

Taylor Pond Association News

JULY 2019

TAYLOR POND ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, August 4, 2019 | 7-9 pm | Taylor Pond Yacht Club



Returns and address corrections to:

Edwin Gray
153 Chicoine Ave.
Auburn, ME 04210

Interested in volunteering to
help with TPA programs?
Please call Dana Little at
207.784.1908

Please visit the TPA website:
www.taylorpondassociation.org

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Dana Little

The Taylor Pond Association volunteer board works for you. We strive to protect water quality, prevent flooding, and keep you informed on pond-related issues. Here's what's been happening since our Annual Meeting in July 2018:

FLOODING ISSUES:

The city of Auburn initially budgeted to replace the culvert which allows Taylor Brook to pass under Hotel Road. This would have reduced the likelihood of flooding. The State stepped in to fund the entire project and planned to start this summer. However, due to unexpectedly high bids being submitted, the State cancelled many road projects, including this culvert. We will be working to ensure that this project is not forgotten at the city or state level.

ZONING ORDINANCE:

Barbara Mitchell drafted an excellent ordinance under the guidance of city staff which would have improved protection for both Taylor Pond and Lake Auburn. Her goal was to ensure that development proposals in the watershed areas of these two vulnerable bodies of water would not harm water quality. Unfortunately, the Planning Board felt the ordinance was redundant and City Council nixed passage. We promised both City Council and the Planning Board that we will remain vigilant and oppose any development that threatens Taylor Pond. The board continues to be involved in the city's considerations of proposals to change the ordinance affecting agricultural land.

WATER QUALITY:

We continue to monitor multiple indicators in Taylor Pond to catch any problems as soon as possible. Despite being listed as a pond vulnerable

to development, our water continues to be of good quality. I want to applaud all of you who have made efforts to create buffers along the lake to prevent water run-off.

GRANT PROGRAM:

We are fortunate to still be able to offer up to \$500 in matching funds for anyone who makes improvements on their property to protect the pond. To qualify for the grant you must first schedule a LakeSmart review. Please refer to the article on our grant program for more information.

FIRE SAFETY:

At our 2018 annual meeting a state forester and Auburn's fire chief presented a program on fire safety and answered questions. Concerns were raised last year when a home on Young's Corner Road burned to the ground due to a lack of access to a fire hydrant. Despite the proximity of so much water in the pond, this water is not easily accessible to pumper trucks, leaving most of us vulnerable to the same devastating outcome.

The Auburn Fire Department, with the help of our organization, received a grant again this year to reduce the chance of our homes burning in a wildfire. As a result of this grant, plans were made to purchase tools, recruit volunteers, cut and chip brush endangering homes, and to make door-to-door visits to provide advice in reducing fire risk. In addition, the town erected signs last year on roads around the pond prohibiting fireworks.

TAYLOR POND ASSOCIATION MISSION STATEMENT

The Taylor Pond Association is a 501(c)3 federal tax-exempt organization committed to maintaining the water quality of Taylor Pond in order to preserve wildlife habitat, protect property values, and safeguard recreational opportunities.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Special thanks goes to Joan Macri, who collaborated from the outset with brainstorming and moral support, and later helped with editing and inspiration. Heartfelt thanks to all for your hard work and timely additions!

Do you receive communications from the TPA during the year? The board likes to keep everyone apprised of pertinent actions by the Planning Board or City Council, get the word out on lost items, and generally keep you informed. If you do not get our notices, but would like to, please submit your email address to susantrask@roadrunner.com. We do not share email addresses with anyone else.

Susan Trask, editor

YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Directors whose terms expire July of 2019, who will stand for re-election to another two-year term:

Barbara Mitchell
783-9000
bmitch61@aol.com

Marc Tardif
783-7395
tardifml@efp-efs.com

Woody Trask
784-4606
woodytrask@roadrunner.com

New Director:

Luci Merin
240-3811
Lucile.merin@gmail.com

Directors whose terms expire July of 2020

Dana Little, President
784-1908
danalw@roadrunner.com

Edwin Gray, Treasurer
720-0098
edwin_gray@hotmail.com

Larry Faiman
782-4648
bmfaiman@gmail.com

Donna Morin
dmorin77@aol.com

Kristi Norcross
577-6408
knorcross@roadrunner.com

Thank you to all our directors for their commitment to keeping Taylor Pond healthy! We are currently looking for a new secretary. If you have internet access and are willing to serve as an officer or director, please contact Dana Little to add your name to this list.

Fourth of July Boat Parade



Come join the fun and celebrate our nation's founding for the third annual 4th of July boat parade! Deck out your boat with red, white, and blue, gather up a group of family and friends, and assemble in front of the Yacht Club at 4:00 on the 4th. We'll circumnavigate the pond, visit the neighbors, and have a blast!

PUBLIC NOTICE

There are **NO FIREWORKS** allowed in the City of Auburn.



Any consumer firework use or sales in the City of Auburn is a **VIOLATION OF CITY ORDINANCE.**

- Children should never handle, play with, or light fireworks.
- **Never throw or point fireworks at other people.**
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket.
- **PARENTS are responsible for any damages associated with their children using fireworks.**
- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reported that FIREWORKS were involved in an estimated 8,800 injuries treated in emergency departments this year.

PLEASE BE SAFE

Auburn Fire Department
550 Minot Avenue
(207) 333-6633 ext. 6

fireprevention@auburnmaine.gov

NEW PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS PLANNED FOR ALL PROPERTIES ON TAYLOR POND

By Barbara Mitchell

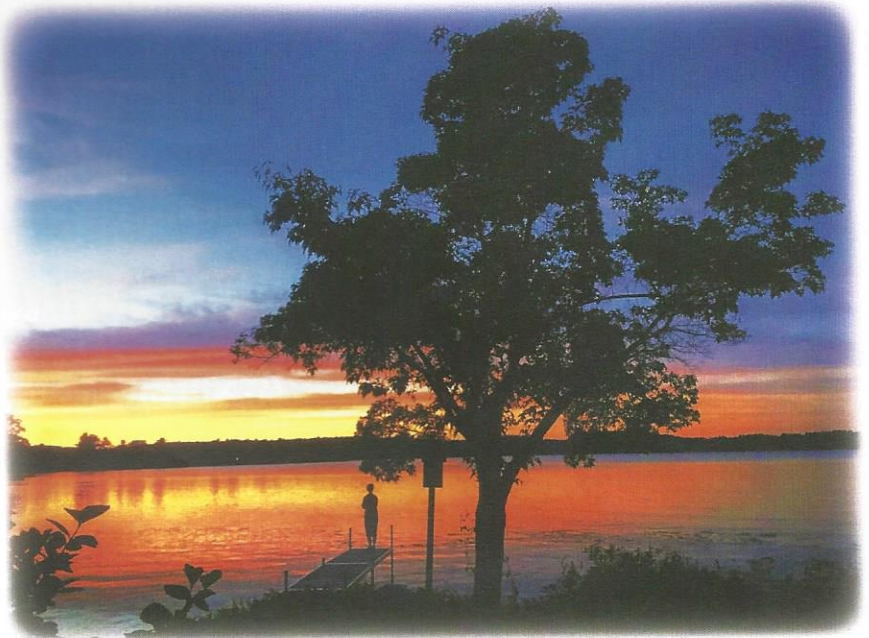
The Maine Constitution says that property shall be assessed according to the "just value" thereof. The courts have interpreted "just value" to mean fair market value or in other words "what the property is worth." A property's worth is commonly looked at as "what a willing buyer would pay a willing seller" for a particular piece of property.

Municipalities in Maine are required keep track of sales of properties to see that their property assessments are in line with the actual sale prices of those properties. Assessed values are supposed to fall between 90% and 100% of the sale prices according to the state of Maine. Last fall Auburn determined that the results of recent sales ratio (assessed value : sale prices) studies spanning the last 5 years show a value trend based upon recent sales differs from the current assessments.

As a result, the city staff has been (and will continue) visiting all Taylor Pond waterfront properties and doing both interior and exterior inspections to determine if assessment values correctly reflect the individual properties. Some properties have had additions, updates, or improvements done since the last assessment several years ago that may warrant increasing the assessed value. Some property assessments may have incorrect information regarding the amount of usable waterfront or other amenities properties have, also requiring an adjustment to the assessed value. The purpose of the re-assessment is to correct any inconsistencies that may have occurred over the years as the real estate market has fluctuated.

The project will take about two years to complete and any adjustments to the assessed values as a result will become effective as of April 1, 2020. Property owners have been encouraged to schedule appointments to have the assessing department staff visit their properties this spring/summer/fall if they have not already done so. (Call 207-333-6601 x1114 or email kdoustout@auburnmaine.gov for an appointment.) Homeowners can request a copy of the assessments of their properties to be assured they are correct or question any discrepancies they find.

Because the last re-assessment of Taylor Pond properties was done at the last height of the real estate market and Auburn real estate has just recently come back to that level, it seems that, unless big changes have been made to your property, there should not be big changes to your assessment.



WATER QUALITY SUMMARY REPORT FOR TAYLOR POND – 2018

By Woody Trask

Monitoring of the water quality in Taylor Pond in 2018 was performed by Michael Heskanen and myself. I conducted readings for clarity, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and other quality parameters monthly from June through September with more frequent clarity readings taken May through September by Michael.

Since 2004, Taylor Pond Association has been collecting its own water samples and performing most of the testing, with the exception that samples for phosphorus are sent to the DHHS Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory in Augusta for analysis. Most results in 2018 were quite consistent with readings for the past few years except for the surface phosphorus readings, the average of which was well below the average for last year and lower than the historical average. We are always pleased to get low readings since phosphorus is the prime contributor to algae blooms. We hope this becomes the new norm and the start of a good trend.

Conversely, water quality readings are better when they are high! The average water clarity reading of 5.3 meters was slightly lower than 2017 mostly due to some low readings in May but is still well above the historical average. Also, the maximum clarity reading taken was 6.5 meters, which essentially ties the highest reading ever obtained. Other readings for pH, alkalinity and conductance were unchanged from past years. The average surface temperature was 73.9°F, 1.6°F lower than last year and equal to the average for the past five years.

"Ice-in" occurred about the 15th of December 2017 and the "ice-out" date was April 23, 2018, a few days earlier and later respectively than 2017. The historical average for ice out is April 14. The pond was "iced in" a couple of times in early December 2018 with the final date recorded as on the 5th, 10 days earlier than the previous year. (Note: ice-out for 2019 was April 22nd making for one of the longest iced over periods in several years – generally considered to be a good thing for water quality.)

In summary, the overall water quality of Taylor Pond continues to be quite good. Keeping it that way will require constant vigilance on the part of homeowners to ensure that fertilizers, pesticides, soil and other harmful substances don't get into the pond or we could have an algae bloom like the one that occurred in Lake Auburn.

ALGAE IN TAYLOR POND

Dana Little

All animal life depends on the productive power of photosynthesis, and in ponds algae are the main producers. As a result of the abundant algae in our pond we have abundant fish and other wildlife. But too much algae are not a good thing. When algae overwhelm a lake, we refer to it as a "bloom." Most such blooms are not caused by algae, but by organisms called cyanobacteria, which also use photosynthesis for energy.

When a bloom occurs, the surface of the water may have a green or brown scum, smell bad and lack clarity. In the 27 years I have observed the pond, I have never seen an algae bloom, and there is only one on record. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) lists Taylor Pond among the 122 lakes considered at risk for another. The table below lists a few local lakes for comparison.

Name	Frequency of bloom in past	Risk of future blooms
Range Pond	never	Unlikely given known data
Taylor Pond	One year on record	Unlikely given known data
Lake Auburn	One year on record	Could occasionally bloom
Sabattus Pond	Almost annually	Will likely bloom annually

Cyanobacteria can not only cause a bloom; they also produce toxins that can damage the human liver and nervous system and can cause intestinal problems and skin irritation. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established safe levels for these toxins in drinking water in 2015 and has proposed safe levels for recreation in 2017. Maine DEP has been monitoring cyanobacteria toxin levels in some Maine lakes since 2008. Fortunately, most lakes do not produce toxins at harmful levels. Lakes that have blooms on a regular basis have been found to produce toxins harmful to humans.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has three satellites monitoring water quality that regularly pass over Maine. They easily measure the transparency of hundreds of fresh and saltwater bodies of water in one pass. By comparing the satellite measurements to what lake monitors find on the ground, NOAA can improve the accuracy of their reports. Many of these lakes have no human monitors, so the agency hopes to create an early warning system for toxic blooms in both fresh and saltwater. Saltwater blooms cause the well-known "red tide" which can make fish and shellfish poisonous.

ALGAE IN TAYLOR POND

(Continued)

The Taylor Pond Association (TPA) monitors our pond's water quality by a variety of techniques described in our annual report. The most frequently used of these is the Secchi Disk. This black and white disk is lowered into the water until it disappears. In Taylor Pond, one can see the disk down to a depth, on average, of about 17 feet. This is better than the 15.8 feet average for all lakes in Maine. Scott Williams of the Lake Stewards of Maine reports that the Secchi disk actually provides more accurate information than a satellite. In fact, according to DEP lake biologist Linda Bacon, the measurements we get on Taylor Pond are used to improve the accuracy of the NOAA satellites' predictions.

For most ponds, limited amounts of the nutrient phosphorus prevent blooms. However, if the level of phosphorus rises above 15 ppm (parts per million), a bloom becomes likely. Fortunately, Taylor Pond's phosphorus remains at an average of 10 ppm, which is well below the average of 12 ppm for all lakes in Maine, and below the threshold of a likely bloom.

The causes of blooms in Lake Auburn are still not fully known. A major bloom in 2012 caused many trout to die. In 2018 the Sun Journal reported another bloom of algae, causing taste and smell issues but with no apparent toxins. This June the water district plans to treat the lake with aluminum sulfate to lower phosphorus levels and hopefully prevent another bloom. According to Scott Williams, one of the main reasons Lake Auburn has issues may be the erosion of marine clays found in the soil surrounding the lake. They contain high amounts of calcium phosphate, which when carried by erosion into the water, raise the phosphorus levels. Unlike Taylor Pond, Lake Auburn is a public water supply and has been the subject of much research. Our monitoring reassures us that if we can prevent an increase in phosphorus, we will continue to enjoy high quality water in Taylor Pond.

So, what can you do to prevent problems on Taylor Pond? As much as possible, prevent any water from entering the pond without being filtered through natural areas. This can best be accomplished by creating at least a ten-foot buffer of natural areas (shrubby, trees, ground cover, etc.) between your lawn and the water. Keep your lawn area small and cut the grass no shorter than three inches. Work to prevent water on your property from running directly into the lake. For free advice, ask for a LakeSmart evaluation to guide you in keeping our pond healthy. See the LakeSmart article elsewhere in this newsletter for more information.



TPA SHORELINE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM UPDATE

By Dana Little

Our long-standing grant program which provides up to \$500 to eligible homeowners continues to work to improve our pond's health. Kristi Norcross and I manage the program, which begins with a LakeSmart evaluation. Since 2017 I have been performing the evaluation, which saves us from hiring an outside consultant.

A LakeSmart property award is made when a homeowner designs their land so that it keeps the lake healthy. LakeSmart recommendations include:

- Preventing rain from directly entering the pond
- Planting a buffer along the shore
- Leaving grass at least three inches long when cutting
- Avoiding pesticides and fertilizers and
- Reducing lawn sizes

No home is perfect, but I can provide recommendations to improve and instructions on how to apply for a \$500 grant to help make those improvements. I can also advise you on how to stay within the requirements of Maine's shoreland zoning law and other regulations.

To find out more about a free LakeSmart evaluation and an opportunity to receive a \$500 grant, call Kristi Norcross at 577-6408. The basic requirements for receiving a grant include:

1. An initial LakeSmart evaluation
2. Make improvements as recommended in the written evaluation
3. Provide proof of associated costs
4. Not make changes to the property that would worsen its score
5. Finally, have a follow up evaluation done to ensure that the work has been done satisfactorily

Treasurer's Report on Finances and Membership

By Edwin Gray

The following is our 2018 end-of-year financial report:

Balance through 12/31/2017				\$27719.04
2018 Income				
	Dues & Contributions	\$5965.00		
	Interest Income	\$26.37		
	Income Total	\$5991.37		
2018 Expenses				
	Federal Filing		\$39.95	
	State fees		\$35.00	
	MLS Dues		\$200.00	
	MVLMP Contribution		\$500.00	
	Dues Letter Printing & Mailing		\$0.00	
	Newsletter Printing & Mailing		\$1,276.80	
	Printer		\$137.14	
	Annual Meeting expense		\$11.94	
	Water Testing expense & Lab Fees		\$229.00	
	Check Order		\$26.85	
	Lake Smart Payments		\$500.00	
	Petition Filing		\$700.00	
	Technical Services		\$3506.23	
	Expense Total		\$7777.07	
Net Gain, (Loss)				(\$1285.70)
Balance through 12/31/2018				\$26,433.34

In 2018, we received 133 dues-payments at various amounts. The Association is very appreciative of the generosity of all its members.

An important part of our efforts is our annual newsletter. In an effort to send the newsletter to all property owners in the Taylor Pond shore land zone, whether they are TPA members or not. Our mailing list currently consist of 239 address, including "honorary" members, such as City Councilors, members of the Planning and Zoning Boards, certain City staff, and so on.

As of 06/10/2019, I have processed 84 memberships, and the Taylor Pond Association checking account has a balance of \$29,148.02

SOME SAFE BOATING REMINDERS:

Maine boating regulations require:

- Boats must maintain no more than "headway speed" (i.e. minimum speed needed to maintain control and forward motion) within 200 feet of the shoreline.
- All children 10 years old or younger must wear a PFD (i.e. life jacket) when aboard any vessel.
- All water craft (including kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards) must be equipped with an appropriate PFD for each person aboard.
- Waterskiing is prohibited between the hours of ½ hour after sunset and ½ hour before sunrise.
- Anyone towing a water skier or tuber must have an additional watcher at least 12 years old aboard.

On Taylor Pond, at any one time there are more kayaks, canoes, paddleboards, and small sailboats on the water than motorized craft. Please be considerate of others at all times. ***If you are transiting at night, be aware that loons and ducks may be in your path.*** Be vigilant!

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Taylor Pond is one of the few lakes in the area is that not infested with milfoil, an invasive feathery plant that can completely take over a shallow lake in a season. Before launching a boat always check carefully to be sure that not a speck of plant material is on it. Just a tiny piece tucked away in a propeller can produce a whole colony of milfoil. Thank you for your vigilance!



ZONING UPDATE

By Jan Phillips

Taylor Pond Association members will remember the controversy raised in the fall of 2017 when the Auburn City Council was asked to (but eventually did not) approve construction of a 21,000 square foot commercial assembly plant for snow-grooming equipment near the north end of Taylor Pond. After the engineer hired by TPA determined that the planned development was not within DEP guidelines, the project was relocated elsewhere. Before that happened, the developers had worked with the Planning Board to write a special exception into the Agricultural and Resource Protected Zone (AG/RP), and that exception remained on the books.

At the 2018 TPA annual meeting, members signed a petition to change the recently written exception in order to prevent any future similar projects from going forward in the watershed. Unfortunately, the PB considered the petition but declined to recommend it to the City Council and the City Council subsequently voted against it.

Because the project never moved past the planning stage, there were other conditions in addition to the phosphorous load that were not addressed, such as traffic safety and the potential depreciation of neighboring properties. The special exception remains as it is now written, but it may be reconsidered in the context of more sweeping changes now being considered for the AG/RP zone. TPA will continue to monitor the health of the pond and its watershed, and at the same time look into what more can be done through partnership with faculty and staff researches at Bates College, grants, and other opportunities.

TAYLOR POND ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2019 AT 7 P.M.
AT THE TAYLOR POND YACHT CLUB**

Please come and visit with pond neighbors and enjoy some light refreshments. Speaker: TBA

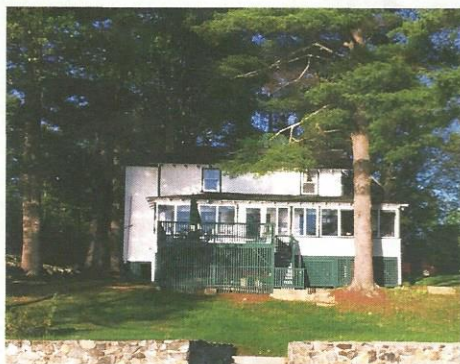
TP HOUSES

By Joan Macri

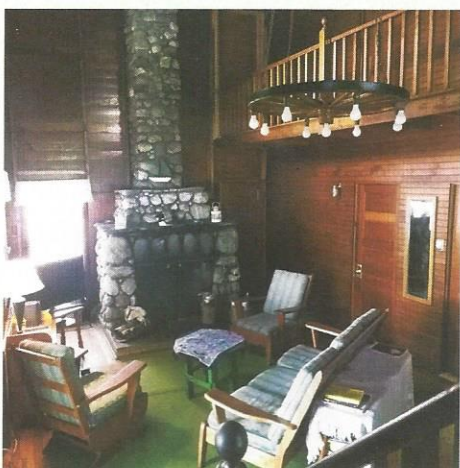
Taylor Pond is a special place to those of us who live here. Its waters are dotted with homes that have graced its shores for generations and it is a favorite pastime for many of us to paddle, sail, swim, or cruise by and peer at certain houses that particularly grab our imagination. We try not to stare too long but we are curious. Who owns that house? How old is it? What history hides behind those walls?

Two such houses are those portrayed in the accompanying photographs. These iconic lake houses have remained largely unchanged over the years because their owners wanted to honor the original owners' designs: the Olstein home on the eastern shore and the Heskanen-Houdek home at the north end. While quite different in style and design, the houses and owners also share a number of similarities.

Sheri and Joel Olstein bought their home in 1989 after searching for more than two years. Sheri wanted a seasonal lake-front home that had "architectural integrity", one that didn't look like it had been picked up from a residential neighborhood and just plopped down lakeside. When she first walked into the house on Waterview, she knew right away she had found what she was looking for. Built in 1913, very little had changed over the years. Board and batten formed the walls, there was a large enclosed wraparound porch, a massive two-story stone fireplace, and a beautiful stone seawall with steps leading directly into the pond. The bones of the house were terrific. The living space is very open with what today would be called a Great Room with cathedral ceilings and a balcony that spans one side. The couple made an offer the same day they saw it and have lived in it since 1989. The only improvement they have made is to update the kitchen in the 1990's and even that maintains the cottage charm. The house came with all the furnishings, many of which they continue to use.



The Olsteins are the third owners of their house. The original family that built the house are thought to have been masons given the 100-year-old stone fireplace and the seawall. Rumor has it that a family member lost the house in a poker game in the late 1920's or early 1930's. The winner's family held onto the house until the Olsteins bought it and the house changed hands twice more before the Olsteins bought it. As with many who live on the pond, Sheri and Joel like to share their home and lake access with their friends and family. For most of the past decade, Temple Shalom has celebrated Shabbat on their lawn each summer, a very special experience. If you hear klezmer music on a summer morning, you will know they are gathering once again.



Architects Michael Heskanen and Debora Houdek spent several years looking for the right lake front property before moving here. Both Debora and Michael grew up on lakes in Minnesota and, after living in a converted lobster pound in Harpswell and dealing with the effects of salt and tides, the couple wanted to return to the relative ease of lake living. They hoped to buy raw land and had a number of criteria including having a south-facing property so they could use photovoltaic cells to provide energy. They looked at a number of area lakes but were especially drawn to Taylor Pond and its unique community and location.

When they first saw what is now their house, they loved the site, especially the sandy beach and gorgeous views, but were unsure they could do what they wanted to do within the budget they had set. They waited more than a year before finally making the purchase. While they originally planned to buy land and build their own house, once they

bought the property, they worked hard to save the original cottage which had been unoccupied for years.

TP HOUSES CONTINUED ...

They were drawn to the massing of the house, how it was shaped, the modern aspects of its overall design. Both Debora and Michael were trained in modern contemporary design and saw the house as much closer to the Frank Lloyd Wright end of the architectural design spectrum than the typical peaked roof New England styles.

Known locally as the Wallingford house, it was originally built by Otto and Peg Wallingford in the early 1960's. Otto, a well-known inventor and innovator, along with Dr. Camille Gardner, started Lost Valley Ski Area where he put his degree in agricultural engineering to good use by creating Maine's first snowmaking system by inventing "The Powder Maker", a cylindrical steel grate towed behind a tractor.

Michael believes Otto put his ingenuity to work when designing the original cottage. While it most likely started as a simple lake-side cottage, multiple additions were added over the years, each new section capitalizing on the large south-facing windows. These windows are sheltered under unusually large roof overhangs that provide shade in the summer but allow in the lower-slanting sunshine during the winter months. The entire house was sited slightly to the east and the roof itself is tilted so that rain drains easily off the lower end. The overall design appears to have been driven by the orientation of the site.

A major problem Debora and Michael experienced with the house after the purchase was that the floors were set low so that one could walk directly outside. With new FEMA requirements and flood zoning, Deborah and Michael raised the house foundation 2'8" by lifting the entire structure and pouring a new concrete floor. That also necessitated raising the exterior grade as well.

The house encompasses about 4700 square feet and is approximately half finished at this point. They have remodeled the interior by taking down walls to open up the views and to create larger interior spaces. Michael has a studio/workshop that was originally two separate rooms. Michael calls himself a weekend carpenter and he is handling much of the interior finishing on his own. He says he has enough projects to last him the rest of his life.

This summer they will focus on the exterior spaces of the property which encompasses more than 15 acres. The old tennis courts are gone but solar panels are going up on Otto Wallingford's old work shed. Debora and Michael want to use the principles of permaculture design as they landscape the property so expect to see lots of native plants, perennials, fruit and nut bearing trees and shrubs that will support wildlife and protect the pond.

The two houses are an interesting study in contrasts and similarities but absolutely perfect for Taylor Pond. Each house is fairly simple and straightforward in its basic design: good bones, straight lines, quality materials. Each structure is honored for its original design by its current owners who look at themselves as stewards of the homes. Each was originally designed and has been carefully maintained as a "lake" home; it's all about the view. And each has been treasured by all the families who have called it home.

May they each continue to grace the shores of Taylor Pond for years to come.



APPRECIATIONS

There are many to thank for contributions to this newsletter. Dana Little, Woody Trask, Jan Phillips, Joan Macri, and Barbara Mitchell contributed articles.

PHOTO CREDITS

We would like to thank the following for contributing photos for this year's newsletter: Roland Brochu, Dana Little, Barbara Mitchell, and Susan Trask



AN IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING TPA MEMBERSHIP

If your mailing of the newsletter does not include a membership form, it means that you have paid your 2019 dues or are an honorary member. If your copy of the newsletter does include a copy of the membership form, it means that you are not currently a dues-paying member of the Taylor Pond Association. Although we enjoy a healthy bank balance, an active membership remains essential to the overall well-being of our organization. If you have never been a member, but agree with our mission of preserving the water quality of Taylor Pond and protecting property values, please join us. If you are a former member who has not yet rejoined this year, please do so. If you are an active member, thank you for your ongoing support.