

# Network News



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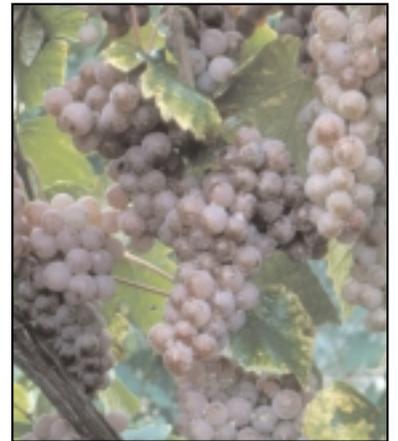
## Fine Wine, Courtesy of the Lake

*The following are excerpts from an article by James McGrath Morris, reprinted with permission from the Ithaca Journal, from the edition of May 13, 1983.*

It's one of those cloudless, still nights of mid-fall. The cold air blankets the fields, leaving a white trail of deadly frost on unpicked crops. The air is so dense you can almost scoop it in your hands. These are the nights that farmers fear.

But these are the nights, too, say vineyard owners along the shores of Cayuga Lake, when the lake works its magic. The steep slopes of the shore offer no perch for the cold, dense air to settle. Instead of coming to rest around the vines supporting the delicate grapes, the cold air continues to slide down the hill and onto the water. The lake, still holding its summer warmth, heats the cold air, causing it to rise and allowing more of it to drain off the hill. On a cold night, the temperature difference caused by this slight motion of air through the vineyards above the shore

*continued on page 7*



## Another Lakefest Success!

*By Roxy Johnston, Outreach Committee Chair*



*Trout Unlimited and the Fall Creek Watershed Committee provided a collection of stream 'bugs' that was a big hit.*

On August 25th, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network hosted the fifth annual Lakefest at Taughannock State Park in Trumansburg, NY. Approximately 150 visitors enjoyed an afternoon of education and entertainment. Every August, Lakefest provides an opportunity for local organizations to educate the public about important issues related to the Cayuga Lake watershed, and for local entertainers to showcase their many talents. Warthog, a local

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# The Network Welcomes A New Office Manager

Connie Kindig has been a resident of Ithaca since 1982, and has had 15 years of experience as an Administrative Supervisor at Cornell University. She is originally from Seneca Falls, where she received a B.A. degree from Eisenhower College. While working at Cornell, she earned a Masters degree in Industrial and Labor Relations. She loves the lake and for many years enjoyed her family's lake home in Romulus. She has very strong ties to the watershed area, and is delighted to now have the opportunity to contribute to the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network's efforts to preserve and protect the lake. 🐦



# A Message from the Watershed Steward

*Sharon Anderson, Watershed Steward*

To ensure that our Newsletter remains enjoyable, educational and inspiring for our readers, we are constantly looking for opportunities to improve. I would like to invite our members to provide comments, ideas, or even potential contributions. Please contact us in writing, either via email to [educator@cayugalake.org](mailto:educator@cayugalake.org), or via regular mail. Thanks, and stay involved! 🐦

# Network Launches Electronic Version of Newsletter

Starting with the summer issue, our award-winning newsletter is now available in an email version, as well as the traditional hardcopy. As a member you can receive both versions, or you can elect to receive only the paper or only the electronic version. The benefits of the electronic version include less paper used, ease of sharing with friends who are interested in protecting our beautiful lake and watershed, and in future issues, the ability to access more in-depth information related to key newsletter articles. We expect the email version of the Newsletter will arrive at the same time or even sooner than the hardcopy version.

If you are a Network member and didn't receive the primer issue of the electronic newsletter, we may not have your correct email address. Start receiving it by sending a message to [manager@cayugalake.org](mailto:manager@cayugalake.org). You may change your subscription to the electronic newsletter at any time. Each newsletter will have an easy link to note if you prefer to receive only the electronic version, plus a way to unsubscribe if you are not interested in receiving future issues of the newsletter via email. You can also request a text only version. 🐦

## Lakefest Success! *continued from page 1*

duo, started out the festivities with old time string band music, Tom Knight and his puppets were entertaining for folks of all ages, and the Tompkins County Dairy Princess tempted us with tasty milk punch. Representatives from several local watershed groups were on hand to meet with folks and share their ideas.

At the Annual Meeting, held in the late afternoon, the Board and Network members recognized and thanked the outgoing board member, Barney Unsworth, for his efforts and achievements during his term and our volunteer webmaster, Howard London, for all his work. The new board members were elected and committee chairs were announced for the upcoming year.

Thanks to all who volunteered their time to make Lakefest 2002 a success. And finally, thanks to all who attended Lakefest. We hope everyone had a great time and we hope to see you all again next summer! 🐦



*The Runoff Model is always popular with the youngsters.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Nutrient Management on a Modern Dairy Farm

Jon and Julie Patterson invite members of the Network to visit their family-run dairy in Aurelius, NY, for a tour and presentation on modern nutrient management techniques, designed to keep nutrients on the farm.



This fun and educational event is scheduled for October 26, from 10:00 am until noon, and will include:

- a visit to the Patterson Farm's manure separation and composting facilities
- a review of a working nutrient management plan and spreading schedule
- a visit with 800 cows and 550 heifers.

For more information, contact the Pattersons at (315) 255-2161. Attendance is limited, so RSVP early!

### Composting For Cayuga County

The Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District is conducting workshops for Cayuga County residents interested in learning how to compost.

Two workshops will be held at the District Office, 7413 County House Road in Sennett, NY, on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 22 and 23, from 7-8 pm.

There is a \$10 registration fee, for which participants will receive an Earth Machine compost bin – an \$80 value! (Limit: one per household)

Contact the District Office for pre-registration and directions, at 315-252-4171, Extension 3. Pre-payment is also required.

### Road Courses and Water Resources: A Workshop for Highway and Municipal Officials in Tompkins County

County and local highway and municipal officials are invited to attend a workshop about new federal stormwater regulations, the effects of road maintenance practices on water quality, and liability issues for highway officials. The workshop will be held October 15, 2002 from 8:30am to 12:30pm at the Cayuga Heights Fire Department, 194 Pleasant Grove Road, Ithaca.

Steve Eidt of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation will address the new regulations; Don Lake of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee will speak on best management practices for minimizing stormwater runoff from roadways; and attorney Andrew Leja will discuss liability issues.

Workshop sponsors include the Tompkins County Water Resources Council, Tompkins County Planning Department, Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization, and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network.

To register for the workshop, call Kathy Wilsea at the Tompkins Co. Planning Department, 607-274-5560.

### Independent Newsgroup Forming

Those who are interested in helping to establish regulation of jet-ski/motorboat noise and two cycle engine pollution on Cayuga Lake may email quiet-clean@yahoo.com in order to join the Cayuga Lake email newsgroup. 🐦

# New Stormwater Pollution Controls Are On The Way

by Jose Lozano, Ithaca Environmental Lab Director

In our watershed, it's pretty easy to see the effect of a good storm on waterways. Streams and lakes quickly turn gray or brown as water levels rise, and we know the color comes from silt and debris carried off the land as stormwater finds its way into the creek. As a Network member, you probably have come to understand that stormwater is a major concern for our watershed. Stormwater can pick up bacteria, pesticides, and oil as it washes across parking lots, farm fields and lawns.

Stormwater-borne sediments may carry heavy metals and nutrients that, according to a 1999 EPA Report to Congress, impact the biological, chemical and physical integrity of receiving waters, and are particularly detrimental to fish, benthic organisms and submerged aquatic vegetation.

Presently, stormwater collected by storm sewers in large cities is required to be treated before being discharged. But in smaller towns and rural areas such as those in our watershed, only a very small percentage of stormwater is subject to any control or treatment at all. By some estimates nearly 75% of pollution is attributable to stormwater runoff in rural regions. In recognition of this persisting problem, and in keeping with the requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act, the EPA has established new regulations intended to further reduce the collective impact of stormwater-borne pollution.

These new "Phase II" Stormwater Regulations will affect most communities around the lake to some degree. Most significantly, the larger urban area at the south end of the lake including Dryden, Cayuga Heights, Lansing, and the Town and City of Ithaca will be required to develop stormwater control programs by March 2003. These programs must be approved and fully operational by 2008. Other communities, and even highway departments and universities situated along critical waterways may be required to follow suit at a later date. One option presently under consideration is a plan that would be developed and implemented jointly



*Ponds catch and store storm runoff from new developments.*



*Stormwater-borne sediment enters the Lake from Cayuga Inlet.*

by all the municipalities. This intermunicipal cooperation could maximize environmental benefit for Cayuga Lake, and economize efforts and expenses associated with the mandatory implementation of the regulations.

The impact of the Phase II Stormwater Regulations will not be limited to the southern end of the lake. The rules also require that all construction and activities disturbing one or more acres of land be permitted by the NYS DEC to ensure that runoff controls are in place. (Previously, the permitting cut-off was five acres.) According to EPA, construction sites without proper sediment and erosion controls can deliver 10 to 20 times the sediment load than agriculture and more than 1000 times the load from forests. Clearly, there is logic to the enhanced degree of stormwater management slated for development activities across the watershed.

One important aspect of the regulations is the approach prescribed for municipalities as they develop their stormwater plans. The plans must include six basic components, three of which are straight forward: addressing discharge detection, construction site controls and post-construction stormwater management. However, the other three – public education, public participation, and pollution prevention – reflect a growing consensus that education and community involvement are key elements to effectively managing the health of our water resources. While these requirements will certainly place a new burden on governments in terms of administration and implementation, well conceived stormwater management programs could more than pay for themselves in the long run. The Network and its partners intend to work to make this vision a reality for the benefit of Cayuga Lake and its entire watershed. 🐾

# When the Lake Turns Wintry Gray

By Bill Foster, Watershed Educator

STORMS AND WIND CAN MIX SHALLOW PARTS OF THE LAKE AT ANY TIME, BUT COMPLETE MIXING IS A ONCE-A-YEAR EVENT.

Unless you're a limnologist or an avid angler, you may never have associated the word "turnover" with a lake. But, you might recall one particular day during a past fall when you looked out over the Lake and thought to yourself, "Gee, the lake sure looks wintry and gray today." That was probably the work of the Fall Turnover, and it signals approaching winter on Cayuga Lake.

The seasonal remixing of waters, or turnover, is an important process in most lakes that aids maintaining oxygen levels and recycling nutrients. Turnover is caused principally by seasonal temperature changes in a lake's surface waters, and may happen during the spring or fall. In Cayuga Lake, however, turnover occurs only in the fall. Here is what's happening:

During the summer season, lake waters stratify into three distinct layers. Topmost is the "epilimnion," which receives heat from sun, and oxygen from growing plants – this is where most biological activity occurs. On the bottom is the "hypolimnion," where colder water remains. Because colder water is denser, it stays on the bottom, and a zone of rapidly changing temperatures and conditions forms between the top and bottom layers. This transitional zone is called the "thermocline."

Over the course of the summer, these zones become more and more distinguished from one another as the surface level heats up and essentially floats on the colder water beneath. As cooler fall winds and night-time temperatures cause the surface temperature of the lake to drop, however, this divide begins to disappear. When the surface layer cools into the mid-fifties, its density approaches that of the colder water, and the two layers are ready to mix. A windy fall day, or a well-timed frost, can make this happen almost overnight.

Look for turnover in Cayuga Lake near the end of November or early December, depending on the weather conditions. There is quite a bit of variation in turnover dates amongst the Finger Lakes. The smaller lakes tend to turn earlier in the season, since they have less volume and store less heat. Once fall turnover begins, Cayuga Lake waters are completely mixed. Cold bottom waters reaching the surface take on oxygen and release other gases, which sometimes cause a slightly swampy, or "rotten egg" smell. The natural decay processes that produce these gases also enrich the up-welling waters with nutrients that are distributed throughout the lake during turnover. Additionally, sediment is brought up from the lake bottom, lending a decidedly cold, gray appearance to the lake for a period of time. But take heart – its a sign that our lake is functioning as designed! 🐾

## Did You Know?

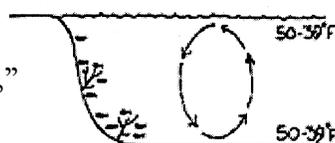
Water is densest at 39 degrees Fahrenheit – so, colder or warmer water is actually lighter. Consequently, the water at the bottom of a lake does not tend to go below this temperature during the winter months. Colder water floats to the top and ice forms on the surface, ensuring that aquatic plants and animals can survive below without freezing.

## WHO... Is Banging Those Drums?

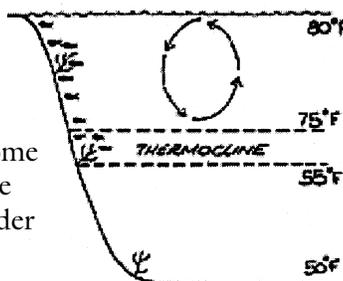
Have you ever walked beside the lake on a clear, crisp Autumn day, enjoying the gentle lap of water along the pebbly shore? Have you ever noticed a persistent, barely perceptible drum beat at the edge of your consciousness? Perhaps you've heard the Cayuga Lake Drums.

Explanations ranging from the scientific to the eerie have provided fodder for the legend of the Lake Drums for generations. For some, the subtle drumming is merely the release of gases built up in sediments over the course of the summer. For others, the explanation is more fantastic – the echo of long past cannon fire, or perhaps the drumming of a local lad who died in battle. Even the Native American residents of our watershed are said to have claimed the drums to be the work of an ancient chief, calling his people to war.

We'd like to know how many of our members have heard the Lake Drums. Please let us know, either via email to Bill Foster, at [educator@cayugalake.org](mailto:educator@cayugalake.org), or otherwise. If you have an explanation to offer, perhaps we'll include it in a future issue. If you've never heard the drums, either end of the lake is said to be a good place to hear this mysterious phenomenon... if you can find a quiet time to listen. 🐾



*Fall turnover completely mixes the lake.*



*Three-level summertime lake stratification.*

# Intermunicipal Organization Receives Funding

By Deb Grantham, Chair Intermunicipal Organization (IO)

THE CAYUGA LAKE WATERSHED INTERMUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION (IO) HAS BEEN AWARDED \$230,845 TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTING THE RESTORATION AND PROTECTION PLAN COMPLETED BY THE IO IN AUGUST, 2001.

New York State Secretary of State Randy Daniels visited Ithaca on September 4, 2002 to announce the award from the Great Lakes Coastal Watershed Restoration Program through the New York State Department of State. The Town of Dryden in Tompkins County submitted the funding application and accepted the award on behalf of the IO.

The funding will allow the IO to begin erosion control projects on streams in the Fall Creek and Cayuga Inlet subwatersheds in the southern end of the Cayuga Lake Watershed, where the topography is steep, tributary stream banks are heavily eroded and the tributaries carry significant loads of sediment to the lake. Techniques used to control erosion will include biotechnical methods of stabilizing streambanks, restoration of streamside vegetation, and construction of structures (including detention structures, where appropriate) to reduce peak flow. The IO will work with the City of Ithaca and the Town of Caroline to complement work being funded in Six Mile Creek.

King Ferry (on the eastern side of the watershed) and Sheldrake (on the western side of the watershed) subwatersheds contain highly erodible roadbanks and roadside drainage ditches that require stabilization. Techniques for erosion control will include restoration of disturbed areas within the right-of-way, including re-vegetation with suitable plant species. Targeted roads in the Sheldrake subwatershed include Hall Road in Ovid. Targeted roads in the King Ferry subwatershed include the Genoa/Lansing Townline Road and Lake Road in Ledyard.

The Great Lakes Coastal Watershed Restoration Program is one of several funding applications submitted on behalf of the IO since August, 2001.

Currently, the City of Ithaca Environmental Labs, Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the US Geological Survey are developing a monitoring plan for the northern end of Cayuga Lake, including Yawger Creek, that will be funded by approximately \$41,000 of US Environmental Protection Agency funding.

In addition to seeking funding, the IO has continued its educational work in the Cayuga Lake Watershed. Beginning in mid-August, 2002, the Education Committee of the IO began a 6-week radio campaign on proper use and disposal of household hazardous wastes and proper car maintenance and motor oil change. The radio spots will air 4 times a week on Lite 97 FM. While the first three spots are being aired, the committee is working on additional spots on groundwater, wells, boating and invasive species.

The Education Committee, chaired by Karin Harjes, is also in the early planning stages for a Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom. A local boatowner/captain initiated the idea and partners in the planning process include the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and Wells College. The Lake George Floating Classroom is being

used as the model for the Cayuga Lake project.

The IO's Technical Advisory Committee, chaired by Tom Vawter at Wells College, remains active. Data gaps in our knowledge of the watershed are a critical issue as we move forward in implementing the Restoration and Protection Plan. In March 2002, the committee held a Monitoring Conference at Wells College, coordinated by Linda Wagenet of the Cornell Center for the Environment with assistance from Wells College and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network. Scientists throughout the watershed and beyond presented their research and findings and considered the need for additional data, including data on groundwater and water quality in the northern end of the lake and the tributaries.

The IO continues to welcome participation by the public at IO meetings and on IO committees. Please consult our Web site ([www.cayugawatershed.org](http://www.cayugawatershed.org)) for more information. 🐦



*Education Committee Chairperson Karin Harjes (left) talked to dozens of people at Lakefest while staffing the IO's display.*

# Regional Envirothon Teams Look to Continue Success in 2003



*The winning team in Tompkins County, from Lansing High School: Megan Reinhart, Josh Reinhart, Melissa McClure, John Hatfield and Max Kraft. (left to right)*

The Envirothon is a hands-on environmental science competition for teams of 3-5 high school students. The Envirothon tests students' knowledge in the topics of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and the 2003 current issue – Agricultural Land Conservation and Preservation. The winning team from each county goes on to participate in the NYS Envirothon in May. The NYS winner will have the honor of

representing New York in the national Canon Envirothon, to be held in Maryland next year. Preparation begins during the fall semester for competition in each of three Cayuga Watershed regions.

## Western Finger Lakes Region

Seneca County Schools have participated in the Western Finger Lakes Regional Envirothon, held in Canandaigua, since 1993. All 4 Seneca County school districts, Waterloo, Seneca Falls, South Seneca and Romulus have participated in this competition, which also includes schools from Ontario and Yates Counties. A team from Seneca County has participated in the New York State Competition each year since 1993 with South Seneca placing as high as 4th overall. For more information, contact Jim Malyj at the Seneca County SWCD, (315) 568-4366.

## Southern Tier Region

The Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District sponsors the Envirothon competition for teams in Tompkins County, and they're looking to enlist more high schools. Students from Broome, Chemung, Schuyler, Tioga and Tompkins counties first compete at the local level, the Southern Tier Regional Envirothon. If you are interested in participating in this event, call Sherry Forgash at the District office at (607) 257-2340.

## Central New York Region

In 2001, the Weedsport High School Envirothon team won the New York State competition and placed 6th out of 49 teams in the National Envirothon, held in Massachusetts. For information on teams and events in Cayuga County, contact Sandy Huey, at the Cayuga County District Office, (315) 252-4171, Ext. 3.

The Envirothon is the fastest growing high school science competition in North America. And remember – there is absolutely no cost to the students or school to become part of an Envirothon team. The Envirothon is funded through the generous donations of local businesses, companies and private citizens. Hope to have you on board this September! 🐦

# Lake Effects Vineyard

*continued from page 1*

can spell the difference between success and failure for a year's harvest.

To grow grapes good enough for wine making, there are a number of climactic requirements, say experts. First is 165 or more frost-free days a year. Second, annual low temperatures should not dip below minus 5 degrees Fahrenheit. Third, grapes need good exposure to sunlight. The lake's influence on the climate of the shore makes meeting the first two requirements much easier. And its protection against frost is not limited to late fall. In the spring, when a frost can heavily damage the vine's new buds, the lake also drains the cold air off the slopes.

Robert and Mary Plane [founders and previous proprietors of Plane's Cayuga Vineyards] know first-hand about the benefits of growing grapes along the shore. The Planes moved cautiously as they turned what was once a kidney bean farm into a vineyard. Before planting any vines, they placed thermometers in the fields and recorded the daily high and low temperatures. It was then that the Planes first encountered the influence of the lake. Some fields were 4-5 degrees colder than others lying within 100 yards. The warmest areas had an unobstructed view of the lake. 🐦

## ...And the Lake Effect Continues!

Nearly twenty years after the accompanying article was written, the "lake effect" continues to have a very positive effect on wine production and the regional economy of the Finger Lakes. Today, a dozen wineries operate commercially along the shores of Cayuga Lake alone. While the slope and soils of the Cayuga shoreline are ill-suited for many other farming practices, the lake's influence creates conditions comparable to some of Europe's most famous grape-growing regions. Our wine industry is continuing to grow and change the local landscape. As you sip a fine glass of Riesling this fall, remember: the continued success of the Finger Lakes wine region depends in part on our success in protecting the quality and beauty of our watershed resources. 🐦

# Elizabeth W. Thorndike Receives Leadership Award

*Submitted by Barney Unsworth, Public Relations Committee*

Network founder Liz Thorndike received some recognition recently in the form of an Environmental Leadership Award from the New York Parks and Conservation Association. This sounds impressive – and it is, but reading the small print makes the recognition even more understandable. The award recognizes “an individual with a long and distinguished record of leadership on behalf of the state’s diverse and irreplaceable natural resources and environment.” Then the citation goes on to mention her “vision, leadership, activism and dedication, which have resulted in lasting contributions to the environment in the Finger Lakes Region, the Adirondack Park, and in the entire state of New York.”

While the citation mentions a whole series of initiatives to which the lady has contributed, it never touches on the one which has been most important to members of the Watershed Network. David Allee alludes to this in his comments about Liz and the award: “She has lived for many years on the shores of Cayuga Lake and was particularly effective in securing some of the early funding for education, surveys and membership recruitment for the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network.”

Now it becomes clearer. Those of you who go back to the Network beginnings will recall Liz as that smiling lady who tackled the toughest jobs in meeting after meeting – getting our name and our mission known around the watershed, probing to find out what the

principal concerns of our members – and our potential members – were, finding funds to help us become more than simply a good idea, etc. Always positive, always there with concrete suggestions, always among the first to help out – now we know what they were talking about at that reception in Rochester! Fortunately, David Allee and Jim White were there to testify to her efforts for the Network.



There is more of course – much more. David touched on a number of her interests recently, noting that, “...governors of both parties have called on her to lead problem-solving efforts in the protection of parks, open space and environmental quality...In founding the Center for Environmental Information in 1974, she started a movement that advanced public understanding, linking scientists, educators, decision makers and the public...She served for 15 years as a Commissioner of the Adirondack Park Agency...” and so on.

For us, probably the main point is that with her current work at Cornell and her continuing residence on the lakeshore, she can still play an important role in environmental matters here in the watershed. Congratulations Liz. We are fortunate to count you among our members. 🐦

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**The Mission...** The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network seeks to maintain and improve the ecological health, economic vitality and overall beauty of the watershed through education, communication and leadership.

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