

# Network News

*It takes a Network to protect a watershed.*



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## ***Ithaca, Seneca Falls*** **Volunteers are Thanked & the Public Updated about Hydrilla**

*Hilary Lambert, Steward*

*In back-to-back free events, folks around Cayuga Lake were able to attend a Hydrilla Hunters thank-you and public information event at the Ithaca Public Library (October 7) and the Seneca Falls Public Library (October 8).*

The Network sponsored the volunteer thank-yous on both evenings, with generous refreshments and grateful comments by Steward Lambert about the amazingly effective role played by the public this past year in learning about hydrilla and helping – in several ways – to look for it around the lake.

Lambert was backed up by Roxy Johnston, de facto coordinator of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Hydrilla Task Force, who said in both her Ithaca and Seneca Falls presentations that volunteers, who have been trained to accurately identify hydrilla and are actively engaged in monitoring docks and shoreline for its presence, have been and will continue to be invaluable partners in the ongoing multi-year program to eradicate hydrilla from Cayuga Lake and environs and prevent its re-introduction.

An estimated 150-200 lakeshore residents and frequent visitors obtained workshop training last spring to identify and report possible sightings of hydrilla, first in Ithaca and via subsequent trainings led by DEC, CLWN, Cayuga County, Finger Lakes Institute, Cornell Cooperative Extension offices, and multi-county Soil and Water Conservation district offices, among other cooperating agencies and groups.

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*The Seneca Falls get-together listens to Bruce Natale of Cayuga County discuss Asian clam and other invasive species of concern for Owasco and Cayuga lakes.*

Hilary Lambert

# Hydrilla: Deep Concern and a Need to Commit for the Long Haul

Hilary Lambert, Steward

In our fall issue (*Network News* 3/12), an article by Hilary Lambert attempted to end the summer on a positive note by saying that non-stop efforts by hundreds of people had prevented the re-growth of hydrilla in Cayuga Inlet this summer. CLWN Board member John Abel took Lambert to task for this too-cheerful assessment: In fact, hydrilla could re-emerge swiftly and take over the Inlet and south end of the lake next summer. Optimism, he feels, is irresponsible. It will cause us to let down our guard.

John Abel is a leader of the West Shore Homeowners Association, with members on the southwest shoreline from Ithaca north into Ulysses, and is working with many of them to foster a simple hydrilla monitoring and reporting system for their shoreline properties.

This effort will supplement the detailed aquatic plant monitoring work being done offshore by Racine-Johnson Aquatic Ecologists and others. While citizen-based science may not be carried out to the rigorous scientific standards of professionals, it can serve as a

useful supplement and as an early warning indicator that the experts need to take a closer look.

As is made clear in the front page article in this issue, Hydrilla Hunters and other volunteers will be essential to successfully eradicating hydrilla from Cayuga Lake. But — this means eight more years of focused concentration and steady involvement. The professionals are ready and willing to continue with needed herbicide and monitoring programs. Can the public's involvement be maintained, or will it flag and falter?

That, argues Roxy Johnston, would be fatal for eradication success. Johnston is the City of Ithaca's Watershed Coordinator, Lab Director for the City of Ithaca Water Treatment Plant, and leader of the Hydrilla Task Force.

In a personal statement submitted for this article, Johnston says, "As we find more hydrilla in the State I fear it will be harder to convince the DEC to focus on state-wide eradication. The alternative would be a Florida-esque situation involving lost water resources,

*continued on page 6*



*In order to truly eradicate hydrilla, south-end Cayuga Lake residents and users need to get accustomed to seeing these signs for several years to come, and be willing to support continued efforts.*

Hilary Lambert

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The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network thanks Westhill Graphics of Ithaca and Pioneer Printing of Lodi for their support and excellence.

# Thank you Maurice Hinchey!

Hilary Lambert, Steward

*A celebration to honor US Representative Maurice D. Hinchey—the man and his career—was held at Ithaca’s Hangar Theater on November 18. Serving since 1993 as the Ithaca area’s representative to Congress in the convoluted 22nd (formerly 26th) district, Democrat Hinchey is author and or supporter of many environmental facts of life that New York State residents take for granted.*

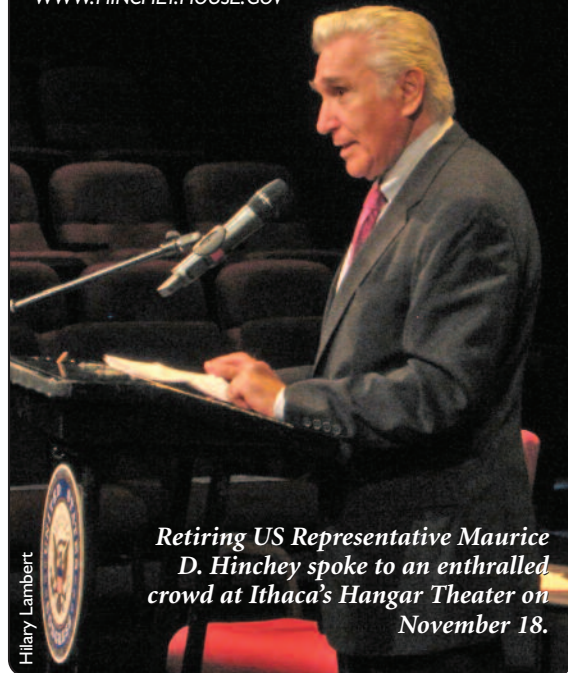
Beginning in 1974, Hinchey first served for eighteen years in the NY State Assembly, during which time he was Chair of the Committee on Environmental Conservation, as well as numerous other influential committees. Focusing here on his environmental and water quality protection work, he conducted an enduring investigation into the causes of the Love Canal toxic waste dumping disaster in Niagara Falls; helped pass an early law regulating acid rain; and shone a light on organized crime’s role in waste management and disposal.

He continued his visionary pro-environment work as US Representative, as an original co-sponsor of the Small Business Clean Energy Financing Act; helped organize the Solar Energy Consortium, and supported the Home Star Energy Retrofit Act. In the mid-’00s Hinchey was an early voice of concern about gas drilling and fracking in Pennsylvania and, potentially, in NY State; and introduced the FRAC (Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals) Act, which would bring these activities back under the control of federal laws from which they were exempted by the Bush-Cheney Administration, and force public disclosure of chemicals used by the industry. Although this bill, active in both the US House and Senate, has yet to be passed into law due to fervent opposition by gas and oil interests, it will eventually, thanks to Hinchey’s foresight and leadership.

At the November celebration, speaker after speaker from Tompkins County thanked Hinchey for his friendship and support of many local projects that help make the southern end of Cayuga Lake such a special place. After the talks were done, Steward Lambert thanked Hinchey on behalf of Cayuga Lake, and, his present ill health notwithstanding, wished him many years on the lake’s shore enjoying the beauty and watershed health he has helped protect and enhance. 🐦

## In his own words:

*“After what happened in the Gulf of Mexico, we have to do everything we can to ensure that any drilling that occurs is done in a way that protects our drinking water and natural environment. During my tenure in Congress, I have made environmental conservation and protection a top priority of mine, and I have opposed the reckless and dangerous methods of resource extraction currently being conducted throughout the country, including deepwater drilling, mountaintop removal mining and hydraulic fracturing. I have supported strengthening the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Air Act to ensure that the water we drink and the air we breathe is free from poisons and pollution. I look forward to lending my support to future legislation that protects our wildlife and wilderness, combats climate change, and promotes clean, sustainable energy alternatives.” – MAURICE D. HINCHEY, WWW.HINCHEY.HOUSE.GOV*



*Retiring US Representative Maurice D. Hinchey spoke to an enthralled crowd at Ithaca’s Hangar Theater on November 18.*

Hilary Lambert



Hilary Lambert

In our 12/3 Network News we failed to include one of our new Board members, John Abel. Here he is at the Ithaca Hydrilla thank-you event, speaking about the program that he and other members of the West Shore Homeowners Association have set up for lakeside property owners to report sightings of hydrilla along the southwest shoreline of Cayuga Lake. Thank you John for all you are doing, and thank you for strengthening the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network’s Board of Directors.

# I CAN Canoe Cayuga! or “My Epic Tale of Survival: How I Took on Cayuga Lake and Kicked Its Wavy Butt.”

By Brittany Toledo, CLWN Intern

*Brittany sings a sea chantey as  
Brenden keeps the canoe on course.*

Ashley Benning

*In the previous newsletter issue we shared photos of CanYou Canoe Cayuga 2012, the 24-mile long paddleboat event held on September 9, that was rescheduled from September 8 due to a freak windstorm. Brittany, undergrad at Wells College, now takes up the tale of how she and her two co-paddlers, Ashley Benning and Brenden Broadwell, made the voyage from Sheldrake Point to the Cass Park finish line and party. Many thanks to Brittany for this tale of high adventure on Cayuga Lake. – Editor’s note.*

It was September 9, 2012 and I had just awoken to a beautiful day, thinking I was going to get a chance to relax in the sun. I was headed out to act as a simple volunteer for the Can You Canoe Cayuga 2012 event. While I originally planned to participate in the most awesome-est experience as a canoe-er (like seriously, how many people have you heard say “Yeah I canoed all the way down Cayuga Lake.” Not many), I didn’t think I was going to be getting in the water after all. Oh man was I wrong.

When my companions and I, Ashley and Brenden, arrived at Sheldrake Point Winery (the new rescheduled starting point following bad weather the previous day), I heard the most wonderful news: they were bringing me in the canoe with them! I was jumping up and down like a little kid getting candy. Little did I know that I would be heading out on an adventure that would have me struggling with fatigue and completely failing to stay dry!

We listened to coordinator John Mawdsley give his

safety talk, loaded up our canoe, flashed some quick pictures, and shoved off to begin our epic quest to Cass Park. The first destination on our trip was Taughannock Falls, which is a total of 10 miles from Sheldrake Point by water. Not too bad, right? ...Right?

At first it wasn’t all that bad; it was relaxing, and I was taking pictures of the landscape and playing some motivational music to help us get through the journey. The water was calm and the sky was a little overcast, but as we proceeded the weather cleared up and the sky was the most beautiful blue I have ever seen. Eventually Ashley asked me to relieve her of her paddle for a bit, which I didn’t mind, but I have to say it was a little awkward sitting on floor of the old aluminum canoe trying to paddle. I felt like Nemo with his little fin!

While paddling south down Cayuga Lake, occasionally trading paddle-duty with Ashley, I became aware of how out of shape I was. In the back of my mind I heard a little

voice; *Are you crazy? You thought you could do this? You knew you weren't fit, especially in upper arm strength, and ha, you wanted to do the original full length trip?* Long before we reached our destination, I felt like my arms were going to fall off and I admittedly started to whine. Even the other two were beginning to get all sore and exhausted, and we came to the conclusion that this first stop would be the end of our journey.

When we pulled in at the Taughannock Park shoreline to a chorus of shouts and cheers from our fellow paddlers, I was so excited I was jumping for joy! (Well, only on the inside. My outside was too beat for jumping.) I also felt overjoyed to once again see "civilization", and I was even more excited for the food. Bagels, and bananas, and trail mix, oh my! At first I was a little disappointed we weren't going to be able to complete our little adventure, but then again I was relieved; I didn't think we would have the strength or the will power to continue. However, after having a little break and energizing food (every bite tasted and felt like heaven to me), the gears started turning, and I started havin' me some crazy thoughts. Maybe, just maybe we could do this; all we needed was a little break and to fuel up. Brenden seem to be thinking the same thing, and said (and I paraphrase), "Come on, we can do this. It's just a little bit further; it should be easier and go quicker since the next stop is only 6 miles." [actually 8!].

So once again we clambered into the canoe and were determined to finish what we started. Once we took off the weather slowly started changing, the sky was becoming darker, the winds were starting to pick up from the north, and the waves started to grow in size. In a way, I was glad there were waves because it helped make our journey a little easier. The waves were giving us a little push in the right direction, as long as we stayed on track, and lined the canoe up just right so that the waves wouldn't tip us over. Even though the canoe didn't tip, the waves were scary to me. We even took on some water as the occasional bigger waves hit us from the side! I was even scared for the other people that were taking part, especially the ones that were on paddle boards. But my friends reminded me that there were safety boats to help us if we got into difficulties, including one just behind us!

As we continued our way down-lake, one of the safety boats encouraged us and told us we were almost done and where to go. Head between the red and white pillars that we saw in the distance, they said. I guess it must have been our tiredness that made us misunderstand and end up on

the wrong side of a concrete wall. Also our heavy old aluminum canoe put us far behind the sleek kayaks so we weren't able to follow anyone.

This wall explained our earlier musings on how some birds were standing on water instead of floating. You could even see their little legs, but how was this possible? Our mistake about the route became evident when one of the safety boats called out to us...

"Where are you going? You're on the wrong side!"

We were all frustrated at this point and I was like *you gotta be kidding me! We headed between the pillars, and when it turned out we couldn't we went around, and now you're telling us that we are on the wrong side?!?! As we tried to escape the channel we were in, there were some intense waves heading right at us. We tried with all our might to*

get out, but we were getting absolutely nowhere. The safety boat operators realized that we were trapped amongst the waves and so they came and rescued us (THANK YOU). They saw that we had taken on some water so they traded our electronics devices (which were much safer on a large motorized boat) for a hand pump, better than our paper cup bailer. What a trade right?

The lovely safety boat folks were nice enough to let us go ahead so that we could paddle up to Cass Park on our

own, and they offered to reunite us with our beloved cameras, cell phones, and exceedingly wet sneakers when they came to shore. We finally made it, thank god, and it only took 5 hours 42 minutes to complete! (Hey, that's pretty good for three in a metal canoe with only 2 paddles!)

When it was time to get out, I was not prepared for the feeling that I was about experience: Everything, even my legs, hurt and felt dead, like I had no control of anything and could collapse at any given second. Then I remembered that food was provided in that tent over there. *Mmm... must get food in tummy now.* As I was tottering along very slowly to the food I must have had the stupidest grin on my face, trying to show my appreciation that I finally made it in one piece. After consuming some lovely food I fell to the ground and just lay there not wanting to move.

When I finally got back to my dorm I took a nice hot shower, and crashed, not looking forward to tomorrow since the pain would be 10 times worse than it already was.

It was 100 times worse.

But it was totally worth it, and I can't wait 'til next year (but I will train more next time.)

*With thanks to Ashley Benning for her editorial input.* 🐦



From left, Brenden Broadwell, Ashley Benning and author Brittany Toledo successfully completed their epic journey.

Hilary Lambert

## **Ithaca, Seneca Falls... Volunteers are Thanked & the Public Updated about Hydrilla** *continued from cover*

Supplementing this widespread Hydrilla Hunter teamwork were the seven Water Stewards deployed across the Finger Lakes in the summer of 2012, thanks to funding obtained by Cayuga County and the Finger Lakes Institute (FLI). As exemplified by the excellent Daniel Munsell, who spoke at the Ithaca get-together, these college-age Stewards patrolled seven of our beautiful lakes, educating water users about hydrilla and other invasives, carrying out voluntary watercraft inspections, and teaching the need to remove aquatic plants from boats and trailers prior to transporting them to other water bodies.

Speakers at the Ithaca event also included representatives from the Department of Health, the Citizens Science Institute, Floating Classroom, and others who stressed the need to continue this work for several years into the future, using all available professional and trained volunteer resources. In Seneca Falls, Roxy Johnston and Bruce Natale of Cayuga County spoke with the smaller group, comprised largely of waterfront landowners, who

are eager to help develop even better outreach and reporting for 2013.

Johnston and Natale are participants with several others in a regular conference call meeting between the north and south ends of the lake, set up by Lambert to facilitate communications and resources sharing across the entire watershed. This wider effort is supplemented by Lambert's work with the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance (FLRWA), an organization formed by lake groups in 2010 to deal with Finger Lakes watershed protection challenges. Working with the FLI and other entities, the FLRWA will share lessons learned about hydrilla and other invasives across the Finger Lakes region during 2013 ([www.flrwa.org](http://www.flrwa.org)). As the Network's slogan says, "It takes a Network to protect a watershed."

Want to get involved, become a Hydrilla Hunter, and be added to the list of those who receive updates via our occasional email newsletter, *Hydrilla Hunters Happenings?* Contact Ashley Benning at: [ambismb@gmail.com](mailto:ambismb@gmail.com). 🐾



*At the crowded Ithaca hydrilla volunteer thank-you and information update, Water Steward Dan Munsell and CLWN member Dave Heck get acquainted.*

## **Hydrilla: Deep Concern and a Need to Commit for the Long Haul** *continued from page 2*

permanent herbicides, carp use or mowing, and permanent economic hits to water resource use.

"These losses cannot be over-stressed. There really is no middle ground with hydrilla but the State — and region — must act decisively now. They should pass a state-level boater transport law. Warren, Tompkins and Schuyler counties already have. Yates County is looking into one. The Office of Invasive Species needs a rapid response team — and all of the state and federal permitting agencies need to have a rapid response process, along with adequate funding.

"These are not novel concepts. Other states have better laws in place. A few states have better procedures in place. We can hold the Inlet hydrilla in place and eventually eradicate it — but for long term success on

many invasives species fronts, we need better state and federal processes."

Along with these Cayuga Lake-focused concerns about hydrilla are many other invasives that are nosing their way into our region due to climate change and global warming. Immediately worrisome is the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, which has the potential to wipe out our hemlocks and along with them the cool shade and erosion-preventing root systems that keep our creeks cool and clean.

Watch for *Network News* articles, community conference events, and information on our soon-to-be-re-launched new website, on the need for us to start adapting now to a rapidly changing climate future. 🐾

# Please Renew Your Membership, Join or Donate to the Network



Your active participation in volunteer efforts such as fracking meetings and hearings, stream clean ups, and monitoring aquatic weed threats to Cayuga Lake demonstrates the love we share for our lake and creeks.

Our lake and watershed are facing historic changes from proposed gas drilling and associated land-use impacts. We have been in the forefront of the fight to prevent gas drilling from having adverse impacts, here in our watershed and across the Finger Lakes region. Other challenges, such as the invasive hydrilla crisis that engulfed the southern end of the lake in 2011, have kept us – your Steward, Interns and Board – very busy and in the forefront of action to protect your lake and creeks.

## Help Support Our Work for Cayuga Lake

These are times of rapid change, all the more reason to support a strong, effective organization working to protect your lake, creeks, streams, wetlands, surrounding landscapes and communities that we all enjoy in this incomparable region. Without clean water, everything else loses value.

**Facing big challenges in the Cayuga Lake watershed, we need to respond effectively. Your membership adds strength. Joining or donating is easy to do!**

**MAIL:** Fill out the information below, select a donation level, and mail the form with your check to Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, P.O. Box 348, Aurora, NY 13026

**PAYPAL:** Join or donate via your PayPal/credit card online at [www.cayugalake.org](http://www.cayugalake.org).

**AS A MEMBER, YOU'LL RECEIVE** four issues of *Network News*, information about upcoming events, trainings and volunteer opportunities, and the satisfaction of knowing that you are supporting a local organization that is making a real difference.

- I am joining the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network with the enclosed contribution.
- I am renewing my membership with the enclosed contribution.
- Please accept the enclosed donation to support lake and watershed protection.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_ May we add you to our listserv?  Yes  No

Please Select the Support Level You Prefer:

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|--|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Headwater Donor       | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Farm/Small Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Organization or Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual             | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student/Senior      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                 |   |

***Your Contributions to the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network are Tax Deductible.***

## The Mission...

*The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network identifies key threats to Cayuga Lake and its watershed, and it advocates for solutions that support a healthy environment and vibrant communities.*



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## in the Cayuga Lake Watershed

### 2013 Creek and Lakefront Cleanups EMBRACE THE LAKE!

Cayuga Lake and its creeks are at the heart and center of our lives, and need our celebration and protection. The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network urges people to embrace Cayuga Lake with creek and lakefront cleanups. We want to completely embrace the lake with cleanups!

#### Plan ahead now, for early to mid-spring 2013 cleanups:

Is your group interested in doing a two-hour lakeshore cleanup, or a creek cleanup on one of the 35 major creeks that drain to Cayuga Lake, or along one of the many hundreds of smaller creeklets and streams that give their waters to Cayuga Lake?

The Network supplies "Embrace the Lake" posters and flyers, gloves, trash bags from American Rivers, and snacks. We help with publicity, and with making a contact for trash pick-up afterwards. Contact: Hilary Lambert (CLWN Steward) at [steward@cayugalake.org](mailto:steward@cayugalake.org) for more information, and look for updates at our website

[www.cayugalake.org](http://www.cayugalake.org) and Facebook page, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network.

### Topics coming up in 2013 Network News issues

- Fracking and gas drilling update: The new DEC water withdrawal regulations and what they will mean for our watershed, the Finger Lakes, and the Great Lakes Basin.
- Lake Source Cooling: What, who, when, where and why.
- Cayuga Inlet dredging project update, and how this long-awaited project relates to hydrilla eradication.
- Updating the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration & Protection Plan: Public input will be needed for success.
- *What do you want to see in these pages?* Let us know: [steward@cayugalake.org](mailto:steward@cayugalake.org)

*Please send details about interesting upcoming events in the Cayuga Lake watershed to [steward@cayugalake.org](mailto:steward@cayugalake.org).*