hard facts and was seldom proven wrong. It's doubtful, that if any of you ever had your properties appraised, that the values varied more than a few percent from Meade's assessment. In fact, you probably wasted your money on the appraisal. You could've taken his numbers to the bank. The fact that two people are being hired to replace him attests to the value he represented as a public servant, as these two positions have grown in scope and complexity over the years.

Long-time School Superintendent Mark Brand also retired this past January. The School Board promoted Principal Dave Snide to replace him. Mr. Snide will also continue to serve as Principal, making him sole administrator. This is a response to a dwindling enrollment and the constraints of New York's "property tax cap". Mr. Brand accomplished a great deal during

his tenure at Indian Lake, including instituting pre-K; a foreign student program; a distance learning lab; a financial literacy and a parenting requirement for graduates; the bargain-rate local construction of a school bus garage and the maintenance program that has come with it, that dramatically extends the service life and safety of the school fleet; the inter-district, collaborative True-North consortium of local districts to share services, faculty, and other resources; as well as a pattern of shared services with the Town and County, long before such a thing became fashionable in the rest of the state. He navigated the district through all the twists and turns, false starts and futility of the Common Core and No Child Left Behind mandates. Through his years, Indian Lake Central School District consistently offered budgets under the 2% tax cap, remained financially sound, and did not have to cut faculty or programs under duress as so many other districts had to do; although the school has reduced staff size, through attrition, and begun to share positions with other schools, in response to our dwindling enrollment. Indian Lake has even been recognized through these difficult budget years as having an award winning Middle School - the smallest such school to be so recognized in the state. In addition to all this, Mr. Brand found time almost every day to welcome the kids by name into school in the morning when they got off the buses and to say goodbye each afternoon when they boarded their buses for home.

For a Town where population decline seems to have left barely enough people to support a viable community, the efforts of men like these, who tirelessly go to bat for Indian Lake, are truly a marvel. They provide a testament to what can be accomplished when people care. Somehow, just enough of us still seem to find Indian Lake worth caring about.

BOARD CHANGES

At the meeting last August, Vice President of the Association, Joe Hancock completed his final term on the board and Gail O'Brien was elected to fill the vacancy. At the reorganizational board meeting August 21, 2016, Maggie Evatt was elected Vice President. Don Woodmansee will complete his term on the board at the upcoming annual meeting, leaving one open director position, and we will have more openings in the future. We continue to seek individuals who would like to serve as a member of the board or serve in some other volunteer capacity such as surveying for

invasive species, communications, website maintenance, newsletter publication, member recruitment, or the annual picnic. Please contact any board member if you are interested.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues are unchanged from the rates that went into effect in 2014. The basic membership options are \$15 for one year or \$35 for three years. In 2014 we instituted voluntary higher levels for members who would like to contribute more, and so far we have received 38 membership payments at the higher levels. This generosity is helping the Association strengthen its financial position and better prepares us to respond as issues that concern our membership arise. The current membership dues levels are:

- Lake Level - \$15 for 1 year or \$35 for 3 years
- Baldface Mt. - \$25 for 1 year or \$60 for 3 years
- Dug Mt. - \$40 for 1 year or \$100 for 3 years
- Snowy Mt. - \$50 for 1 year or \$125 for 3 years

Please note that your membership expiration date is printed on the address label on the last page of this newsletter. Please check to see whether you are due to renew your membership.

ILA DICK MERRILL SCHOLARSHIP

The 2016 scholarship of \$200 was awarded to Noah Pine, 2016 valedictorian of Indian Lake Central School, for use in his pursuit of a degree in Diesel Mechanics and Business Management at SUNY Cobleskill. The scholarship was named after Dick Merrill, a long time board member, educator and lake advocate. It is awarded to graduates of Indian Lake High School who have exemplified good stewardship of the lake and the environment.

WATER QUALITY

~ Joe Hancock

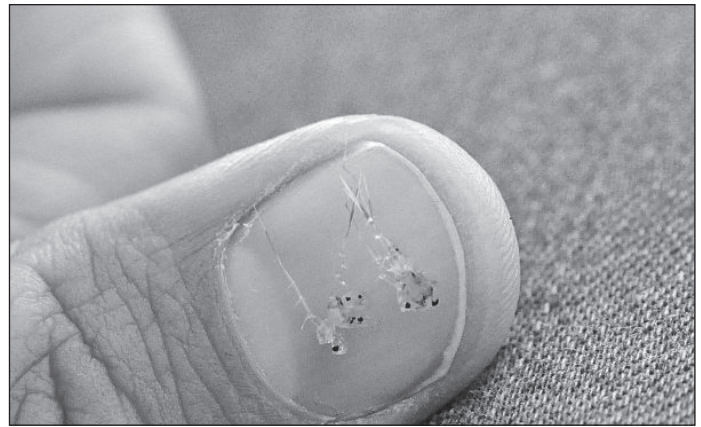
Last year our Association continued its participation the water testing program run by the Adirondack Watershed Institute at Paul Smiths College and administered by Protect the Adirondacks. Three times during the summer and early fall Joe Hancock and Russ Evatt drew water samples from the lake at the "deep hole" location, froze and sent them to Paul Smiths where they were analyzed, tabulated, and reported. They also conducted three Secchi tests for

water clarity. The report is available to our members at www.protectadks.org. A brief summary of the results indicates that our lake continues to have good water quality with little contamination from road salt, fertilizers, and septic systems. The lake has a very large watershed surrounding it, but the area has a very low population density and much of the shoreline is uninhabited, with some scattered boat access only campsites. The water clarity was good averaging visibility to a depth of about 15 feet. The chlorophyll, phosphorus, sodium and chloride readings were all in the lower ranges and showed no trend from previous years. The only trend that bears watching is the PH level, which averaged a marginally alkaline 7.1 last year. A reading of 7.0 is neutral and below that is acidic. This reading has been trending upward over the past few years, but so far is within the acceptable range. The current level is in the circumneutral range of 6.5 to 7.5, which is considered safe for aquatic life. The lake does have a significant flush rate, with a complete turnover rate of at least 1 time each year. This helps to maintain good water quality. Joe and Russ will continue to do the testing in 2017. This will be the 14th year our Association has participated in this program. Please remember to keep lawn and garden fertilizers away from the lake and keep all septic systems in good working order.

AQUATIC INVASIVES

~Gail O'Brien

As many of you already know the spiny waterflea has been identified in Indian Lake. Last August, shortly after our annual meeting, APIPP reported the discovery of this tiny invasive. Spiny waterfleas are crustaceans less than one half inch long with long barbed tails. They collect in gelatinous globs on fishing equipment and lines. The species consumes small zooplankton that is an important food for young native fish. The barbed tail prevents smaller fish from eating them. This invasive is particularly difficult to keep out of the lake due to its transmission on fishing gear that enters the lake at many points. The species had previously been found in neighboring lakes including Pleasant, Piseco, Great Sacandaga, Little Sacandaga, and Lake George. Research on this species is ongoing but presently there is no known management technique once the crustacean is established in a lake. Indian Lake had been the largest remaining lake in the Adirondacks considered to be aquatic invasive species free. We will be following the research on this issue.



Spiny Water Flea on a thumbnail

Last summer our Association once again organized a team of volunteers to survey the shoreline for invasive aquatic plants, and the good news is that none were found. Unlike many less fortunate Adirondack Lakes, Indian Lake shows no signs of the common plant invasives such as Eurasian milfoil, variable-leaf milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, and water chestnut. Each summer our volunteer surveyors divide up the 39 mile shoreline and search their assigned sections for plants that fit the profile of common Adirondack invasives. APIPP offers a free training program at multiple locations each June and July to help volunteers locate and identify the target plants. APIPP has informed us that training session dates and locations have not been decided as of yet but should be announced by the end of March. This past year our team of volunteers included Pete and Ellen Sinski, Jeremy Gorss, Ellie Menz, Paul Coppock and boat steward Chris Malin. There is a lot of shoreline to cover and we can use more survey volunteers to claim a piece of the map. If you are interested in helping please contact Gail O'Brien at: gailo@timberlock.com, 315-945-0568, or any board member.

For the last two summers, boat stewards have manned the Indian Lake DEC boat launch ramp, checking boats for invasives and familiarizing boaters with proper preventative measures. The Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI) final report for 2016 shows that Indian Lake had a steward at the launch 81 days of the season. There were a total of 3,915 visitors and 1,894 boats inspected of which 53 of the boats were dirty, and 19 carried an invasive species for a total of 65 organisms. There were 536 visitors who took one or more measures to avoid spreading invasive species by washing boats, draining bilges, emptying bait buckets, draining livewells, disposing of unused bait and drying boats. This coming season we will again have boat

steward coverage at the DEC ramp funded by the second year of a three year state grant to the Town of Lake Pleasant, in which the ramp is located. There is still a lot of work to do to prevent further damage to our wonderful lake. CLEAN IT, DRAIN IT, DRY IT.

NEW TARGET LAKE LEVELS

Last season, the Hudson River Black River Regulating District that operates the Indian Lake dam acted on the suggestion by our association and implemented new water level targets for Indian Lake. The revised targets provide for an earlier draw down after the spring flood to reveal beaches earlier, and a slight slowing of the rapid draw down in the late summer to extend the boating season. These targets involve increasing the draw down rate slightly on May 1, reaching a target on July 1 that is a foot lower than the old target, and on August 1 slowing the draw down so that on September 1, the lake is a foot higher than the old target level. On October 1, the draw down is accelerated to increase the lake's collection capacity. This is all subject to change due to unusual weather conditions and events. We knew that the new target levels carried a risk that an extremely dry season could result in late season levels below the target. Last summer proved to be that outlier year giving Indian Lake one of the driest seasons in memory. By July 1, the lake had dropped 6 inches below the new target and the trend continued into the fall. The Regulating District responded by cutting the water release rate from the dam to the minimum required for downstream needs, about 230 cubic feet per second, which is well below historical release rates. For the long term, historical precipitation patterns favor our new targets, and the Regulating District plans to

keep the revised target levels in effect for the coming season.

The Regulating District must perform a balancing act, particularly late in the season, to keep a sufficient flow in the Upper Hudson and support dam releases from Abanakee for white water rafting, while slowing the outflow to hit the higher targets. They also need to quickly get the level down after October 1 closer to 1644' (about 26' by the painted rock gauges) to prepare for heavy autumn rains. We are pleased that the Regulating District is trying to accommodate our concerns, but we need to remember that the District's primary statutory mandate is to regulate the flow of streams and rivers as required for downstream benefits such as prevention of flooding, and providing sufficient water flow for wastewater treatment, and hydroelectric plants.

This winter, Indian Lake has been high in February and March as they dam operator had to slow the flow into Abanakee Lake to facilitate the ongoing work on the Abanakee dam. That work should be completed in time to allow a drop in the Indian Lake level to make room for the big spring melt. Current and historical data on our lake levels and water release rates can be found on the Regulating District website: www.hrbrdd.com. There is also a link on our www.ilaadk.org website.

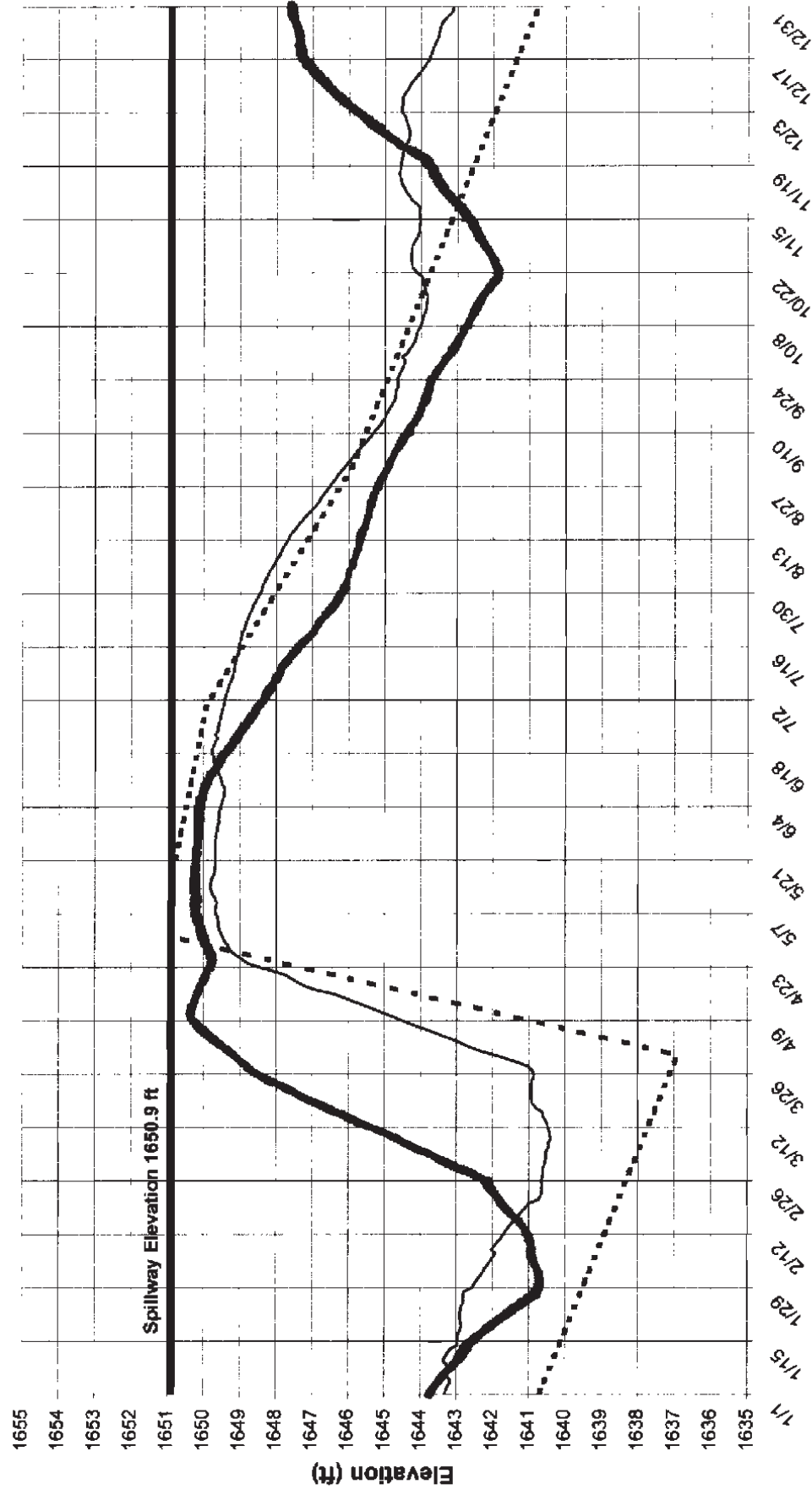
The regulating district has tentatively scheduled it's June 13 board meeting to be held in the Indian Lake Town Hall beginning at 10 a.m. The public is invited and will have an opportunity to ask questions.



Get ready, the ice is melting.

INDIAN LAKE WATER LEVEL ~ 2016

Below is a graph from the Hudson River Black River Regulating District that shows the target water levels agreed on between the Indian Lake Association and HRBRD for the lake (dotted line) and the historic average water levels (thin solid line). Added to the graph are the actual levels from USGS data (heavy solid line). The combination of the large drainage area and the relatively small outlets on the dam mean that a large rain event or rapid snow melt can make the lake rise significantly even with the gates fully open.



2016 ACTUAL ELEVATION - heavy solid line
 HISTORIC AVERAGE ELEVATION - thin solid line
 TARGET ELEVATION - thin dashed line



Indian Lake Association ADK, Inc.
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www.ilaadk.org

INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors 2016-2017

President – Paul Coppock 648-0762
Vice President – Maggie Evatt 796-3964
Secretary – Carmen Adler 845-679-5328
Treasurer – Richard Vincelette 648-5542
At-Large – Autumn Blanchard 648-5409
At-Large – Gail O'Brien 648-5494
At-Large - Pete Sinski 648-5980
At-Large - Jon Voorhees 648-0300
At-Large - Don Woodmansee 648-5649

ILA Website: www.ilaadk.org

INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING & PICNIC BYRON PARK PAVILION SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 2017

4:30 pm – Barbeque Picnic
5:15 pm – Dinner
5:45 pm – ILA Business Meeting
6:30 pm – Guest Speaker – Erin Vennie-Vollrath,
APIPP Aquatic Invasive Species Project Coordinator

ILA will supply the burgers, hot dogs and veggie burgers FREE to ILA members. There will be a \$5.00 charge for non-member guests. The guest fee will be applied to a new annual membership for anyone not currently an ILA member so please invite your friends and neighbors. Each family should bring a dish to share (appetizer, salad or dessert) as well as drinks of your choice.

Please RSVP with the enclosed mailer or contact:
Richard Vincelette – rbvincelette@gmail.com