

THE IPA NEWSLETTER

Mystic Lake, Middle Pond, and Hamblin Pond in Marstons Mills, MA

Spring 2015

A quarterly publication of the Indian Ponds Association

Vol. 15 No. 2

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO THE IPA'S FIRST "OPEN" ANNUAL MEETING



The IPA's annual meeting and social gathering this year will take place on Sunday, July 12, at Lew and Nancy Solomon's house 28 Heath Row, Marstons Mills. Heath Row is to the right off of Regency Drive, which is off of Old Mill Road. We look forward to seeing you there.

In previous years, only IPA members have been invited to these annual gatherings, but this year the IPA Board decided to invite everyone who is interested in the Indian Ponds, whether members or not. We have become concerned that the organization may be perceived as limited to a few waterfront property owners, which it is certainly not. Or that its work is incomprehensibly scientific, which it is not. Many local people use the Indian Ponds for fishing, swimming, and other recreational activities, love the ponds, and have a vital interest in keeping them healthy, for ourselves and for our children and grandchildren. We are hoping that some of these people may also be willing to volunteer to participate in the kinds of work the IPA does on behalf of the ponds. This year's annual meeting will be dedicated to communicating the

organization's need to reach out to the community, and to talk about the ways in which the organization needs to evolve to perpetuate its vital work into the future.

Since its inception in 1958, the IPA has functioned well as a purely volunteer organization. However, the present generation of IPA leadership has dwindled to a small number of individuals who are shouldering all the tasks, and we must encourage more people to join us in the interesting things we do and to share with them what we have learned. It "takes a village" to protect ponds. The IPA needs and would warmly welcome your active participation!
(Continued on page 3)

HISTORY OF THE SCHWARM MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Ten years ago, the IPA Board of Directors decided to establish a scholarship program as a tribute to and in memory of Edward Schwarm, a former IPA Board member, who died of cancer on May 20, 1995. Ed's wife Erla had passed away on March 22, 1995 also of cancer. Ed joined the IPA Board in 2000 and played several key roles when the IPA was rejuvenated

in 2001 as a result of public concern with extreme low water levels in the Indian Ponds and with the Middle Pond herring run, which had been left open for several years. In May 2001, the Town Conservation Commission had approved a proposal submitted by the Town's Engineering Division and Three Bays Preservation in Osterville to lower the herring run by 1.6 ft. Many residents in the IPA area, including Ed, were strongly opposed to this decision because they thought, at the time, that lowering the run could potentially adversely impact the water level in the lakes and be detrimental in a variety of ways to the health and ecology of the lakes. Consequently, Ed initiated a lawsuit, co-sponsored by a number of other residents, in Barnstable Superior Court opposing the lowering of the herring ladder and was also one of the co-signers of an appeal to the MA Department of Environmental Protection opposing the lowering of the ladder. Later, he helped develop and reach agreement on a management plan for the future operation of the run with the MA Division of



Ed Schwarm, 1922-2005

Marine Fisheries and the Town's Division of Natural Resources. As the IPA's representative on the Marstons Mills River Committee, he helped greatly in "mending fences" and was successful in securing a grant of \$20,000 from the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment to repair part of the deteriorating herring run.
(Continued on page 3)

IN THIS ISSUE

- OPEN ANNUAL MEETING
- FINAL HERRING COUNTS
- HISTORY OF THE SCHWARM SCHOLARSHIP
- THIS YEAR'S SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE
- ALUM TREATMENT OF HAMBLIN POND
- HYDRILLA PLANS
- 4TH OF JULY BOAT PARADE
- DAVE REID'S BIRD ARTICLE

IPA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 2014

President
Alex Frazee

Vice President
Holly Hobart

Treasurer
Greg Cronin

Clerk
Emily Wheeler

Directors
Christine Bizinkauskas
Aaron Fishman
Betsey Godley
Roberta Gough
Tamar Haspel
Chip King

Database Manager
Maggie Fearn

Newsletter Editor
Holly Hobart

Webmaster
Tamar Haspel

IPA, Inc., P. O. Box 383
Marstons Mills, MA 02648

<http://www.indianponds.org>
info@indianponds.org



Scan the above QR code with your smartphone to go to the IPA website.

The IPA is a 501(c)(3) organization and a registered public charity. All dues and contributions are tax deductible. This newsletter, with a circulation of 700, is a forum for the exchange of ideas on matters concerning the IPA mission, and the views expressed by authors of articles do not necessarily represent official IPA policy.

2015 SCHWARM SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO GRADUATING SENIOR FROM MARSTONS MILLS



Ethan McPherson

Meet Ethan McPherson, winner of this year's Edward Schwarm Memorial Scholarship. Ethan was selected by the IPA Scholarship Committee on the basis of his academic achievement, extracurricular activities, and community service related to the work of the IPA. Ethan will receive his award at the annual meeting on July 12.

The Schwarm Memorial Scholarship was established in 2005 in memory of Edward Schwarm, a former IPA Director and Officer who died in May of 2005. (See article on page 1)

Ethan is the son of Michael and Gretchen McPherson of Marstons Mills. He graduated from Sturgis Charter Public School where he pursued the full International Baccalaureate Diploma and, last summer, participated in the Falmouth Academy Science, Engineering and Technology Scholars Internship Program. He has also volunteered his time at Cape Cod Hospital. Ethan also participated on the soccer and lacrosse teams, and is a member of the ski club and outing club, and helps run the school store. Ethan plans to pursue a career in either the environmental sciences or pre-med.

We are very pleased to present Ethan with a check for \$1,000.00, with our congratulations and best wishes for his success in college and beyond.

Dear Indian Ponds Association Members,

I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your generosity. I am very grateful to be receiving this scholarship and it will definitely be very helpful in paying for college. Yesterday I committed to UMass Amherst and I could not be more excited. I am looking forward to beginning the next chapter of my life.

Thank you again,
Ethan McPherson

OPEN ANNUAL MEETING JULY 12

(Continued from page 1)

Do you like to work out on the water in a boat, doing water quality testing or collecting samples of plankton or algae? The IPA would be happy to train you.

Do you like to write, draw, edit, or proofread? Do you know how to assemble photos and text on a computer? Create charts from spreadsheet data? The IPA Newsletter needs you!

Would you like to learn how to support a website or maintain a relational database? You can do that in the IPA.

Do you enjoy boating? The IPA has two outboard boats that need people who know how (or would be willing to learn how) to operate and maintain them. During the summer, this involves only few hours of pleasant work a week.

Could you offer a place to store a small, trailered boat during the winter? This would be a hugely-appreciated contribution to the IPA's work.

Can you lead a meeting? Take minutes? Keep track of income and expenses? The IPA needs you, too!

Would you like to join the IPA's Board of Directors? They're a multi-talented group of people who meet for a couple of hours every six or eight weeks. Although the eleven official directors have to be elected by the membership at the annual meeting, anyone who is interested can join the board by becoming an associate director at any time.

The IPA needs your brains and talent! This is not an organization for a few rarefied summer people. It's for everybody who loves the ponds. Don't worry about things being too complicated or technical. They aren't! None of us knew anything about ponds when we first joined. We all had to learn from scratch. It wasn't hard.

Come to the Annual Meeting on July 12. After the business meeting, we always enjoy socializing with wine and tasty snacks. It's a great opportunity for you to get to know us better. Help us expand our horizons!

HERRING DATA SO FAR

Herring counts for the Marstons Mills River as of the first 25 days of this year's run, as shown in the table below, are down about 17% from the 2013 totals for the same number of days into the run, but this year's local run went for an additional 40 days, so counts could easily surpass 2013 by the time final totals are tabulated. The State doesn't release those figures until the data for every run in the state are complete, and some runs are still in progress. The Taunton River, for example, still has millions of herring running in mid-June! The Newsletter will publish final totals for the Marstons Mills River in its next issue.

It's important to understand that the actual number of fish counted does not equal the number of fish in the run. Fish are counted for only ten minutes out of every hour from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Many of the fish in the run are not counted. The State uses a statistical model that takes the raw counts and other data into consideration to produce an estimate of the total number of fish in the run. The calculated totals for the entire run in 2012 were 87,308 fish; in 2013, 56,987 fish, and in 2014, 47,006 fish.

	Comparative herring data for 1st 25 days of run — actual counts	2013	2014	2015
	Date of first count	April 1	April 9	April 11
	Date of most recent count	April 25	May 3	May 5
	Number of days counted	25	25	25
	Number of fish counted	3688	3551	3040

ALUM TREATMENT OF HAMBLIN POND IS UNDERWAY

As this issue of the Newsletter goes to press, the alum treatment of Hamblin Pond is in process. On June 10, a sample area of the pond was treated and the results analyzed. This analysis yielded satisfactory results, and the treatment began. It is scheduled to finish on June 22, after which the pond will be reopened for swimming.

The Town Council appropriated \$300,000 for this project. The application was done by Aquatic Technologies, Inc., contractor to the Town. Dr. Kenneth Wagner of Water Resources, Inc., the lake management professional who supervised the successful treatment of Mystic Lake in 2010, also designed and was on-site supervisor of the Hamblin Pond treatment.

The pond is divided into irregularly-shaped sections, each of which receives a different measured dose of alum. The barge make four passes over each section, two in one direction and two crosswise, delivering both aluminum sulfate (alum) and a buffering solution, sodium aluminate, in precisely-measured quantities of up to 53 grams per square meter. There are three different doses specified for different parts of the pond.



Side view of barge,

The reason for doing this treatment is to inactivate the excess phosphates in the sediments. These phosphorus compounds were deposited in the pond over the decades during which the Clear Lake Duck Farm raised thousands of ducks on its shores.

The pond was previously treated with alum in 1995. These treatments are expected to last around 12-15 years, but the 1995 treatment lasted 19 years, something of a record.



This barge dispenses a precise mixture of alum (aluminum sulfate) and a buffering compound (sodium aluminate) over a section of the pond defined by GPS coordinates. The chemicals enter the water as liquids, but immediately turn into a snowflake-like precipitate called “floc”, which floats to the bottom of the pond, clarifying the water as it goes. When it reaches the bottom, it combines with phosphates in the sediments to form a long-lasting, insoluble compound that prevents phosphorus from escaping into the water column.

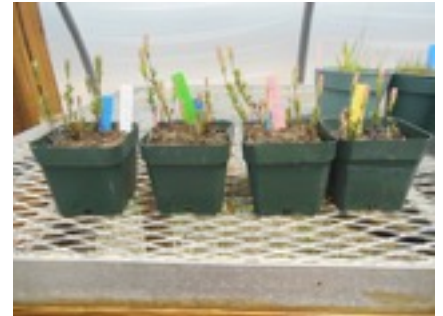
HYDRILLA CONTROL PLANS ON HOLD AWAITING COMPLETION OF CRANBERRY RESEARCH

Since its discovery in 2010, Mystic Lake's *Hydrilla* has continued to spread despite all efforts at eradication, including hand-pulling by volunteers, diver-assisted suction harvesting (DASH), and two summers of treatment in selected locations with the herbicide Aquathol-A. While these measures have achieved some control in areas where they were applied, new plants have continued to appear in other parts of the pond. In the past two years, new patches of the invasive weed have also been found in Middle Pond near the cut.

Growing in shallow, sunlit water, *Hydrilla* has spread from isolated, mappable patches to a nearly continuous encirclement of Mystic Lake. It is, clearly, a hardy and successful invader, and there are few remaining alternatives that stand a chance of eradicating it.

The measure that has been proposed is the systemic herbicide fluridone, (trade named SONAR), which was used successfully to eradicate a *Hydrilla* infestation in Centerville's Long Pond, although it required nine successive years of treatment to achieve its objective. Fluridone, when administered in the extremely low concentrations proposed (5 parts per billion), is effective at killing *Hydrilla* without harming native aquatic plants. This concentration is also far below established thresholds for recreational uses and even drinking water.

One important question is whether cranberry plants would be harmed if they were irrigated with pond water containing fluridone. Some of the bogs near Mystic Lake draw pond water for cranberry irrigation during dry periods during the summer. To answer that question, the UMass Cranberry Experimental Station in East Wareham has undertaken a study of the herbicide's effects on growing cranberry plants. Results were expected by mid-June, but have not yet been released. The permits for the fluridone application, to be done by Aquatic Technologies, Inc., are contingent on the results of this study, so the treatment plan is currently on hold awaiting further news.



Experimental cranberry plants. Untreated control plant is on left; plants treated with fluridone in three increasing concentrations to the right of it.

—Holly Hobart



JOIN THE JULY 4TH BOAT PARADE!*

Decorate your boat with flags, banners, or anything in the spirit of the occasion and meet at the Race Lane beach at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, July 4th

Rain date: Sunday, July 5

*This event is not sponsored by the IPA, nor can the IPA be responsible for any accidents. Individuals will be responsible for their own safety.

HISTORY OF THE SCHWARM SCHOLARSHIP *(Continued from page 1)*

Ed, who flew B-24 bombers in World War II and maintained an avid interest in flying, also actively supported the Town's purchase of the former Danforth property, which included the Cape Cod Airfield. Following its purchase in the fall of 2003, he was appointed to a Town committee to oversee the reactivation of the airfield, which finally took place in spring 2004. During 2003–2005, Ed served as IPA clerk and treasurer, relinquishing the latter position only a few weeks before his death.

Ed's accomplishments during his career as an electrical engineer are impressive. He worked at the MIT Instrumentation Laboratory (now Draper Labs) when the school teamed with NASA on the Apollo missions. Formerly chief designer of the DC-8 aircraft flight simulator, he headed the design of the Apollo Space Program's self-contained guidance systems for the command and lunar landing modules. His work on the Apollo program helped NASA land the first man on the moon and safely return the Apollo 13 astronauts to earth. Ed was also an accomplished inventor and held 11 international patents for innovations in space aviation and electronic power systems.

Ed was truly a fine gentleman, a man of many talents with numerous extraordinary accomplishments during his career, a devoted husband and father, and a dedicated member of the IPA.

In 2005, shortly after his death, the IPA Board of Directors decided to honor Ed's memory by establishing a scholarship in the amount of \$500 to be awarded annually to a worthy college-bound graduating high school senior residing in Marstons Mills. Initially, only Barnstable High School students were eligible to apply, but later that was amended to include Sturgis Charter School and eventually any high school as long as the student resided in Marstons Mills. The first \$500 scholarship was awarded in 2006. In 2007, thanks to the generosity of IPA members contributing to the Scholarship fund, it was possible to increase the amount of the award to \$750.

In 2008, the Board agreed to increase the amount of the award to \$1,000. The fund had been bolstered by the transfer of over

\$2,000 from the Erla Z. Schwarm Memorial Scholarship which had been established at The Federated Church of Hyannis by Ed Schwarm in memory of his wife. Since the Church had not received any applications that met the criteria of the scholarship, intended for teaching students pursuing an undergraduate college education, Ed's oldest son Tom, together with his sister and brother and in collaboration with the Church's Memorials Committee, decided to close the scholarship at the Church and transfer most of the funds to the IPA's Schwarm Scholarship Fund. This additional money, coupled with the continuing generosity of Tom and the IPA membership, has enabled the IPA to give one and sometimes two \$1,000 scholarships every year since 2008.

The following are the Schwarm Memorial Scholarship recipients: (2006) Michael Crowley, son of Dan and Jane Crowley; (2007) Terri Anne Guarino, daughter of Richard and Joanne Guarino, and Katherine Patellos, daughter of Samuel and Deborah Patellos; (2008) Robyn Pitera, daughter of John and Cheri Pitera, and Rebecca Cabral, daughter of Neil and Moira Cabral; (2009) Ariel Walcutt, daughter of Mark and Roberta Walcutt; (2010) Nicholas Atcheson, son of Peter and Michelle Atcheson; (2011) Jamie Neelon, son of Daniel and Cindy Neelon, and Sam Wollak, son of Gerard and Mary Wollak; (2012) Amanda Kennedy, daughter of Peter and Kim Kennedy, and Carolyn Morin, daughter of Jacque and Martha Morin; (2013) Jeffrey Clark, son of Jeffrey O. Clark and Sandra Leo-Clark, and Sara Pipe-Mazo, daughter of Gary Mazo and Deborah Mangan; (2014) Jack Riley, son of Michael and Christine Riley; and (2015) Ethan McPherson, son of Michael and Gretchen McPherson.

It is the fond hope of the IPA to continue this scholarship program of recognizing and assisting outstanding college-bound students. This is consistent with part of the organization's mission to educate the public, serve the community, and promote and preserve the Indian Ponds. In addition, it serves as a fitting way to honor the memory of a very good man whom I and others considered to be a good friend and collaborator in the IPA, Edward Schwarm.

--Emory D. Anderson, PhD

Photo Credits: Page 1, Dr. Emory Anderson; Page 4, Dr. Kenneth Wagner; Page 5, Hilary Sandler, UMass Cranberry Experimental Station; Back Cover: "Ducks In the Mist", Betsey Godley;

BLACK BIRDS AND BLACKBIRDS

Occasionally, I hear people referring to a group of black birds as Blackbirds and I say to myself, "Those are black birds, but they are not Blackbirds." Pretty snooty of me, huh?



Red-winged Blackbird

We do have a lot of black birds on Cape Cod right at the moment, but we may have only one Blackbird. We have Common Ravens. We have two types of Crows, the American Crow and the Fish Crow, two types of Grackles, the Common Grackle and the Boat-Tailed Grackle. We have the Brown-headed Cowbird whose body is black and the European Starling who is not really black all over. All these and I haven't even mentioned shore birds or water birds and ignored ones you don't always see like the Black Vulture.



Rusty Blackbird

These are all "black birds" but none are Blackbirds. There are really only two Blackbirds that may be seen on Cape Cod, the Red-winged Blackbird and the Rusty Blackbird. I have seen several vagrant Brewer's Blackbirds, undoubtedly blown in on some storm, but basically we have the Red-winged Blackbird and the Rusty Blackbird, but at different times of the year.



Brown-headed Cowbird

You can find Red-winged Blackbirds flying in groups of Grackles unless you are near a marsh and then you will see lots of Red-wings and virtually no Grackles. They will nest and breed near any body of water, but occasionally mate in open pastures. They raise two to three broods each season, building a new nest for each brood. After the breeding season, Red-winged Blackbirds gather in flocks, off-Cape, sometimes numbering in the tens of thousands.

The Rusty Blackbird is not quite as visible as the Red-winged. During its breeding season it is liable to be the only blackbird in its area. It is a winter resident on Cape and is seen in other seasons only because it has strayed from its normal pathways or been blown off course by a storm or strong winds. At other times of the year they fly north and live and breed in Northern Canada and most of Alaska.

While in the spring the male is black with a bluish iridescence, in the fall both sexes are much more a rusty brown. Both sexes have conspicuous yellow eyes.

The Brewer's Blackbird, which shows up here once in a while, is my favorite because it is so easy to identify. Picture, if you will, a jet black bird with a stark white eye. What could be simpler? Its normal range is west of the Mississippi, but I have seen one on the street I live on and several in Falmouth. It is named for a 19th century ornithologist, Thomas Brewer of Boston. The Brewer's is still expanding its range and is moving east. It is a very social species and plays well with Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds.



Brewer's Blackbird

—Dave Reid

**TO SEE NEWSLETTER PHOTOS IN FULL COLOR,
GO TO THE IPA WEBSITE: www.indianponds.org**

“ To preserve and protect the natural environment and ecological systems of the Indian Ponds and surrounding parcels of land and watershed and to participate in studies and work with other agencies, individuals, and groups to educate the public, serve the community, and promote and preserve the Indian Ponds and surrounding areas.”

INDIAN PONDS ASSOCIATION
P. O. BOX 383
MARSTONS MILLS, MA 02648

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

