Loon Preservation Committee NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 604, Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH 03254; www.loon.org

SUMMER 2010

Photo Courtesy of John Rockwood; www.oegallery.com/NaturePhotosByJohnRockwood

The Loon Preservation Committee
183 Lee's Mill Road, P.O. Box 604
Moultonborough, NH 03254
603-476-LOON (5666); *www.loon.org*

The Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) is a non-profit, self-directed and self-funded constituent organization of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire (ASNH). Autonomous in membership and fundraising, LPC works to preserve loons and their habitats in New Hampshire through monitoring, research, management and education.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Oil and Water and Loons

As I write this message, oil is still flowing from the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean as a result of the BP disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. In the first days of this slow-motion environmental catastrophe, few people suspected it would overtake Exxon Valdez as the largest oil spill in U.S. history. Even then, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal expressed his frustration that when the mechanism to shut down the breached well failed, there was no "Plan B" – no failsafe to prevent a tragedy like the one we are now experiencing.

Loons in the northeast have had their brushes with oil, and as you might imagine it has never turned out well for our birds. When the North Cape barge ran aground off the coast of Rhode Island in January of 1996, its cargo of home heating oil killed over 400 overwintering loons, most of them probably New England birds. LPC's data was pivotal in setting the restitution required to compensate society for the loss of those loons.

Seven years later, the Bouchard B-120 barge spilled its load of fuel oil into Buzzards Bay, MA and killed over 200 more loons overwintering on the Atlantic. The work of LPC's biologists and volunteers will once again be central in setting restitution for the Bouchard spill. But seven years on from the spill, things are still in the hands of the lawyers, and loons in New Hampshire have not yet seen a dime to begin the process of replacing these lost birds.

One of the main breeding grounds of the Brown Pelican, just removed from the endangered species list, lies right in the midst of the oil now washing up on Louisiana's shores.If pelicans are anything like loons, that spells sure trouble for this still fragile population. LPC's Loon Recovery Plan (see pages 3 - 5) has shown that loon populations are very sensitive to events like oil spills that can cause significant adult mortality. Our loons are still at risk from another spill like the one happening right now in the Gulf of Mexico. But by far the most important and uplifting finding of LPC's Loon Recovery Plan is that humans and loons don't have to be like oil and water; if we appreciate loons and respect their needs, we can live, and even thrive, together.

I recently read that there is a movement among geologists to name a new geological epoch, the "Anthropocene;" an era in which, for the first time, human-driven processes are having a major and lasting impact on our planet. Today we have the power to remake our world, and also the responsibility to make it a world in which we and our children will want to live. Our goal in creating LPC's Loon Recovery Plan is to make it one that includes healthy lakes that will be a home to both loons and people.

The Loon Preservation Committee's Loon Recovery Plan

In 2009, Loon Preservation Committee staff and volunteers counted 264 pairs of loons on lakes in New Hampshire. The good news is that this number represents a three-fold increase of our loon population since LPC began to monitor loons in 1975. Today, the call of the loon can once again be heard on many lakes formerly missing their most iconic residents. However, loons remain a threatened species in New Hampshire, and face growing challenges. Those challenges have manifested themselves in five consecutive years of declines in the number of loon chicks on New Hampshire's lakes, and in significant population declines or mortality events on the state's three largest lakes, in the past ten years. These declines threaten to undo the hard-won gains that LPC's research, management and outreach efforts have achieved. Faced with these troubling trends, and an increasing awareness of the scope and severity of challenges facing our loons, LPC embarked on an ambitious undertaking: To gather knowledge derived from 35 years of monitoring, research and management of loons, and create a comprehensive plan to assure the future of loons in New Hampshire. LPC's Loon Recovery Plan compiles everything we and others have learned about loon life history; the challenges facing loons at present, and those we know they will face in the future; and our ability to mitigate those challenges through management and outreach, in order to direct our work to promote a healthy and growing loon population throughout New Hampshire.

LPC completed a first draft of its Loon Recovery Plan last summer, and immediately began to implement the increased monitoring, research, management and outreach called for in the plan. In the rainy summer of 2009, LPC staff floated a record number of loon nesting rafts; protected a record number of nesting loons with LPC signs and ropelines; gave a record number of presentations and exhibits to educate the public about loons; created a new website (www.loon.org); and carried out groundbreaking research to assess the effects of a wide range of challenges facing loons. Those efforts were rewarded by a tally of 109 surviving loon chicks on 83 New Hampshire lakes at summer's end – the first time in six years that we recorded a gain in those numbers. But even with these increased efforts, 2009 was another year in which New Hampshire's loons raised too few chicks to ensure the continued viability of their population. We need to do even more to assure a bright future for our loons.

The goals of the New Hampshire Loon Recovery Plan are first, to recover, and then, to maintain, a viable population of loons in New Hampshire as a component of a healthy regional population and ecosystem.

The information we've learned over the past year has now been incorporated into a revised draft of the Loon Recovery Plan, and LPC is implementing this plan in earnest this summer to address the factors challenging our loons. The goals of the New Hampshire Loon Recovery Plan are first, to recover, and then, to maintain, a viable population of loons in New Hampshire as a component of a healthy regional population and ecosystem. The plan includes analyses that estimate New Hampshire's state-wide carrying capacity for loons (to establish the number of loons New Hampshire's lakes can and should

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support); population models to measure the effects of man-made stressors on loon survival and breeding success (knowing which stressors are most problematic will allow us to target our limited resources toward mitigating them); an assessment of our ability to help loons cope with these challenges through research, management activities and outreach/education; and, strategies that will be implemented to increase loon populations to as close as possible to historical, pre-decline levels of an estimated 450 loon pairs (almost 200 pairs above current levels).

To achieve the goals of LPC's Loon Recovery Plan, we need to reduce human-caused mortalities of loons, and increase the breeding success of our loon pairs. Accordingly, we have identified two objectives to be achieved by year three of this plan:

1. Decrease mortality of adult loons resulting from lead fishing tackle, boat collisions, and other human causes from approximately 8 yearly mortalities at present to an average of 5.5 mortalities annually (a 31% decrease in human-caused mortality); and,

2. Increase reproductive success of loon pairs to a minimum of 0.48 chicks surviving to fledge per loon pair from the current 0.41 chicks surviving per loon pair (a 17% increase in reproductive success of loon pairs).

LPC has identified strategies to ensure the achievement of these specific objectives and the overall goals of the Recovery Plan. These strategies include the following:

a. Increase the number of nesting loon pairs protected by floating signs and ropelines from 61 pairs (avg. 2005-2009) to 80 pairs by year three of the Recovery Plan. Signs and ropelines are helpful in specific instances to educate lake users and protect nesting loons.

b. Increase the total number of loon nesting rafts floated in New Hampshire each year from 54 rafts (avg. 2005-2009) to 75 rafts annually by year three of the Recovery Plan. These rafts will provide alternate nesting sites for loons displaced from traditional, natural sites as a result of shoreline development, and help protect nesting loons from water- level fluctuations and increased populations of opportunistic shoreline predators.

The Loon Recovery Plan will continue to be updated to reflect LPC's success in achieving its objectives and addressing new challenges facing loons in New Hampshire.

c. Increase the number of LPC exhibits at events, and public presentations made by LPC staff from 58 (avg. 2005-2009) to 75 by year three of the Recovery Plan. These exhibits and presentations encourage a culture of respect and appreciation for loons; illuminate the challenges facing loons in New Hampshire from lead fishing tackle, irresponsible boating, and other human practices that directly and indirectly affect loons; and increase awareness and support for loons, and for LPC's efforts to preserve them.

d. Increase the awareness of legislators and decision-makers to challenges facing loons in order to encourage informed discussion and actions that protect loons and other wildlife in New Hampshire.

e. Investigate new and increasing challenges to loon survival and reproductive success, including contaminants in loon eggs and adult loons; increased weather and temperature extremes predicted in global and regional climate change models; and the direct and indirect effects of increasing human populations.

f. Investigate our ability to mitigate these challenges through new management and outreach activities, and enhancements to LPC's current management and outreach efforts.

Implementing these strategies will require significant increases in staff and materials. This summer, LPC has hired a part-time Staff Biologist, Chris Conrod, to help coordinate the increased monitoring, research and management activities outlined in the Loon Recovery Plan. The plan also calls for increased volunteer involvement to help monitor lakes and ponds in New Hampshire, and LPC has hired Susie Burbidge as a part-time Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator this summer. Susie will help recruit new LPC volunteers, and help ensure that volunteers remain engaged and committed to LPC's mission through continued contact and communications.

The other half of Susie's summer will be spent working as a field biologist to enhance LPC's monitoring and management in the Monadnock Region (the southwestern portion of the state). Adding field staff, and increasing the length of the field season for some staff, will allow LPC to decrease the high ratio of lakes to field biologists so that staff can more accurately assess abundance, survival, and breeding success of loons; float an increased number of nesting rafts between ice-out and the commencement

of loon nesting; respond to loon use of rafts by floating signs and ropelines; and measure late-season survival of loon chicks. A Tufts University Veterinary School Intern, Heather McFarland, will ensure timely responses to sick or injured loons and their transport to an animal rehabilitator. If rehabilitation is not possible, Heather will perform necropsies on-site to record valuable and time-limited information about causes of death rather than freezing carcasses for later necropsy. Heather will also support other field staff in drawing blood from banded loons; preparing egg and liver samples for analyses; interpreting results of contaminant and pathogen tests; and assisting with other research to assess contaminant burdens, health, and causes of mortality.

There is not a moment to lose in implementing this recovery plan if we are to turn things around for our loons and assure them of a bright future on our lakes. To learn more about LPC's Loon Recovery Plan, or to make a donation to LPC to help implement this critical new initiative, please visit LPC's website (www.loon.org) or contact LPC Senior Biologist/Executive Director Harry Vogel (hvogel@loon.org).

~Harry Vogel

There is not a moment to lose in implementing this recovery plan if we are to turn things around for our loons and assure them of a bright future on our lakes.

~Harry Vogel

Volunteers Spearhead Raft & Sign Management

Several events contributed to the growing stockpile of floating signs and rafts provided to New Hampshire's loons in 2010. A workday at The Loon Center on April 23 drew volunteers from Highland Lake in Andover, Eastman Lake in Grantham, and Wentworth Lake in Wolfeboro, producing several signs and a raft. The workday also marked a welcome innovation in the usual design of our floating signs--a collapsible base that allows them to fit into the trunk of a small car--expanding our ability to deliver them via field biologists and volunteers to loon nests in need.

A design competition in Ben Quinn's Technical Design class at nearby Moultonborough Academy in January generated many good ideas and came to fruition in April with the incorporation of the winning design elements in two prototypes, deployed within days on Winnipesaukee and Squam. LPC's field program is still seeking volunteers and locations around the state who would be willing to store signs for distribution, to expedite provision of signs to nest sites as soon as they becomes active.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

See more raft & sign building pictures on page 13.

The Moultonborough Academy Technical Design class, instructed by Brendan Quinn, recently undertook a project creating new floating loon sign designs. The numerous schematics were reviewed by LPC Director Harry Vogel, and LPC Senior Biologist John Cooley. The best aspects from the designs were combined to produce two prototypes which were float tested and presented to LPC earlier this month. LPC field staff have already put the signs out on Winnipesaukee and Squam Lake, and plan on implementing the students' concepts with future signs. Pictured above from left to right: John Cooley, Vincent Spagnuolo (Winnipesaukee Biologist), Harry Vogel, the Tech Class students, and Brendan Quinn.

Milfoil Management Underway on New Hamsphire's Lakes

In summer 2010, the Loon Preservation Committee will continue to monitor invasive milfoil management near active loon nests. Invasive milfoil is the undeniable king of exotic aquatic weeds in New Hampshire: a fast growing, easily spread nuisance for boaters and swimmers and a threat to native plants.

Each year New Hampshire communities pour more and more resources into managing milfoil in our lakes. For example, this year the town of Wolfeboro has planned over $30,000 in town funds and matching state and federal grants for milfoil control. Milfoil management techniques include hand pulling, suction harvesting, benthic barriers to prevent growth, and the application of aquatic herbicides.

Picture: Milfoil herbicide application at Winnisquam, June 2008. Loon raft and floatline visible in background. Photo credit: LPC staff.

The prime season for herbicide treatments coincides with the peak of loon nesting in mid- to late-June. Herbicides are usually applied from an airboat or small outboard motorboat using a hopper that sprays pellets into the water as the boat crisscrosses the application site. When the site is near a loon nest, our immediate concern is that the noise and activity of the application may flush the loons from the nest. State herbicide permits near active loon territories usually mandate a setback distance from the nest and/or contact with NH Fish and Game and the Loon Preservation Committee before the application date to assess the status and location of the nest. When LPC observers can be present during an application, we monitor the response of the loons and communicate with the applicator to try and minimize the risk to the nest. Representatives from LPC, NH DES, the state Bureau of Pesticides, and NH Fish and Game are sometimes all on hand during the application, at times outnumbering the application crew by 3:1. For LPC, these observations are an important but time-consuming safeguard, diverting staff from their regular loon monitoring and management duties.

With the rich legacy of disastrous and unintended consequences from the use of synthetic compounds to "control" natural systems fresh in our minds (as fresh as the residues still accumulating in loon eggs laid this year from contaminants that have been banned for decades) any right-minded citizen interested in preserving a threatened species should view with a healthy dose of skeptical caution all proposals for a quick chemical fix (herbicides) to a complex problem (milfoil, especially one so closely intertwined with the ecological web our loons depend on). Thus, in addition to the immediate risk of nest disturbance from herbicide applications, LPC tracks broader concerns voiced by members of the public, regulatory agencies, non-governmental organizations and wildlife biologists about the potential risks of aquatic herbicides for wildlife, including loons. While commercial milfoil herbicides like 2,4,D (Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid) have been used for decades in terrestrial agriculture and are regarded as relatively safe for human use, the long term effects of these herbicides and their degredates and byproducts on aquatic ecosystems are not fully known. Herbicide toxins that appear benign in isolation may have ill effects when combined with other toxins present in the environment. Concerns have also been raised about the mobilization of nutrients into the lake water from dead milfoil stands after herbicide treatments—a potential catalyst for algal blooms. The removal of invasive milfoil stands may also change the available fish habitat—dense stands of native vegetation and milfoil both provide cover and spawning

grounds for small fish, and herbicide applications in some situations may reduce this habitat.

Together, these concerns provoke debate about the overall approach to milfoil management, as well as the particular risks of herbicide use. How do eradication campaigns based on herbicides fit with the long term management of what may be, for better or worse, a perpetual nuisance in NH lakes?

As milfoil control continues at a growing number of loon nest sites (at least three in the town of Moultonborough alone this year), LPC will be closely monitoring the impacts and potential risks. For the many LPC members and volunteers involved in efforts to control milfoil, we hope to be able to report in future newsletter issues about information and empirical evidence from New Hampshire lakes on the effectiveness and wildlife impacts of different milfoil techniques. We urge the managing agencies, lake associations, and other interested parties to closely and systematically document herbicide effectiveness and non-target impacts (or their absence), and to foster dialogue on those findings with all due haste.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

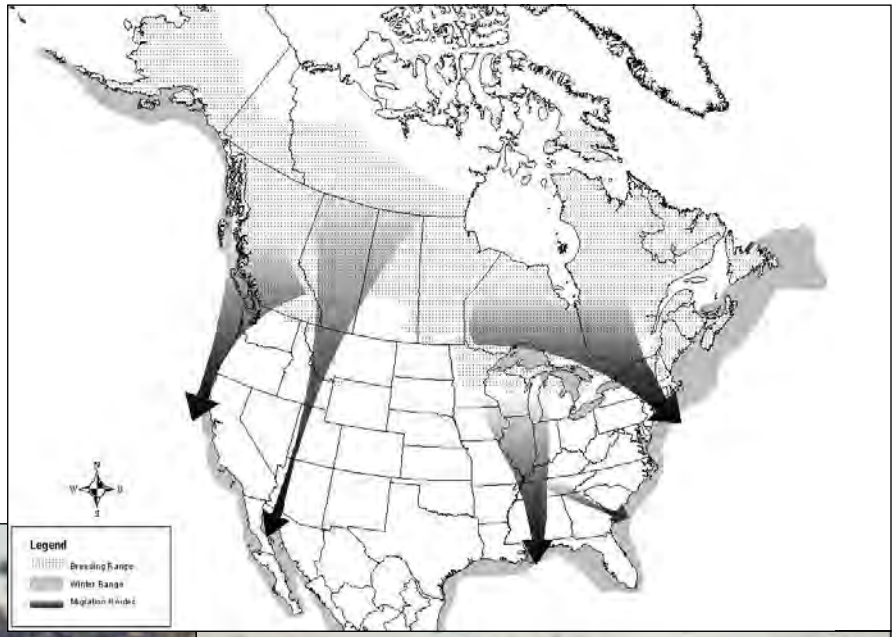
Below: LPC photos of oiled loons <u>not</u> from recent spill in Gulf of Mexico.

Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill

Oiled loons have been rescued from the Gulf of Mexico in recent days and released in Minnesota, according to the Associated Press. While the BP disaster won't affect New Hampshire's loon population, which winters along the New England coast, loons from breeding populations in the central US and Canada depend on the Gulf waters as part of their winter range (see map). As the spill grew throughout the month of May, most adult loons had already migrated north from the Gulf. But immature loons usually stay on the ocean all year and will be immediately vulnerable to the oil. The two loons flown to Minnesota from the Gulf appeared from press reports to be in non-breeding (immature) plumage. In mid-May, LPC's field biologist and volunteer outreach coordinator Susie Burbidge spent 10 days helping her past employer, Tri-State Bird Rescue, with spill-related wildlife work in the Gulf.

General migratory connections between breeding and wintering areas for Common Loons based on band recoveries, satellite telemetry data, morphometrics, and population monitoring efforts (reprinted by permission from Evers (2006) Status assessment and conservation plan for the Common Loon (Gavia immer) in North America.).

~John H. Cooley, Jr.



Early Returns from the Field

Although we are still a long way from having a clear picture of this year's loon nesting season, the early results are encouraging. For one thing, we have been spared the early rain that marked last May: this year's rain total for May was less than half of last year's. A warm early spring and sparse snowcover produced an early ice out, the earliest on record since 1889 (or so) for Winnipesaukee. There seemed to be a slight lag after ice out until most loons returned, close to their normal dates. But the first round of field surveys show that the start of nesting has tracked the earlier ice out, with on-the-nest dates running 5-7 days earlier, on average, than in 2009. This is a good sign, since it means more nests should be hatched before the height of the summer traffic on the lakes. And we are pleased to report the first chicks hatched this year were on Pleasant Lake in New London. Dubbed Percy and Poppy by local loon fans, these two hatched on June 6-7 (pictured below). They were close behind an early nest in Vermont for the title of earliest in New England!

Another positive sign from early this spring came from Cold Spring Pond in the Monadnock region, where photographer's documented the return of a banded loon that was seen last fall with fishing line tangled in its bill (see Fall 2009 issue). Although entanglement can predispose migrating birds to winter mortality, this loon made it through.

On a positive note at a slightly more global scale, news came from Wisconsin in mid-April that a majority of voters at a Department of Natural Resources statewide referendum voted in favor of banning lead fishing tackle, a huge step in protecting loons and other waterfowl in the heart of the loon's range in the United States. The vote was closely watched and not without controversy, since a majority of counties voted against the measure (37 opposed versus 33 in favor) in spite of the overall majority approval. Wisconsin DNR will take the vote result under advisement in its rule-making process (http://www.prairiestateoutdoors.com/index.php?/pso/article/wisconsin_sportsmen_back_lead_ban/).

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

Photo courtesy of Kittie Wilson

Loon Census News

The Loon Preservation's annual loon census will be held on Saturday, July 17, 2010. Please see the inside back cover of this newsletter for a census observation form, or download an electronic copy from www.loon.org. If you are interested in having greater input, forms for reporting observations throughout the season are also available on-line. Stuffing the ballot box with these sightings (early and often) is a welcome help, providing context to the census snapshot and documenting the presence of resident loons on your lake over the course of the summer.

A highlight of the annual New Hampshire loon census in recent years has been the camaraderie, accuracy, and (not least) delightful brunch, all part of the Center Harbor Bay portion of the Winnipesaukee count, hosted by Kerry and Bruce Claflin. It was with much regret that LPC learned in April that the Claflin's are moving to Maine. Kerry single-handedly organized the census coverage for 10 different sections of the lake and close to 30 participants with gracious ease, delivering a compiled spreadsheet tally the envy of many of our field biologists. And the brunch! I met Kerry and Bruce in June 2006, when high water on Winnipesaukee mandated a lake-wide no-wake rule and we needed to station a second boat on the western half of the lake for effective surveys. Kerry and Bruce volunteered a dock and lake access from their place. For the annual census and these pinch-hitting efforts, we are extremely grateful for the Claflin's work and support on behalf of Winnipesaukee's loon population!

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

LPC Monadnock/North Biologist and Voilunteer Coordinator Susie Burbidge poses on Crystal Lake in Enfield with a beautiful loon decoy, hand-carved and hand-painted by volunteer Wayne Adams. This was Wayne's first attempt at a loon carving and what a great job he did! Photo credit: Wayne Adams

To Report a Stranded, Injured or Dead Loon, or Loon Harassment
Call. . .
Loon Preservation Committee:
603-476-5666
NH Fish & Game Dispatch:
603-271-3361

2010 LPC SUMMER STAFF

LAKES REGION

Sarah DeLong

Sarah is a recent graduate of SUNY Plattsburgh where she earned a BS in Biology and Environmental Science. She spent last summer surveying Pacific and Red-throated Loons in a remote field camp above the Arctic Circle in Alaska.

SEACOAST

Sam Merker

Sam returns to the Seacoast this summer after graduating from the University of New Hampshire with a BS in Environmental Science. He spent the fall on an Ecoquest in New Zealand and hopes to continue tropical fieldwork in the future.

MONADNOCK NORTH

Susie Burbidge

Susie returns for a second summer covering the northern Monadnock territory, as well as doing half-time duty as volunteer outreach coordinator at The Loon Center. She recently returned from New Orleans where she participated in animal rescue.

SQUAM LAKES

Tiffany Grade

Tiffany graduated with her BS in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has entered the master's program there. She will be conduct research on Squam this summer on the impact of human recreation on loon chick-rearing.

MONADNOCK SOUTH

Sarah Baker

Sarah spent the summer of 2007 as LPC's Squam Lakes Biologist. A graduate of Unity College, Sarah holds a degree in Wildlife Care and Environmental Education, and is working towards certification to care for and possess/rehabilitate birds of prey.

UMBAGOG

Mike Sharon

Mike returns for another season on Lake Umbagog in New Hampshire's North Country. He is pleased to have made it through his first year of coursework at Antioch University New England, including classes in statistics and GIS.

NORTH COUNTRY

Krista Newell

Krista recently completed her BS in Wildlife Biology from Unity College. Her field experience includes deer tagging, black bear monitoring, and Blackpoll Warbler research. A native of Whitefield, she'll be right at home in the North Country.

WINNIPESAUKEE

Vincent Spagnuolo

Vince continues his master's program in environmental science at the Harvard Extension School in Boston. This spring he presented his milfoil research at the Northeast Loon Study Work Group (NELSWG) gathering at Tufts Veterinary School.

Husband and wife team, Mike and Bette Ruyffelaert (pictured right), will assist Rachel Williams in The Loon's Feather Gift Shop this summer, conducting sales and greeting visitors. Rachel will also have the assistance of a wonderful corps of volunteers: Anne McLean, Sheila Robusto, Cydonia Haeicki, Marilyn Coppo and Matt Nolan.

Annual Loon Census

Saturday, July 17th; 8 a.m. - 9 a.m.

(see page 19 for census form)

Photo by Chris Conrod

Bob Keith Keeps a Watchful Eye on Wakondah's Loons

Wakondah Pond in Center Harbor is prime loon habitat—a 94 acre lake with clear water, limited public access and other loon lakes close by. It has probably had nesting loons on it since the days, centuries past, when human intrusions on the pond were limited to native canoes on the portage route from Winnipesaukee to Squam. These days there are scattered camps and second homes along with a few stretches of unbroken forest and marsh, and the loons have shifted their summer residence from the sandy shorelines to a nest raft, close to the yellow canoe and watchful eye of LPC volunteer Bob Keith. Since the raft was first deployed in the 1970's, the Waknodah loons have been amazingly consistent, using it to nest in all but one year since 1984.

Bob Keith of Wakondah Pond enjoys the company of a pair of nesting loons from his screened porch.

Bob has lived on the pond since 1993, and my annual spring pilgrimage to help float the raft from his dock is also a chance to catch up on a pleasing diversity of wildlife sightings in his cove—dozens of wood ducks, a passing osprey, a migrating merlin, the monster snapping turtle basking on a boulder a little closer to the raft site than either Bob or I would like. Bob's fondness for the loon pair doesn't obscure his attention to the rest of the natural history his cove has to offer. He's vigorous—a past member of the local "Over the Hillers" hiking club in spite of Korean-wartime frostbite injury to both feet—but it's clear that the summer porch of hishouse, overlooking the lake, is a favorite place. A spotting scope trained on the loon raft have let Bob and his late wife, Jane, watch the incubating nest each season and, in a good year, the hatch. This has produced an awesome record of the year-in year-out triumphs and failures of the Wakondah loon pair. Bob's attention epitomizes the kind of grassroots, ground-up knowledge that is the heart of New Hampshire loon monitoring and management. When I lowered myself carefully into the bow seat of Bob's ("my wife always told me this thing was tippy") canoe this April to tow the raft out into the cove and looked out to see the loon pair waiting on the main part of the lake, I knew that the season was truly underway and that these loon's longtime knowledge of their territory would be well matched by the longtime familiarity of their guardian.

Thanks, Bob!

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

"It is the personal concern by human neighbors of the loons that makes protection possible and survival a reasonable hope."

~Rawson L. Wood, LPC Founder

Volunteer signbuilders Ebbe and Craig McArt and Hugh Crawford show off their work.

April workday participants Donna Hartwell-Baker (Highland Lake), John Cooley (LPC), and Sarah Davis Baker (LPC – Monadnock).

A custom-designed raft with avian guard from the Wilson household at Pleasant Lake.

Annual Benefit Raffle: Take a Chance for Loons!

RAFFLE

What a year for LPC's raffle! We are very pleased to offer *three* wonderful prizes for this year's benefit raffle thanks to the generosity of LPC members and local merchants. They include a hand-crafted, laminated cedar strip canoe; a quilted loon wall hanging with hand-forged, wrought iron rod and brackets; and a matted and framed loon print by local artist Peter Ferber. Tickets will be sold between July 1st and November 27th. The drawing will be held at our Annual Holiday Open House. All proceeds benefit the Loon Preservation Committee!

Laminated Cedar Strip Canoe:
This stunning canoe was hand crafted and donated by Michael Sullivan of Moultonborough, a neighbor and supporter of The Loon Center. The laminated process requires meticulous preparation and creates a wonderful visual. The canoe is 16 feet long, weighs 57 pounds, and has cane seats. It's *almost* too beautiful to use! With that in mind, it also makes a lovely showpiece hung from a cathedral ceiling or porch. A one-of-a-kind labor of love!

Quilted Wall Hanging:
This 28"x38" quilted wall hanging entitled "Reflections" was generously created and donated by Winifred O'Shaughnessy of Mirror Lake. The exclusive design is comprised of 315 one-and-a-half inch squares sewn together to create a color-wash effect. The border and many of the squares are hand-dyed batiks. The piecing, appliqué and quilting are done by machine; and the fabric, batting and backing are 100% cotton. A talented husband and wife team, Dick O'Shaughnessy hand-forged and donated the wrought iron rod and brackets for displaying this piece. Dick's shop, The Country Forge, is located in Mirror Lake where he does custom work, sells wrought-iron pieces, and gives demonstrations upon request.

Framed Loon Print:
This tranquil framed print entitled "Loon Passage" was generously donated by The Art Place of Wolfeboro, NH. A Limited Edition giclee print by local artist Peter Ferber, this composition is sure to win many compliments hung over a fireplace or on that special wall for frequent viewing. The Art Place is open year-round and features many artists from the local community and beyond. Custom matting and framing are offered along with their featured gallery.

Tickets for the raffle are $5.00 each or 3/$10. They will be mailed to our members the first of July and are also available at The Loon Center where items are on display. Additional tickets can be requested by phone at (603) 476-5666.

Take a chance and win one of these spectacular prizes!

Birdathon/Bloomathon a Success Despite Soggy Start

Despite morning rain and day-long coolness, this year's Birdathon/Bloomathon team saw or heard 103 species of birds. Highlights included 2 American Pipits and a Merlin at the Ambrose gravel pit in Sandwich and 19 species of warblers. As happens some years, common species such as Downy and Pileated Woodpeckers were missed. It's possible this happened because a large proportion of the birding team was waylaid at 10:30 a.m. by an irresistible urge to see the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in North Conway, which they did. (Can you blame them?)

The team observed 78 species of spring wildflowers in bloom. It had been an early, warm spring, and the first flowers had passed: Trailing Arbutus, Trout Lily, and Yellow Violet. But other plants were farther along, and the date was a bit later than last year. So, for the first time, Golden Alexanders were flowering, as was Indian Cucumber.

This was a significant year for the Birdathon/Bloomathon as Moultonborough was included for the first time. The home of The Loon Center, the recipient of this fundraiser, it just made sense to expand the range. Did it make much difference in the count? Some. It helped Tony spot the eagle and Jane the chance Ring-necked Duck. And with the colony of Chimney Swifts near the library where Jane works, there was another chance to see them, which she did.

The Loon Preservation Committee is extremely grateful to the Lakes Region Audubon Chapter, including team leaders Jane Rice and Tony Vazzano, for their help in orchestrating the Birdathon/Bloomathon again this year. A complete list of the birds and blooms counted can be found on LPC's website at www.loon.org.

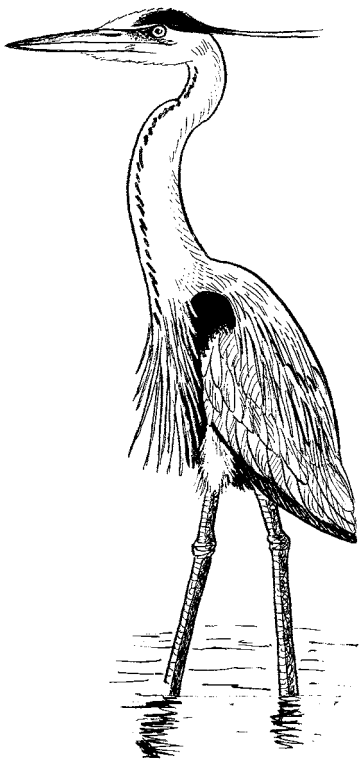
~Linda Egli Johnson

Birds team:
Ned Beecher
Chris Clyne
Jane Rice
Bob Ridgely
Tony Vazzano

Blooms team:
Ned Beecher
Chris Clyne
Juno Lamb
Jane Rice
Tony Vazzano

A recent graduate of Holderness School (NH), Matt Nolan is spending his summer volunteering for charitable organizations. He was recruited to volunteer at The Loon Center by family friend and LPC Board member, Bill Irwin. Matt will dedicate two days each week to helping in the field as well as with visitor services. In addition to The Loon Center, he is volunteering for Habitat for Humanity.

Matt is a competitive downhill skier and will spend next year at Mount Mansfield Academy in Stowe, VT where he hopes to advance his skills. His love for sailing and boating introduced him to loons on Lake Winnipesaukee and the importance of protecting these birds on New Hampshire's lakes.



The Squam Swim Celebrates its Fifth Year

The Squam Swim has become a much-anticipated yearly event in the Lakes Region. Since 2005, first Wendy Van de Poll and then a team of swimmers, known informally as the Squam Swimming Sisters (and Bro) swam the length of the lake four times. Three of those swims raised funds to support loons and LPC's work on Squam. This year, the Squam Swimming Sisters (and Bro) team will be Wendy and Rick Van de Poll, Rose de Mars, Blair Newcomb, Nancy Hansen and Jennifer Wright. Wendy has an ambitious goal to raise $20,000 to support LPC's work on Squam.

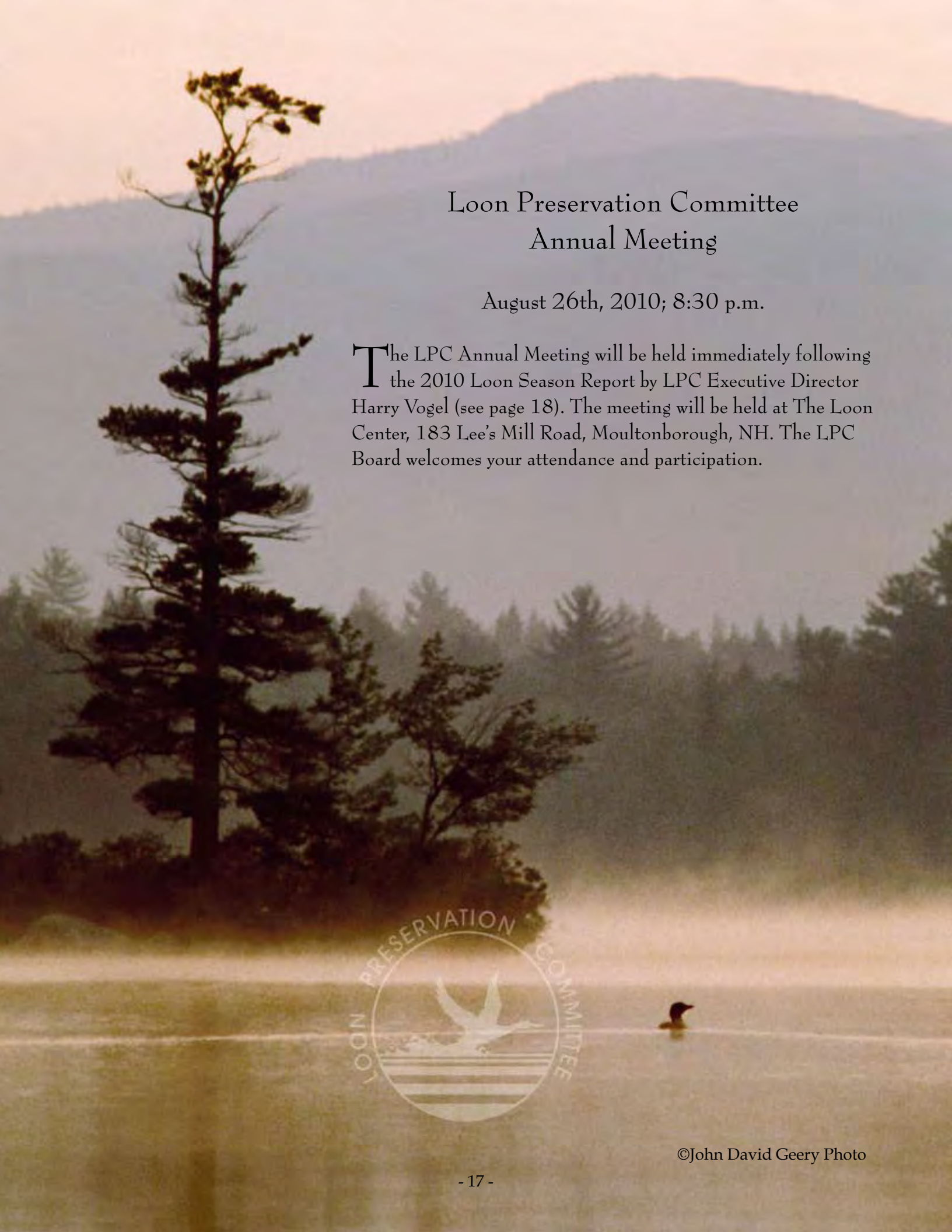
Donations raised through the efforts of these dedicated swimmers will fund LPC's Squam Lake Loon Initiative, an ongoing effort to increase monitoring, research, management and outreach on the lake to benefit its loons. Squam's loons have had a hard time in recent years. LPC's ongoing research suggests that contaminants, increased rainfall and temperature extremes, and increased recreational use of the lake might all have played a role in their decline. The good news is that funds raised through the Swim have been used to good effect to investigate, and begin to reverse, the decline of loons on Squam. The past two years have seen a modest recovery of the population: The number of nesting pairs and surviving chicks are up from several years ago, even if not yet returned to their historical levels. We are confident that LPC's increased efforts, and the continued support of friends of Squam loons, will recover a healthy population of loons on Squam. Please see LPC's website, www.loon.org, for more information on the Squam Lake Loon Initiative.

You can help support LPC's work to safeguard loons on Squam Lake by donating to the "SWIM 2010" fundraiser. This year, the Swimming Sisters (and Bro) will swim the length of Squam Lake, from the Squam River outlet in Holderness to the Sandwich Town Beach, in mid-August (exact date dependent on weather conditions). To pledge your support for the swimmers and for Squam Lake loons, call LPC at 603-476-5666 or visit the www.loon.org "donations" page and note "SWIM" in the donation box.

Thank you for your support!

~Harry Vogel

Photo courtesy of John Rockwood



Loon Preservation Committee Annual Meeting

August 26th, 2010; 8:30 p.m.

The LPC Annual Meeting will be held immediately following the 2010 Loon Season Report by LPC Executive Director Harry Vogel (see page 18). The meeting will be held at The Loon Center, 183 Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH. The LPC Board welcomes your attendance and participation.

Summer 2010 Nature Talk Series

at The Loon Center
Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH
(603) 476-5666
7:30 p.m. ◆ Admission Free ◆ Donations Appreciated

Thursday, July 1 **LOONS – The Call of the Wild**

LPC Director Harry Vogel and nature photographer John Rockwood team up for a presentation for loon lovers. John's slide show follows loons from their arrival in the spring to their departure in the fall while Harry discusses the work of LPC's biologists and how you can help to protect loons.

Thursday, July 8 **Summer Birds of the Lakes Region**

Life-long birdwatchers, Bob and Dana Fox give an illustrated talk on the summer birds of the lakes region. Sharing photos of the 50 most common summer birds seen in their different habitats, they'll also provide tips on how to identify them and play many of their calls.

Thursday, July 15 **Fantastic Fungi I Have Loved and Known**

Join seasoned mycologist Rick Van de Poll for a colorful tour of the fantastic (and infamous) fungi of the Lakes Region. Learn to separate the edible from the poisonous, the common from the rare, as well as how to prepare mushrooms for winter consumption.

Thursday, July 22 **All About Comets – Far Out!**

The McAulife-Shepard Discovery Center comes to The Loon Center to answer all your questions about comets! Where do they come from? What are they made of? In a hands-on demonstration, they will make a comet out of common materials like dry ice, syrup and cookies.

Thursday, July 29 **Bald Eagles – The Story of their Recovery in NH**

Chris Martin, wildlife biologist for NH Audubon , monitors and manages the state's endangered and threatened birds of prey, including bald eagles. Chris will describe eagle recovery successes and failures in the Lakes Region and beyond, and how you can get involved.

Thursday, August 5 **They're Green & Mean: Exotic Aquatic Plants**

Amy Smagula, Limnologist with the Dept. of Environmental Services, provides a look at the problems caused by infestations of exotic aquatic plants, such as milfoil. Find out what the State is doing to combat the problems and learn how you can help through volunteering to watch the weeds!

Thursday, August 12 **NH Wildlife and Climate Change**

Retired NH Fish and Game biologist, Eric Orff, discusses the current and future effects of climate change on fish and wildlife in New Hampshire. Eric now works for the National Wildlife Federation and is an author, lecturer and photographer.

Thursday, August 19 **Wildlife Tracking in the Northeast**

Photographer, Park Ranger and Naturalist Ed Sharron offers a glimpse into the life of a wild animal. Much more than just looking at footprints, tracking can often tell you how fast an animal was moving, what its mood was when it made them, and what it recently had for a meal.

Thursday, August 26 **2010 Loon Season Report**

LPC Director Harry Vogel will present overall trends in loon populations and preliminary statistics on how loons fared in New Hampshire over the last year. Also featured will be a slide show by nature photographer John Rockwood. The Loon Preservation Committee Annual Meeting will follow (see page 17).

PHOTO COURTESY OF NORDEL GAGNON

New Hampshire Common Loon Census
Saturday, July 17, 2010
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Lake/Pond: _____ Section: _____ Town: _____

Observer(s): _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

_____

Total number of people in party: _____

	Time	#Adults	#Chicks	#Immatures	*Location/Direction
Example	8:17	1			Flew in from east.
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
TOTALS:					

Notes:

*(1) Record only the FIRST sighting of each loon or group, then be sure to total the number of loons observed on the appropriate line. Be sure and note the direction in which the loons move or fly.
(2) It is CRITICAL that observations continue for the ENTIRE HOUR.
(3) Remember, a report of zero is just as biologically important as a report of ten loons.

CENSUS FORMS SHOULD BE RETURNED BY AUGUST 1ST TO BE INCLUDED IN THE FINAL TALLY.
A REPORT OF ZERO IS STILL VERY IMPORTANT TO THE CENSUS!

Please return this form to your coordinator, LPC staff, or to the LPC office as soon as possible.

Loon Preservation Committee, P.O. Box 604, Moultonborough, NH 03254
(603) 476-LOON (5666); Fax: (603) 476-5497

Thank you!

Loon Preservation Committee
P.O. Box 604
183 Lee's Mill Road
Moultonborough, NH 03254

The Loon Preservation Committee gratefully acknowledges our friends at Squam Boat Livery, Inc. for underwriting this publication.

Photo courtesy of John Rockwood