

INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION *in the Adirondacks*

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2020

2020 ANNUAL MEETING/PICNIC

The 2020 annual meeting and picnic are currently scheduled for Saturday, August 8 at the Byron Park pavilion. This year we will be discussing lake level management, invasive species prevention, water quality, and other topics of concern to lake residents. The guest speaker is TBD, but the board welcomes any suggestions our members may have. We light the grills at 4:30 and dinner is at 5:15. The annual meeting starts at 5:45 over dessert. Please RSVP with the enclosed mailer* or by email and plan to bring your questions, comments, and your appetite. *Plans could change depending on COVID-19 developments. Please make sure to include your email address so we can notify you of any changes or updates to this event.

2019 ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW

The Association held its 41st annual meeting and picnic on August 3 at the Byron Park pavilion. Pete Sinski, Russ Evatt, and Tim Crowley kindly volunteered to man the grills and served up some excellent burgers and hot dogs to complete the buffet of sides and desserts. A big thank you to Timberlock, for once again generously helping to provide food and other supplies, as well as all the members who brought dishes to share.

The business meeting began with the election of directors. It was noted that the board had two of the nine seats open and we were fortunate to have two excellent candidates to fill those positions. The members elected Dr. Daniel Way and Martha Bisbeck to the board for 3 year-terms. Dr. Way is a retired family physician who practiced medicine in the Adirondack Park for 38 years. Dr. Way is also a photographer and a published author of three books that chronicle his Adirondack medical career. He and his wife Dr. Harriet Busch, who is also retired after practicing medicine in the Adirondacks for several decades, enjoy their time spent at their home in Birch Hills.

Martha Bilsback recently retired from a 30-year teaching career in the Rhinebeck, NY area. Martha and her husband Woody purchased a home in Sabael in 2006 and have now officially become full-time residents in 2019. Martha is very passionate about the health of the lake and our community and is hoping to positively contribute to this by joining the Indian Lake Association board of directors.

The members also reelected Gail O'Brien to her second 3-year term. Gail currently serves as our treasurer and her efforts to support the Association are greatly appreciated.

The attendees recognized the passing in May 2019 of Jeremy Gorss, who was a devoted friend and supporter of our association. Jeremy served three terms as a director from 2005 to 2014 with five of those years as the Association secretary. He was a staunch advocate for defending Indian Lake against invasive species and initiated the Association's participation in the Adirondack Park invasive aquatic plant program almost 20 years ago. Jeremy will be missed by all of us who knew him, and a moment of silence was offered in his honor.

Treasurer, Gail O'Brien reported that for the past year, revenues from memberships were \$2,170 and expenses were \$974.21, yielding a cash balance of \$7,893.80 as of the meeting. The main expenses were for printing and mailing the newsletter and Boater's Guide, the ILA Scholarship, the annual testing of the lake water quality, and the picnic. There were 113 active memberships as of the annual meeting.

The Association welcomed guest speaker, John Callaghan, Executive Director of the Hudson River Black River Regulation District (HRBRRD), who was joined by his two sons and HRBRRD chairman, Mark Finkle. John provided the attendees' insight into the

100-year history of the HRBRRD and their mission to protect public health and safety by regulating the flow of waters in the upper Hudson River and Black River to prevent flooding. John provided additional insight into the condition of the Indian Lake Dam and shared that plans to do any work on the dam would likely not begin until 2021 with notice given to shareholders beforehand. We greatly appreciate John's time and the HRBRRD's cooperation and continued willingness to work with the Indian Lake Association to set target lake-levels with property owners and recreational concerns in mind. 2019 annual meeting minutes are available for your review on our website: www.ilaadk.org.

ILA DICK MERRILL SCHOLARSHIP

Last year the Association's scholarship of \$300 was awarded to Indian Lake Central School Class of 2019 graduate Benjamin King for the pursuit of studies in sports management at North Country Community College. Ben is a Sabael resident, and an outdoor enthusiast, who appreciates the opportunities living here gives him to hike, boat, fish, and camp. Our scholarship was named for Dick Merrill, a long-time board member, educator, and lake advocate. It is awarded to graduates of Indian Lake Central School who have exemplified good stewardship of the lake and the environment.

LOCAL NEWS AND VIEWS

-Jon Voorhees

Brutal bookends bracketed our "off" season. Indian Lake got off to a roaring start with catastrophic flooding on Halloween night, followed by a blizzard on Veterans' Day. Up to 7" of rain on Oct 31 ripped a gaping 25-foot deep chasm out of Route 30 near Swifty's. A dozen or so similar washouts all the way down through Speculator, Wells and Northville resulted in the road being almost totally unusable and closed to traffic. But, after two years of cursing the New York State Department of Transportation for the deplorable condition of Route 28, we owe DOT a tremendous debt of gratitude for their amazing response in repairing this severe damage. The entire highway was reopened within a week.

The lake went brim-full during the storm, and a number of boats and docks (including the golf course bridges and the barge that was tethered to the Abanakee dam for repairs) all disappeared into the torrent and are now probably somewhere off northern Scotland.

The ground here was pretty much covered with snow from Veterans' Day until just before Christmas. But when people really wanted it, for skiing or snowmobiling, winter ran out of steam, yielding just a pitiful amount of the white stuff until the beginning of February, causing businesses to struggle through that vital part of the season.

Then, as you know, COVID-19 descended, casting a pall over everything. Even though Hamilton County had the lowest infection rate of almost anywhere on the planet, it was still smothered under the blanket of Statewide hygiene restrictions. These one-size-fit-all precautions, which lumped Hamilton County with NYC, Long Island, and Westchester, placed the local economy into what could be described as a "medically induced coma". The only discernable point of legal distinction between here and downstate was, for some unaccountable reason, that schools in Indian Lake and surrounding districts decided to close before those in New York City.

The enormous question marks hanging over this upcoming summer season bring with them a real sense of unease about the future. The first note of what could become a dirge sounded when the Adirondack Experience announced that it would not reopen at all for the upcoming season, leaving a significant number of local residents bereft of their expected employment. But at least an unheard-of number of second homeowners got to experience mud-season firsthand, believing that their odds of survival were greater sheltering-in-place here than at their primary residences.

Also sad for the local business scene, and a loss for humanity, was the unexpected passing of the wonderful Walter Harr in January. Walter's widow Nancy decided against keeping Marty's Chili Nights running without him, and a "for sale" sign was planted in the front of that popular restaurant.

Thankfully (miraculously), the closing of Marty's is probably not going to leave yet another gap on Main Street. Mary Frasier, an experienced and very talented chef is involved in a deal which will reopen the restaurant as "Mary's on Main". Ultimately, plans include a dinner menu. But for now, they hope to be up and running soon for breakfasts and lunches, with offerings that'll even include plant-based and gluten-free cuisine, while Mary continues her summer service

as head cook at Timberlock. Ben Frasier, Mary's son, who does blacktop contracting, is also investing in Main Street, converting the old service station at the Indian Lake Petroleum site to a sign-making business, called "Genuine Sign Design".

An additional "for sale" sign went up at Sandy Beach Camp, alongside the one at Smiths Cottages, making public what had been under the radar for a while. This continued deterioration of the accommodations foundation of Indian Lake's tourism industry calls into serious question the Town's willingness and ability to address this mortal threat to our local economy. It would seem that there are few weapons in the town's quiver that can be aimed at the problem. The principal ones would be zoning, which would be draconian or targeted tax relief, which would be controversial. Since accommodations are assessed on their re-sale value as second home properties, the present structure seems to provide an unintended incentive for these businesses to shutter themselves.

Stewarts finally consummated the long-expected acquisition of the old Pete Hutchins Floor Covering/Ste. Marie's property on the corner in town. The stumbling block had been the small carve out that had been made for a law office for Colleen Delcore, which had never opened.

The town finally agreed to swap the adjacent Chamber of Commerce Information Booth for the unused law office. In exchange, the Town receives title to the old Stewarts building. Preliminary plans call for that building to be converted to a welcome center for the town, once everyone else has relocated. Stewarts plans to level their newly acquired parcels this summer and build a major new store there, along the lines of their new North Creek facility, which will include pumps for diesel fuel and kerosene.

East of town, the DOT nearly completed last-minute patching on Rt. 28, late last fall, just in time for the plows to begin the annual "peeling of the patches". But a warmer than usual winter left the road in better condition than it has been in recent Springs. Don't worry, though, there are still more than enough challenges remaining on the highway's topography to allow you to continue what has become a tradition of exciting and eventful steeplechases, on the way to the front-end shops in Glens Falls. Major reconstruction of the road is

not scheduled until 2021. The rumor that they're going to replace it with the old, time-tested corduroy road system (see it on display at the Adirondack Experience in 2021) is probably not true.

In December voters approved a \$2 million roof resurfacing/window replacement project for the school. Because of the way that the State compels these types of projects to be funded and managed, taxpayers will be paying about \$6,000 per window. Only 18 people voted against the proposal.

The town's budget failed to come in under the "2% property tax cap" for the first time. The school's proposed budget was under the cap, but it was harder than ever to achieve that result. The school's total budget is now almost \$7 million.

In any case, the hole that COVID-19 blew in the State's budget is so overwhelming that all local projected budgets are rendered little more than wish lists; because State aid, requirements, and programs are going to be tortured beyond recognition. This has pushed concerns about the tax cap to the sidelines. Touted as a boon to taxpayers, the tax cap has proven to be more a fig leaf than a real saver anyway. Every taxing authority fears going significantly below their allocated cap, even if the funds aren't called for in a given year, because of the potential squeeze they might feel the following year. So, in other words, even if it were possible to cut a budget this year, no one would want to; because unforeseen expenses the following year would be unachievable without breaching the reduced cap figure. So, we go up about 2% every year, no matter the need. Additionally, capital expenditures such as the school's \$2 million project do not count against the cap, even though they grow budgets significantly.

In any case, indigenous taxpayers are proving ever harder to find in New York State. A census is supposed to be happening in the midst of all this chaos, which will measure the decline in population in the Adirondacks and the rest of New York State. In 2019 only 11 babies were born in all of Hamilton County. Such sad statistics do not bode well for the survival of any of the tiny school districts in this region.

Apart from expenses from the Halloween storm, the principal reason the town failed to come in under "the Cap" was continued travails with the Lake Abanakee

dam rebuild. Hiring engineers to quarrel with other engineers ate up a lot of extra dollars, some of which the town hopefully may be able to recover, through penalties and other terms of the contract. The Adirondack Lake dam project has also run into complications as state engineers and town engineers wrangle over spill rate and other obscurities. The start date is unknown.

Frontier Communications went into Chapter 11 bankruptcy in April after attempting to restructure their massive \$16 billion debt. Wall Street was not impressed at any of this, and Frontier's stock price descended to 20 cents per share before trading was halted. Frontier promised that there would not be any interruption in service, but it's doubtful that the restructuring will result in any improvement there or to its infrastructure.

A nearly forgotten tragedy has paradoxically caused a major ray of light to fall on the community. After graduating from high school in 1945, a young man named Patrick Kelly drowned in Blue Mountain Lake. Now, years later, his sister Joan Kelley-Ryder has bequeathed to the School, in his memory, a sum which may total over a million dollars, to be used for water safety, swimming, safe boating, and CPR/lifesaving programs. The school intends to collaborate with the Town, to decide how best to use this windfall and is soliciting the inspirations of citizens.

The ice left the lake unusually early this year: April 6. But the weather remained seasonably cold. So, it's uncertain whether the early thaw will lead to a more robust appearance of our first great herald of summer: The Black Fly. We can only hope, that as black fly season gives way to deer fly season and then stable fly season and all the other big fly seasons, that summer will follow its historic course; and we can all relax for a bit, recapture a measure of prosperity, appreciate what we've had and what we have left, and reconnect with the peace that our beloved lake has always offered. We've certainly been given enough food for thought and plenty of time alone in quarantine to digest it. I pray our conclusions will be righteous ones.

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

-Paul Coppock

Our team of volunteers was out on Indian Lake again last summer conducting the annual survey for the

identification of any invasive aquatic plants as a part of the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP). Ellie Menz, Pete Sinski, Ellen Sinski, Russ Evatt, and Paul Coppock took sections of the Indian Lake shoreline and searched the visible lakebed for any invasive species. Once again, we found no invasive species to report. We are fortunate that our lake has not suffered the infestations that many other Adirondack Park lakes have experienced. Invasive plants such as Eurasian watermilfoil, variable leaf watermilfoil, water chestnut, curly-leaf pondweed, fanwort, and others can choke out native species and interfere with boating. Indian Lake has an advantage of a very rocky shoreline, a seasonally fluctuating water level, and a high flush rate due to being in the middle of a large natural catch basin.

To date, the only invasive species that has been found in Indian Lake is the spiny waterflea, which is a tiny crustacean less than one-half inch in length, including its elongated barbed tail. The problem with this miniature intruder is that it consumes zooplankton that is an important food for young native fish, and the barbed tail prevents the smaller fish from eating them, potentially interrupting the food chain. This creature has been found in a number of lakes in our area and is easily transmitted between lakes on fishing gear, boats, and trailers. We do not know what the long-term effect of the species might be on the habitat, and the waterflea population can cycle through periods of decline and resurgence. There is currently no known remediation method for this species.

Invasives are spread from lake to lake primarily by hitching rides on boats, trailers, and fishing gear that have not been adequately drained, cleaned, and dried. For four summers, the Paul Smith's Adirondack Watershed Institute has used grants from the DEC to provide boat stewards at the Indian Lake DEC boat ramp to inspect boats for invasive hitchhikers before the boats are launched. Last year, the program provided a boat wash station in the parking lot of the DEC boat launch to clean any boats and trailers before entering the water or returning to the highway, if suspected of contamination. The boat stewards make sure that boats and trailers are free of visible contamination before launching, and they have been able to intercept invasives such as zebra mussels, water chestnut and Eurasian watermilfoil. It also appears that the stewards have played an important role in quickly raising the awareness of boaters to the need to drain, clean

and dry their boats, trailers, and fishing gear between launches. We expect the Indian Lake DEC boat ramp to be staffed with stewards again this summer and the wash station to be operating.

The Adirondack Watershed Institute reported that last summer, the stewards at Indian Lake inspected 2,188 boats and found plant or animal organisms on 26 of the boats and trailers, a sharp reduction from 110 in 2018. Six of the identified organisms were invasive including European watermilfoil, variable-leaf milfoil, water chestnut, and zebra mussel. They also performed 47 decontaminations at the boat wash station. The full report will be posted online at: www.adkwatershed.org.

Our association will be organizing a team of volunteers again this year to survey sections of The Indian Lake shoreline for aquatic invasive plants, concentrating on the most vulnerable areas. The aim is to catch any infestation at the earliest possible time when removal is easy before the plant spreads causing serious harm to the lake and massive remediation costs. APIPP offers free half-day training programs in multiple locations in the late spring and early summer each year. One online aquatic invasive species training session has been scheduled so far and is set for 10am - 12pm June 10. We are waiting for the announcement of the subsequent training session dates, which will be posted on the APIPP website: www.adkinvasives.com. We encourage anyone who would like to get involved to go to the website and sign up for a session. If you are interested in helping survey a section of the lake shoreline, please contact Paul Coppock at pccoppock@gmail.com, 717-460-4591, or any board member.

2019 WATER QUALITY REPORT

-Joe Hancock

During the summer of 2019 the Indian Lake Association once again participated in the Adirondack Lake Assessment Program (ALAP) which is a partnership between Protect the Adirondacks and the Paul Smith's College Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI), along with more than 200 volunteers across the Adirondacks. This is our 17th year participating in the 22-year-old program. Each year, the group collects water samples from close to 70 lakes and ponds throughout the Adirondack Park that are tested, analyzed and tabulated. More information and the full reports can be found on

their website: adirondacklakeassessmentprogram.org/

Three times during the summer Russ Evatt and myself draw a sample from the "deep hole" of our lake. Our sampling procedure involves three parts. The first part is performing a transparency reading with a colored disc, known as a secchi disc. This involves lowering the disc into the water using a tape measure until it is no longer visible. This measurement indicates the amount of dissolved organic matter that is in the water which can contribute to algae production. The second part is taking a Chlorophyll reading, which involves drawing a sample of lake water through a fine cellulose-acetate filter with the use of a vacuum pump. The filter is frozen and then analyzed in the AWI laboratory. This indicates the level of algae and cyanobacteria (which can produce algae blooms). The third and final part is collecting and freezing a lake water sample. This is primarily for detecting PH levels (acidity), phosphorous (fertilizers) and sodium chloride (road salt). The results from the 2019 season indicate that our lake is doing well, and they are very consistent with previous years. Road salt is a major concern, but at this point does not seem to be affecting the quality of the lake water. Our lake has a very high "flush rate" meaning it turns over completely at least once each year. Drawing from a very large watershed that is sparsely populated with very little agricultural influence also helps. We will continue our participation with the program this summer. We can all do our part to help keep our good quality water by keeping our septic systems in good working order and avoiding using lawn and garden fertilizers near the lakeshore.

NEW BOATING REQUIREMENTS

As of January 1, 2020, new education requirements for motor boat operators go into effect under the recently enacted Brianna's law.

If you were born on or after:	You will need a boating safety certificate when operating a motorized vessel in:
Jan. 1, 1993	2020
Jan. 1, 1988	2022
Jan. 1, 1983	2023
Jan. 1, 1978	2024

Certification generally involves 8 hours of classroom training. For a current list of New York training locations and times go to: <https://parks.ny.gov/recreation/boating/safety-courses.aspx>

TARGET LAKE LEVELS

Last year, our dam operator, the Hudson River Black River Regulation District (HRBRRD), was able to keep lake levels fairly stable throughout the boating season. Heavy water inflows last spring created a high starting point, that on May 1 was 9 inches above our established target level. HRBRRD was able to maintain water levels on a steady slow decline throughout the summer season hitting target level on July 1 and staying close to target into August before declining inflows bent the curve below the mark. In anticipation of the declining inflows, on July 10, the Regulating District cut the release rate from 218cfs to 154cfs and maintained the rate between 154 and 134 until mid-October. The lake levels compared to targets for 2019 are approximately as follows: May 1: +9", June 1: +5", July 1: -1", Aug. 1: -3", Sept. 1: -12", Oct. 1: -21".

There was an extraordinary event on October 31 when a storm poured massive amounts of rain on the area causing the lake to rise over 5 feet in one day, reaching a foot above the crest of the spillway sill. The storm was powerful enough to wash a deep gash in Route 30 near the former Swifty's. Our dam served its primary purpose of holding back the surge of inflow to mitigate the potentially disastrous flood downstream. Throughout the event, the HRBRRD was posting real-time updates on the situation on its Facebook page: www.facebook.com/hrbrrd.

The regulating district reported the following data showing the inflow and outflow rates from Indian Lake during the 2019 season as a percent of the historic average:

	Inflow	Outflow
May	141%	184%
June	142%	168%
July	51%	81%
August	69%	65%
September	51%	60%
October	125%	129%
November	170%	245%

The Hudson River Black River Regulating District is a body created by the State of New York with the primary purpose of maintaining adequate flow and preventing flooding downstream on the Hudson. The regulating district also has a secondary goal of supporting recreational use of the lake by aiming for established

water level targets that will help reveal our beaches early in the season and slow the drawdown late in the boating season. It can be a tricky balancing act that will be affected by weather conditions. The regulating district has cooperated with our lake association by trying to accommodate recreational concerns with these target levels, while carrying out the HRBRRD's primary statutory mandate of regulating downstream flow as required to prevent flooding, provide sufficient water flow for wastewater treatment, hydroelectric plants, and other needs. The data regarding lake levels and other information can be found on the Regulating District's website at: www.hrbrrd.com.

INDIAN LAKE DAM STUDY

The Hudson River Black River Regulating District is continuing its work on an engineering study of the Indian Lake dam. They are waiting for DEC to provide comments on the conceptual design plan the District submitted. The plan would make improvements on the earthen embankments, redesign the bulkhead gate structure for additional release capacity, provide restorative grouting and sealing of the dam joints, and make other technical changes to meet current DEC requirements. Once DEC approves a final plan, the District will solicit bids for the construction project. Work is anticipated to begin in 2022 at the earliest.

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 many 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.

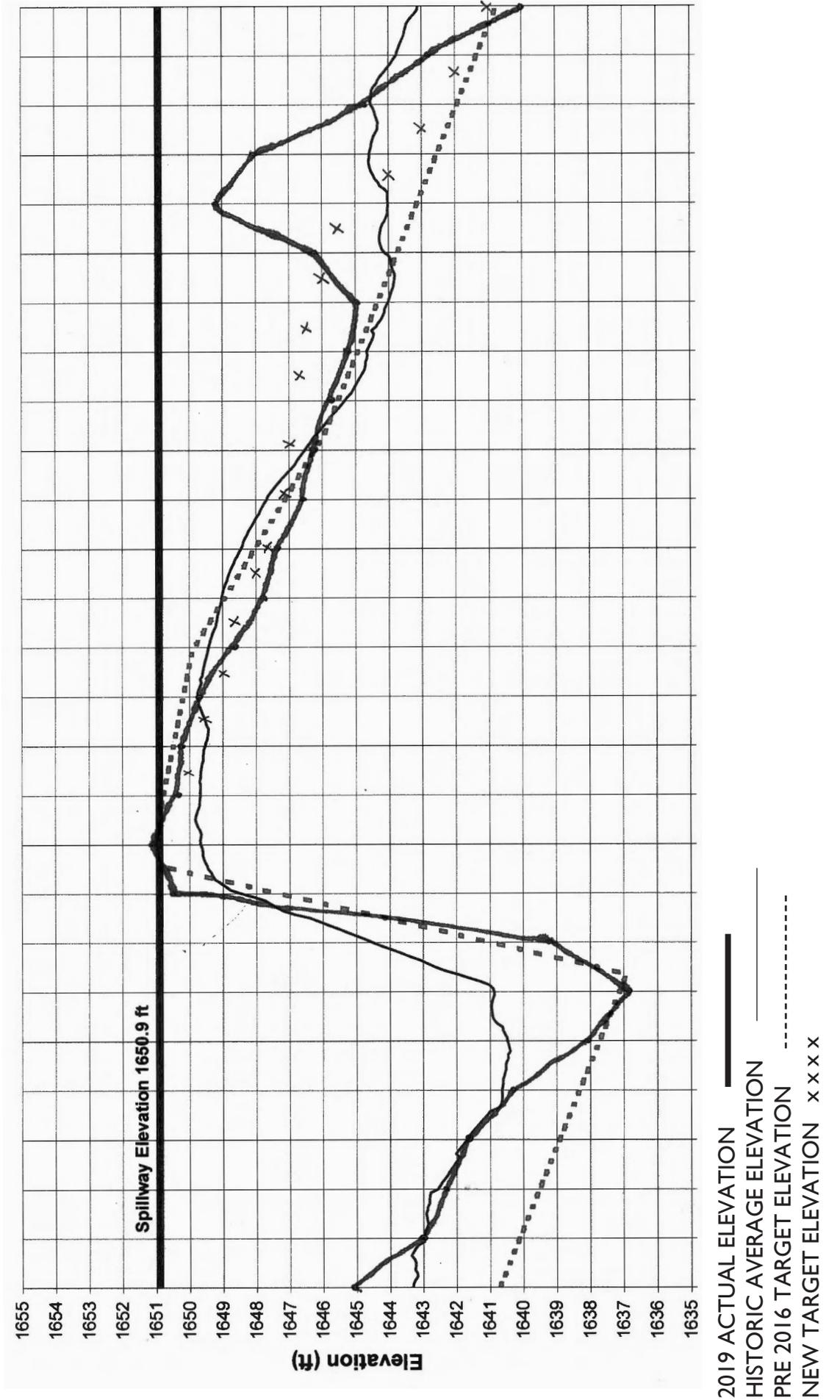
The current membership dues levels are:

- 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.

INDIAN LAKE WATER LEVEL ~ 2019

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 in effect prior to 2016 (dotted line), the new target levels effective in 2016 (small 'x's) 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.





Indian Lake Association ADK, Inc.
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INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION Board of Directors 2019-2020

President – Maggie Crowley (Evatt)
Vice President – Marsha King Purdue
Secretary – Carmen Adler
Treasurer – Gail O'Brien
At-Large – Jon Voorhees
At-Large – Pete Sinski
At-Large – Autumn Blanchard
At-Large – Daniel Way, M.D.
At-Large – Martha Bilsback

CONTACT US: info@ilaadk.org

ILA Website: www.ilaadk.org

INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING & PICNIC BYRON PARK PAVILION SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 2020

4:30 pm – Light the grills
5:15 pm – Barbeque Picnic
5:45 pm – ILA Business Meeting & Dessert

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:
info@ilaadk.org