

Cooperstown Crier

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## [Memories of lake, camps shared at meeting](#)

By Meghan McCaffrey Contributing Writer [Cooperstown Crier](#)

People who share in the common interest of preserving Otsego Lake met on Saturday as the Otsego Lake Association held its annual membership meeting at Camp Minnetoska.

People were invited to share photos and stories about their memories of the various camps at Lake Otsego, as the theme for the meeting was nostalgia.

The current president, Wayne Bunn, ran the meeting. However, he said it was his last meeting as president because he plans to retire.

The OLA also held a silent auction with photos of the lake, T-shirts, books and other Otsego Lake related items as well as gift certificates for lunch at local restaurants.

Paul Lord, faculty member of the State University College at Oneonta Biological Field Station and Biological Field Station Volunteer Dive Team, presented some of his findings about invasive species in Otsego Lake.

Lord has been working with aquatic invasive species in lakes and rivers throughout the greater Catskill Region for the past two summers, he said.

“What I’ve come to realize is that things leaving our lake are a threat to our lake and everything leaving other lakes is a threat to our lake,” Lord said.

“It’s not just inspecting boats coming in. It’s keeping stuff that belongs in the water off the roads so that they don’t move from one lake to another,” he continued.

Lord then mentioned Warren County in the Adirondacks that has already passed legislation that made it illegal to drive on county roads with any living aquatic plants or wildlife from Lake George in a boat or trailer.

Lord said there is no such legislation in Cooperstown and towns surrounding Otsego Lake. The best way to help prevent invasive species is by passing a law forbidding the movement of living things out of the lake and on the roads, he said.

According to Lord, there have been compost bins installed at various access points around Otsego Lake for people to put any plants they find dangling from their boats.

Someone in the audience asked Lord about enforcement of this new law and how that would work.

“It gives the lake stewards a little bit of authority, to say this is a law you need to abide by,” Lord explained.

It is also an opportunity to educate people about the dangers of invasive species and have law enforcement back up efforts, Lord continued.

Lord also said staff and volunteers will be needed to inspect boats as they come in and out of the lake.

The OLA honored Bunn, who had the longest served presidency of five years, with a plaque that commended him for his leadership focusing on OLA programs that helped bring relevancy to the association.

This was followed by a slideshow by Cindy Falk, a professor at the Cooperstown Graduate Program. The presentation was full of images of historic camps on Otsego Lake from the New York State Historic Association’s Smith-Telfer and Florence Ward photography collections. The historic images dated back to the 1920’s and some went as far back as the late 19th century. There were also modern pictures of the camps taken by Richard Duncan that showed just how much, or in some cases, how little the camps have changed.

People in the audience whispered words of recognition as the images appeared, saying things like “that camp is right next to ours.” One little boy shouted out excitedly when he recognized an old photo of the Kalorama camp: “That’s my house!”

Suzan Friedlander, a curator and museum consultant shared some photos in the 1920’s and 1930’s of the Overnight Children’s Camps including Minnetoska, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Ethical Cultural Society; an interracial, interreligious camp, Pathfinder Lodge, Camp Fenimore and Camp Chenango.

She read an excerpt of an article that was in the Freeman’s Journal in 1876 titled “Camp Life on Lake Otsego” written by a man at the Dugway Camp.

“I feel the benefit of the exercise of cutting wood for our campfire or catching the minnows with a net for bait. I have learned more about cooking within the past few days than I ever knew before.”

Friedlander explained that this was during a great outdoor movement in the 1870’s-1880’s that was sweeping the nation. People were discovering that being outdoors and getting exercise was good for you, so more people were coming to the region to camp, Friedlander said.

“The children’s camps were established here in the 1910’s and the 1920’s. The last camp that was established here was Otsego for Girls in 1944,” Friedlander said.

“The camps began to move out in the 60’s and 70’s largely because of the change in the idea of the family vacation and due to more strict regulations for camps,” Friedlander added.

Those who brought photos of any of the overnight children's camps were invited to have them scanned.

Will Walker, also of GCP, told everyone he had a listening station of some oral histories from his "Community Stories" project in the far corner of the room. He asked if anyone had any oral histories about Otsego Lake that they would like to tell him and his students.

Lord set up a table full of dive equipment and people could watch videos in the corner about some of his underwater archaeological finds. The day concluded with few people standing and sharing memories of Lake Otsego.

Burt Southworth stood to recount how he and his fellow camp members at Camp Chenango would go down to the lake in the morning to do calisthenics.

"Afterward, we all stripped off our pajamas and dove into the lake. As far as I know, no one took any pictures," Southworth joked.

The audience laughed and clapped.

For more information about the OLA or to join, visit the organization's website at [www.otsegolakeassociation.org](http://www.otsegolakeassociation.org).

- See more at: <http://www.coopercrier.com/localnews/x335455620/Memories-of-lake-camps-shared-at-meeting#sthash.gZRQJBwG.dpuf>

