

# Cranberry Lake Boat Club

Fall 2002 Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 3  
November 2002

## Board of Directors 2002-2003

John Adami

Clint Farnsworth

Pat Guevara

Jim Glavin

Rod Leavell

Chuck Lewis

John Loewer

Hugh Mitchell

Jeanne Reynolds

Janet Rhodes

David Richardson

Kass Thompson

Lucia VerSteeg

Chris Westbrook

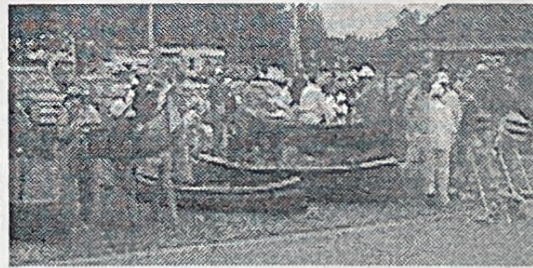
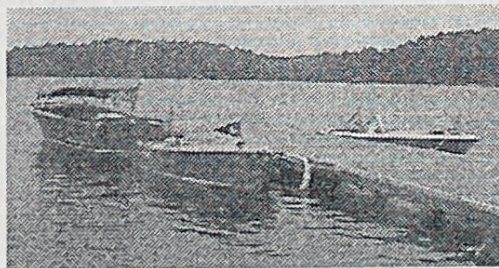
Melissa Wilder

## 2002—A Banner Year

All Boat Club activities were well attended in 2002. A Boat Show and Lake Cruise were held on July 5 and the response was such that we decided to do it again next year. (See photos below). The attendance at the banquet on July 13 was 99 and there were 120 at the picnic on August 10.

We published a new edition of the Membership Directory in 2002 listing 224 memberships - 170 family and 54 individual.

This fall, local merchants placed six flags and 16 welcoming banners throughout the village (see photo at right). The Boat Club assisted this project by purchasing four of the banners.



## Fund Drive for Dive Team

The Cranberry Lake Search and Rescue Dive Team is conducting a fund raising drive to purchase equipment for the Dive Team. The Dive Team is currently certified in open water diving and is undergoing training for more advanced activities such as night diving, search and recovery diving, ice diving, and wreck diving. The Fire Department is paying for the training and is soliciting funds for the equipment, which amounts to about \$10,000 per diver. The Board of Directors of the Boat Club endorses this project and encourages you to support it with a tax-deductible contribution. If you are interested in making a contribution, please send a check, payable to the Cranberry Lake Volunteer Fire Department, to the Cranberry Lake Boat Club, P.O. Box 656, Cranberry Lake, NY 12927.



**Merchandise Brochure**

Enclosed in this newsletter is a brochure containing information about ordering Boat Club merchandise.

**Mark Your Calendar**

The dates of the banquet and the picnic in 2003 are as follows:

- Banquet - July 12
- Picnic - August 9

**Officers for 2002-2003**

Commodore - David Richardson  
Vice Commodore - Lucia VeSteege  
Treasurer - Jay Edel  
Secretary - Pat Farnsworth

**Committee Chairs for 2002-2003**

Membership - Pat Guevara  
Nominating - Chris Westbrook  
Dock & Navigation -  
Hugh Mitchell  
Water Quality Monitoring -  
John Adami  
Banquet - Lucia Versteeg  
Picnic - Janet Rhodes  
Regatta - Clint Farnsworth  
Fish & Game - Wes Marsh

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Cranberry Lake Boat Club, Inc.  
P.O. Box 656  
Cranberry Lake, NY 12927

**Good Economic News**

There are several new developments in the area of local economic development:

- The paper mill at Newton Falls has been sold and will be operating again soon.
- Star Lake has a new pharmacy and a new bakery.
- There have been expansions in the physical facilities at The Ranger School.
- The Clifton-Fine Hospital received permission from the state to convert beds for long-term care.
- Wanakena has received a grant from the state to rehabilitate its playground and tennis courts.

**Board to Propose Increase in Dues**

At its August meeting, the Board of Directors voted to seek approval of the membership for an increase in dues starting in 2004. A proposal to increase the dues to \$15 for single memberships and \$25 for family memberships will be presented at the 2003 annual meeting. This would be the first increase in dues in 13 years.

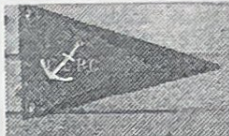
**Sailboat Races in 2003?**

Several years ago the Boat Club organized and sponsored sailboat races on the lake. Some members have asked that we try to revive that tradition but to accomplish this we need a group of volunteers who are willing to organize and officiate the races. If you are interested in being part of group to get this started, contact Clint Farnsworth at P.O. Box 727, Cranberry Lake, NY 12927, 315-848-2541, or cfarnswo@nothnet.org.

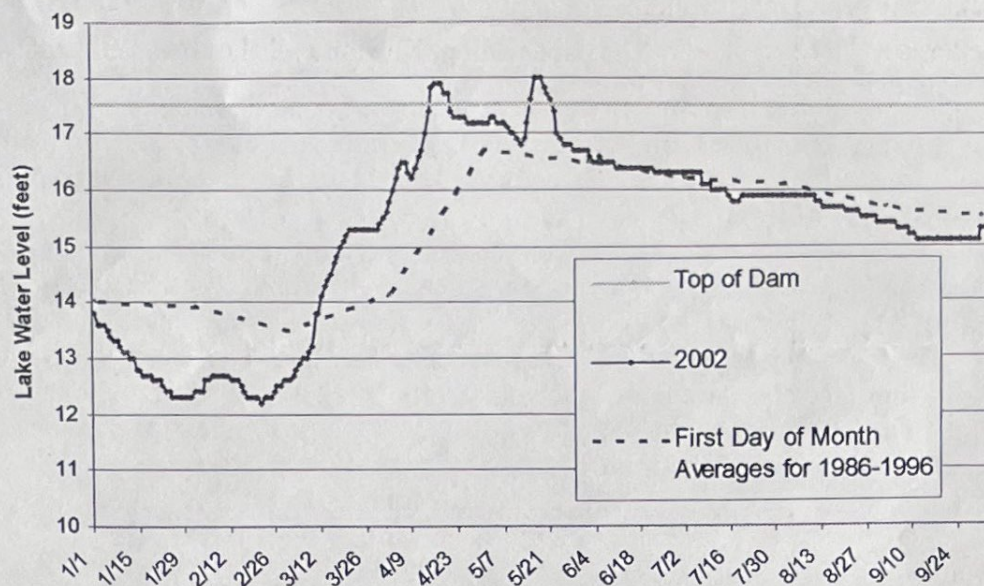


Pictured above is a new photographic display that tells the history of the Cranberry Lake Dam. It is located on the east side of the river below the dam. Check it out the next time you are in the neighborhood.





### Cranberry Lake Water Levels



Anyone who was on the lake this year knows that the water levels of the lake were more variable than usual. The above chart shows the daily lake levels as measured at the dam compared to averages for the period 1986-1996. The lake was very high in the spring at two different times. Later in the summer the lake was lower than usual. Why did this happen? To try to get an answer to this question and to learn about the dam commission, we had a long conversation with Roger Backus, the chairman of the commission. Here is some of what we learned.

The official name of the commission is the Oswegatchie River-Cranberry Reservoir Regulating District Corporation. It is the oldest such commission in the State of New York. There are three commissioners, each appointed by the St. Lawrence County Judge for life terms. The current commissioners are Roger Backus (Cranberry Lake), Mary Miller (Cranberry Lake), and Patricia Visconti (Gouverneur). They meet once a month and the day-to-day operations are carried out by Mr. Backus and two employees, one full-time and one part-time. The revenues for operating the dam are provided by the 19 downstream power generators. The commission does not receive any tax revenues.

The dam commission has total responsibility for regulating the flow of the Oswegatchie River and this is done only by altering the flows out of the dam at Cranberry Lake. In regulating the river flow, the commission has four different objectives: recreation, navigation, power generation, and flood control. This immediately suggests conflicts between upstream and downstream users. Since the power generators are paying the bills, there is even more reason to suspect that the commission would be under pressure to provide water to those downstream users at the expense of lake residents. But a close look at the current policies and practice of the dam commission shows that this is not the case.

According to Mr. Backus, the major objective of the commission is to maintain a constant level on Cranberry Lake during the recreation season. Specifically, the goal is to get the level to within 6 inches of 16.5 feet and to keep it there for as long as possible. They do attempt to provide a minimum outflow of 70 cubic feet per second to maintain the downstream fishery and to assist navigation for downstream users. But there is no commitment, legal or otherwise, to provide water to the downstream power users. This was not always the case. Indeed, data from the Boat Club files shows that the summer lake levels in the 1950s were much lower than they are now.



So why was the water level so high this spring and so low this summer? The answer is in the weather. With spring temperatures in the 70s and some heavy spring rains, we had an extremely fast snow melt. According to Mr. Backus, the water was 8 inches over the spillway this spring. The highest it had been in the past 15 years was one inch over the spillway. The reason the water level was so low in the summer was because we had an unusually dry summer. It was not because the dam commission was letting more water out of the lake. To verify this, Mr. Backus provided records of the outflow from the lake from January 1 to October 5, 2002. Those records show that there was no day after July 7 when the outflow from the dam exceeded 70 cubic feet per second.

The data show that the devil is in the weather, not on the dam commission. 2002 was an unusual year with a double whammy of a warm, wet spring and a very dry summer. It is unlikely to happen again soon. As you might expect, Mr. Backus draws a lot of criticism in a year like this. But he takes it in stride. He says, "I really enjoy the job. It is very interesting and a responsibility that I take seriously." He cites a survey conducted by the Boat Club several years ago in which one-third of the respondents thought the lake was too high, one-third thought it was too low, and the other third thought it was just right. He considered that a pretty good endorsement of his work. Our investigation leads us to the same conclusion.

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### **Water Quality Report**

by

John Adami, Chairman, Water Quality Monitoring Committee

Water quality monitoring. We now have Cranberry Lake water quality monitoring results for a four-year period. Tests are performed during the summer by Boat Club volunteers in cooperation with the Adirondack Aquatic Institute at Paul Smiths College, where the test results are formulated. Based on the results for the year 2001, Cranberry Lake continues to be threatened by, and moderately sensitive to, acidification. However, all test results for the four years continue to fall in the "desired range." The tests include sampling for several chemicals, such as pH and alkalinity, plus dissolved oxygen and temperature at various levels. The tests also indicate that Cranberry Lake water conditions are sufficient for cold and warm water fish. In summary, the four-year mini-trend indicates that Cranberry Lake continues to be moderately sensitive to acidification, with no obvious or dynamic changes or aberrations apparent.

Fecal coliform test results for swimming. We were able to obtain results of fecal coliform tests performed at the Town Beach in August 2001 by the St. Lawrence County Health Department. These tests were performed to test for swimming safety purposes only, not drinking water safety. The results show very low fecal coliform levels, well below the safety level mandated by New York State. So, our Town Beach seems to be quite safe for swimming. Also, on July 24, my wife, Dot, and I took a water sample from South Bay to test for fecal coliform for swimming purposes only. The results from Atlantic Testing Labs are even better, less than 1 cfu per 100 ml, indicating a very safe level for South Bay.

Invasive aquatic plant monitoring. Dot and I recently attended a day-long seminar on invasive aquatic plant monitoring held at Paul Smiths College. The program, sponsored by the Adirondack park Agency and New York State, is part of a regional collaboration to prevent the spread of Eurasian water milfoil, curlyleaf pondweed, and water chestnut to Adirondack lakes. The program is designed to locate populations of these invasive plants, to increase awareness about their spread, and to offer free training in plant identification to recognize the target species. These plants are highly invasive and aggressive competitors that form dense vegetation mats that clog boat propellers, impair swimming, restrict boating and fishing access, affect water quality, and cause loss of native species and habitat. Recognizing invasive aquatic plants and performing an invasive plant survey can allow the greatest opportunity for effective control, potential eradication, and help protect a lake from new infestations. Next summer we will be doing hands-on monitoring at suspected habitat sites on Cranberry Lake identifying invasive species (if any) vs. native look-alikes. We will communicate test results through the Boat Club as available.