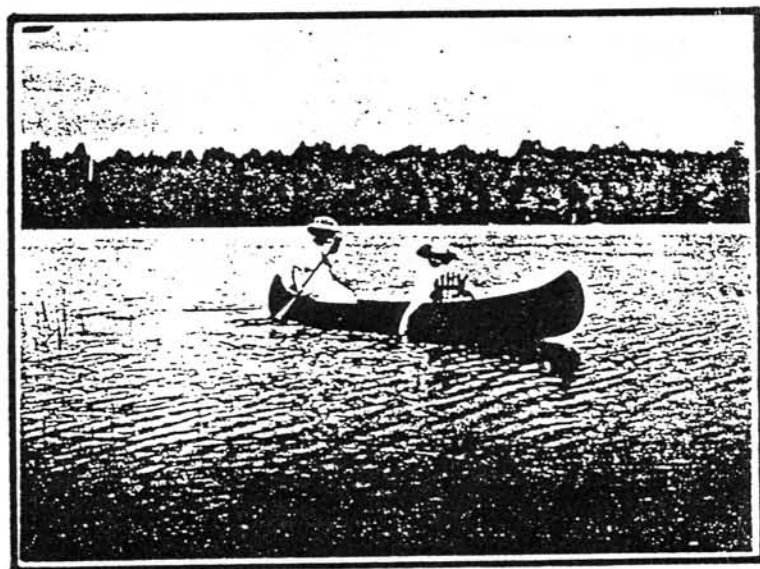
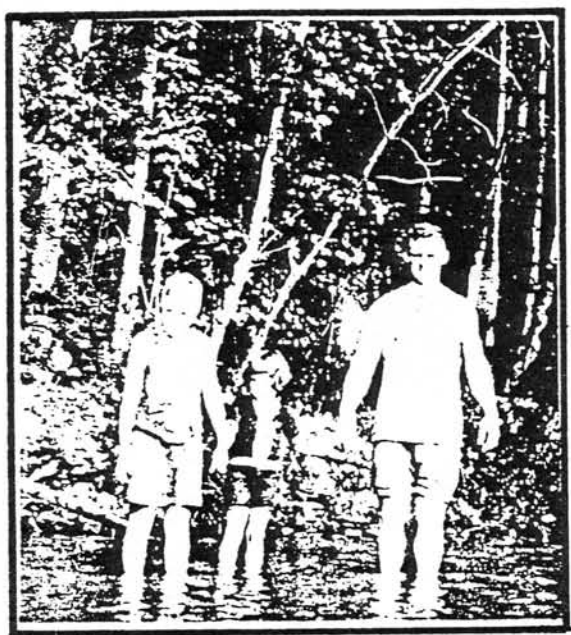
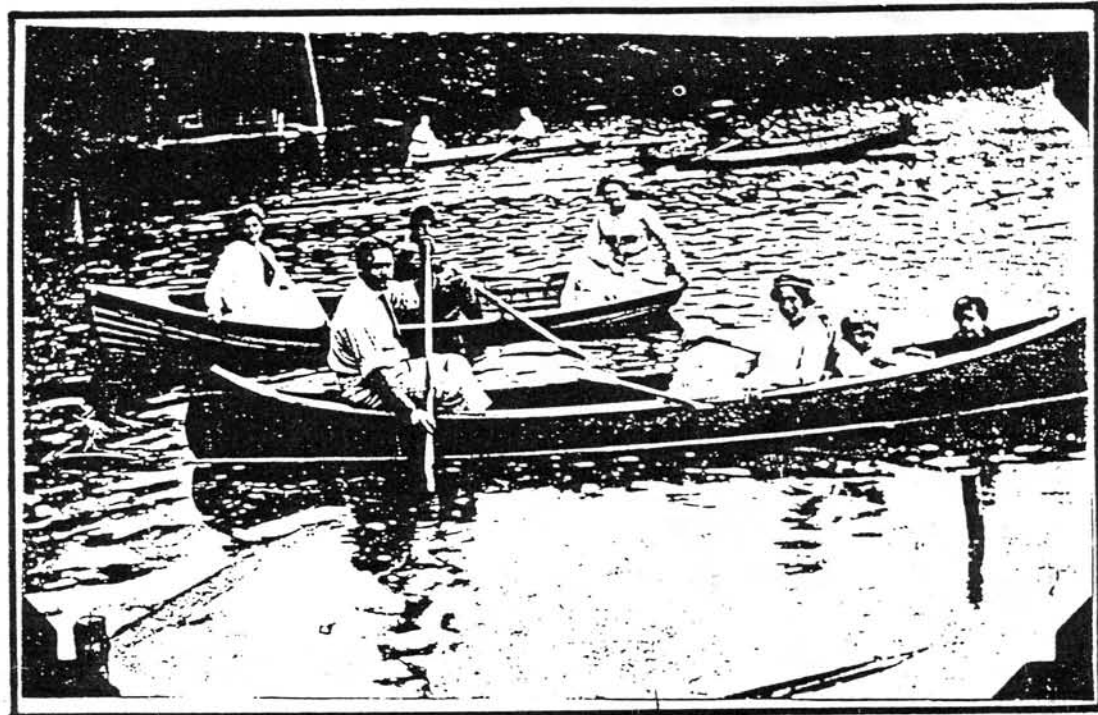


# *Taconic Memories*

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Commemorating the 90th Anniversary  
of the Taconic Lake Association

## About "Taconic Memories"...

*Taconic Memories* is a collection of words, nothing more, nothing less. It will never win a Pulitzer prize for journalism nor will it reach the New York Times Best Seller List. That's OK - that is not what we intended to do.

What makes *Taconic Memories* important lies behind the words. The words come from the heart and soul of a wonderful group of people - you, your family, friends and neighbors on this little bit of heaven we call Taconic Lake. Our intentions in collecting these words from you was to provide an outlet for expressing your feelings, joys, frustrations and even sorrows and share them with others through our common bond - the lake and its people.

For those of you interested in a little Taconic Lake Association history, we suggest you read Anne Bittners "How It All Started", Bill Rodiers "Family Ties" and Marion Bretons "Store and Post Office Memories".

While everyone had different and exciting memories to share, one cannot help but notice that two words predominate the articles - FRIENDSHIP and BRETON. That's not unexpected... after all, Taconic Lakers have always thought of those words as synonymous.

Don't try to read *Taconic Memories* like a novel, rather think of it as a collection of letters from an old friend, or 41 of them to be exact!

Sit back and enjoy!

Mary Kreiger  
Mary Millard  
Mike Cavanaugh

## Editors Note:

When faced with the task of combining 90 years of memories from 40 different people I sought the advice of a friend who is a professional editor. She told me two very important things:

1. "You work for the reader, not the writer."

So I attempted to rearrange articles to eliminate repetition and rewrite sections if necessary to make the memories flow more easily.

2. "The writers won't like what you've done to their work, and the readers won't notice - and that's OK."

I hope that I have fairly and accurately interpreted your memories and that, if in the interest of time, space or clarity, I have left out something that is important to you - I apologize.

I wrestled with various ways of arranging this collection of memories. First I tried alphabetically, but that was boring and confusing. Then I thought of geographically, by camp. That idea had it's flaws too - some of you have moved around the lake and your memories relate to other cottages. Therefore, *Taconic Memories* is presented in no particular order except that families are generally grouped together.

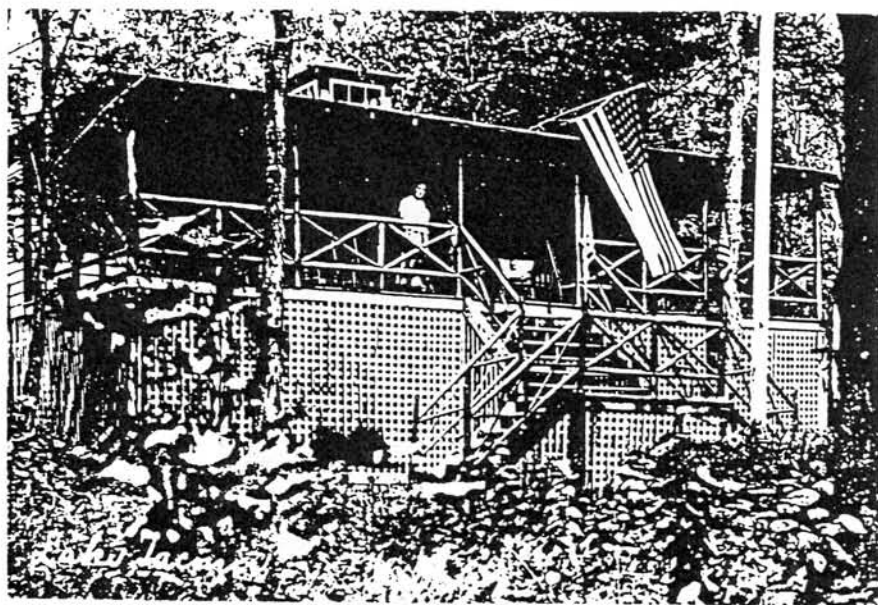
Special thanks go to Mary Millard and my aunt, Mary Kreiger for collecting the letters, initial editing, providing historical perspective and making countless trips to meet me with more information. A great big thanks also goes to my wife, Kathy, for all her help with typing, proofreading and putting up with me during the project.

M.J.C.

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*Bittner, Barnes, Cavanaugh/Poulin  
Brendese, Kennedy, Grogan, Millard*



### *How It All Started*

*Anne (Hellmuth) Bittner*

In 1913, at the age of five months, I made my first visit to Lake Taconic via the Hudson River Night Line out of New York City. The following is what I have learned or remember from my many summers there.

Lake Taconic, known as Crandall Pond before 1901, was a tranquil spot with clean, cool air in the Grafton Hills. It was sought by folks who wished to escape the hustle and heat of summer in their home cities. They built what they called "cottages", not "camps", and settled for a simpler life. It was somewhat like a little hamlet where everyone knew everyone else, for better or worse, striving together to improve and protect their Shangri-la by forming an association in 1901.

They formally named it The Taconic Lake Association. The original Board consisted of H. Jesse Moses, Edward W. Greenbaum, Harry A. Lewis, Anthony P. Finder and James H. Duffie who, I believe, was from New York City.

Oddly enough, many of the early members came from New York City area as had my grandfather, Charles Strebel, of Queens, New York. They told their friends about the mountain air and NO mosquitoes! Chris Brandenstein was a friend who introduced Grandpa to The Lake. Brandenstein had bought what was called the Pioneer Cottage. It was built with narrow clapboard siding before 1905 on the north side of the lake. My father, August Hellmuth, later bought it from Brandenstein renting it for a few years to Marian and Arthur Mann, among others. He then sold it to the Devanes, whom I believe are the present owners.

At the beginning, I am told, there were three log cabins: Marge Curry's (an early Taconic Lake Board member), Baldwin Palmer's (though he was not the original owner), both cabins near the present Store, and Mrs. Rourke's (later Neil Rourke's) on the east side of the lake. They were all New Yorkers.



I remember my mother, the late Catherine M. Hellmuth, telling of her first visit from New York City. The train arrived in Chatham and from there they rode a buckboard to The lake, a long and wearisome journey. Considering the travel difficulties these city people endured The lake must have meant a great deal for so many to have carried on through the third and fourth generations.

My parents did not own an auto until 1922. In the intervening years, they and others were met in Albany or Troy for a fee by Will Rodier who had an open "touring car" or Phil Elgeiser in one of his "Tin Lizzies" as called them, if one was operational! This was a fine courtesy by these men.

Rodier was an Association member and later on the Board but Elgeiser did not belong to the Association. Mr. and Mrs. Elgeiser were Lake "caretakers", natives of Berlin or Petersburg, living year round in a house at the top of the steep hill going down to the shore. From there they could observe every car going into or out of the lake. This house had plaster walls and was winter-tight! It was later purchased by Mrs. Kreuscher, an elderly N.Y.C. lady who spent many summers there.

From the State Road (Rte. 2) one entered a one-lane dusty, dirt road of three miles to the lake. The road surface was rounded like a camel's back with deep drainage ditches on either side. It made for a perilous situation if a vehicle approached from the other direction. I recall my Dad pulling over to allow another car to pass. The other car drove on, but Dad had the dickens of a time getting out of the ditch. Courtesy of the road? I am sure it was not one of our Lake people.

While Grandpa's house was being built on the second tier of lots just behind Baldwin Palmer's log cabin, he lived in a tent. My father spent some time there with him before 1910. A photographer used to come to the lake and make postcards of Strebel's tent as well as houses or noteworthy scenes of the lake, which he could sell.

Once construction was completed, a pump in the kitchen brought water into the house. Grandpa had a well dug for his supply, but those at the waterfront simply ran a pipe into the lake. There was no bathroom. Everyone had an outhouse, and yes! - everyone had a chamber pot under each bed. Cooking was done on a kitchen wood-burning stove which often provided the only heat for chilly mornings or evenings unless one had a fireplace. Kerosene cookstoves came later.

On warm evenings one sat on the porch, in a comfortable rocker, chatting with neighbors, undisturbed by mosquitoes. Indoors one lit a kerosene lamp or two by which to read, play cards or board games. This is where I learned to play dominoes, checkers, parcheezi or other games with my father or friends. There was no television or radio, except for a battery radio in later years, but reception was very poor.

Grandpa loved people and parties, so they danced or listened to the cylinder records of his Edison phonograph or Mr. and Mrs. Brandenstein's music box. Both these instruments now grace our California home, to the amazement and curiosity of all who see them.

The advent of the family automobile, better roads, and the electric power line into the lake changed all that, but I get ahead of myself.

Outdoor recreation in the early days consisted of boating, swimming and long walks in the countryside. At first there were no canoes on the lake. Some had safe, unwieldy flat-bottomed boats or keeled round-bottom ones. These would have to be bailed out after each rain, unless shielded by a covered dock.

Swimming took place only at the Bathing Beach, a now laughable term, since it was a small clearing designated for that purpose on the east side of the lake. There was no diving board or platform or even a place at which to tie one's boat. There was, however, The Rock! This was a flat-topped rock below the water's surface and a few yards from shore. One could sit on it. It was a red-letter day when, as a child, I was first able to swim to The Rock!

There was another rock, large and split vertically down its center, named Split Rock, located on the road near the later built tennis court. Visitors were taken there for a "picture opportunity" sitting atop Split Rock. From the meadow east of the tennis court they were also shown the distant Taconic Hills and Berkshires.

The Keyes and Snows had built their cottages facing this view which they preferred to a lake location. A hurricane swept through this area in the 1930's destroying the handsome pine grove surrounding Snow's house. One of the charms of this property had been the tall pines. Fortunately, the attractive home was saved. Dr. Hess later bought it.

Mother, like her mother before her, loved picking wild berries which grew in abundance on the hill near the King cottage and behind ours. From these she baked wonderful pies and made jelly on that woodburning stove. Sometimes we walked to a farm where apples and other fruits were available. More pies and jelly? Yes!

Not far from the lake lived the Crandalls, Schermerhorns, Burdicks and other historic families whose forebearers were buried in a little cemetery nearby. The headstones bore 1800's dates with sentimental or amusing verses. I should have made a rubbing or two, if I had known how at the time.

Some of these farmers came to the lake by buggy to sell their produce in season. Mother had a standing order with Mrs. Burdick for eggs, home-churned sweet butter and a roasting chicken...all tasty-fresh.

Charlie Weeden was our milkman. It was unpasteurized and delivered in bottles with a thick layer of cream on top. We did not know about cholesterol at that time. He was also the iceman. The Association had an icehouse built near the store. It was filled with sawdust in which Charlie buried the ice he had cut from the lake the previous winter. There was always enough to supply all homes the entire summer. For \$.50 or \$.75 Charlie carried a large chunk of ice into the house or outside to the icebox built into the kitchen wall. It usually lasted about a week.

Charlie made change from a strange-looking long, narrow, 6" or 8" vertically deep purse which he folded and kept deep in his trouser pocket. Also, he never changed his watch to Daylight Saving Time; just kept it at Standard. We set our clocks by Charlie's watch. There was no radio to give us the time. He called it "Petersburg time". Each town or city in those days made its own decision about time. It was not a universal thing. Daylight Saving Time began in 1918 in N.Y.C. and gradually spread to other cities and states.

As more people came to the lake, other vendors arrived. I recall the Watkins Spices man drove in a few times. More important was the weekly butcher's truck, but there was a problem with these deliveries. No road went completely around the lake. On the north road one could drive as far as Buerger's cottage but then had to retrace ones way before proceeding to the south side which ended at Mrs. Haas' house in the cove. Here it was a case of turning about again, back to the store. People who were served first got first pick at choice cuts. For the sake of fairness the butcher finally alternated his route each week.

This problem existed because the Association had been trying for years to purchase a stretch of Long Lake land which adjoined Taconic Lake right down to the shore. It was owned by Theodore Wilsnack, of Long Lake, who refused to sell. We could not legally cut through to complete a road circling the lake. After many years, our Association

settled with Wilsnack who had been holding out for a price. Our road was finally cut through. Who was first to walk or drive over the new road? It was as exciting as the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco or the George Washington Bridge in N.Y. I do not know, but recall Mr. and Mrs. Cushman, who passed our cottage on their nightly walks, passed just once one night. They no longer had to make the obligatory retracing of steps.

Another walk enjoyed by oldtimers was the mile or so through thick woods to Long Lake or Dyken Pond. The trail started behind the Baldwin Palmer property, near the King cottage. My parents were acquainted with Theodore Wilsnack, who had been a New York Assemblyman from Queens. Upon reaching the Long Lake shore we would ha-loo across to the Wilsnacks who lived there now year-round. He would row across the lake to get us and do the same upon our return. It was always an interesting visit since he was an educated man, full of fascinating stories. He was also the Justice of the Peace for the area. Sometimes State troopers brought someone in while we were there and court would be held right on his front porch.

It may have been about the time of the land purchase that the Association hired a surveyor to survey every lot and piece of Taconic Lake land, a copy of which was provided for each member. In the beginning lots were laid out with chains, and perhaps, rather casually. Property lines in dispute were finally resolved.

The first building for the Association had been the store. It was there that simple basics could be purchased and mail was delivered from our post office in Petersburg. A man named Simmons is the postman I remember best. He arrived about 1:30 p.m. blowing his car horn, announcing his arrival as he came down the steep hill. This was the hour for greeting and chatting with other members as they gathered at the store to pick up mail and out of town newspapers.

Our further connection with the outside world was a crank-up telephone on the store wall. Put the receiver to your ear, give the phone a few cranks and the Berlin operator answered connecting your call to "wherever-land". It also served as a friendly party line. I recall trying to reach a carpenter who had failed to show up for work. The Berlin operator said, "I know he was at so-and-so's lunch room a few minutes ago. I'll try to get him for you". She did!

Through the years a succession of people tended the store. It was always the Board's responsibility to be sure we had someone each year for this job. It was just a one-room building during the first decade with a Mr. Howard and I believe Mr. Elgeiser for a while, in charge. Later a man from Stephentown was there and, for several years, Alan Stewart and his wife, Lucy. Alan was a happy-go-lucky popular fellow and a helpful handyman. He went on a fishing vacation once (the Adirondacks or Canada, I think) and was never heard from again. He was presumed to have drowned, leaving Lucy and a young son.

The Bretons, Art and Marion, and her mother, Mrs. McCarthy are best remembered for their long tenure as storekeepers. Marion even became postmistress. By that time additional rooms and living quarters had been added as well as a large screened porch which was used as a playroom for the young people and for Association meetings.

Does anyone remember the corrugated metal roofs on several cottages now occupied by the Thieringers, Predigers and others in that area of the lake? Someone had built them on speculation before 1910. Grandpa bought one and then decided he did not want to live on the lake shore. Out of town guests stayed there at times. They said a rainy night, especially one with hail stones, meant a sleepless night. It was not just the drip-drip-drip of the raindrops, a la Cole Porter, but more like the drumming or bombardment of Desert Storm on the metal roof! This was soon changed when new owners came along.

How about the days when some of our allegedly obstreperous youths pulled a Halloween-type joke on lake residents? During the night they untied all boats from their moorings. In the morning the boats were seen tied together in the middle of the lake, clustered like a gaggle of geese which had lost its way. They looked so silly out there, floating around together with no human in sight.

Of a more sedate nature was the time Mrs. Chambers, Aunt Abby and Aunt Mamie (not sure of that last aunt's name) invited several of us teens to an evening musicale at their home. Mrs. Chambers had a teenaged daughter, Kathleen. We were all asked to perform. Someone played the piano, I sang in my nervous soprano, another did a recitation, etc. Afterward we had cookies and soft drinks. It was a pleasant interlude and a brave attempt on the part of the Chambers for our young folk.

There is no doubt the family auto had a lot to do with growth at Taconic Lake. It made places more accessible. A greater number of people discovered the lake and bought property there. There were the Cushmans from Bennington, the Rhodes from Rensselaer, the Eckerts from Albany, the Cavanaughs and Kreigers from Watervliet, the Sambrooks from Troy and too many others to mention.

Businessmen could leave the hot city and drive the 20 miles or so each evening to be with their families and enjoy a refreshing swim. Friends could drive up for an afternoon or evening visit. The newcomers were a welcome addition as they brought "new blood" and enthusiasm. Mrs. Cushman served on the Board several years during which the Wilsnack transaction was completed as were other important Association matters. Unfortunately, cars brought air pollution, of which we are so conscious today, and, somehow, more mosquitoses. But no one has figured out that problem so far.

Whereas swimming anywhere but at the bathing beach had been discouraged, people began taking advantage of this convenience at their own docks. The Cushmans constructed a large dock where high diving could be practiced from its roof. This was the deep water side of the lake. The Cushman's and Chambers' sons, as well as Jack Rourke, Martin and Newt Buerger and the beautiful Baird girls, often swam there. They were all excellent swimmers and divers.

In the 1920's a new member appeared on the scene - Dr. Palmer, DDS. At his dock he taught swimming and diving to a few children on his side of the lake, near Shalkenbacks I believe. The Board gradually improved the bathing beach with easier access and a platform, with springboard, out beyond the Rock.

Bringing electricity to the lake made for the greatest change in life there. What a luxury to have electric refrigeration (good-bye Charlie Weeden), electric pumps, indoor bathrooms, septic tanks, electric lamps, radio, television, and all the conveniences enjoyed at home. This brought an era of building and renovation. Whereas my parents, the Hellmuths, had made improvements after Grandpa's day, electricity opened new possibilities. My husband, Michael Bittner, and I further remodeled Grandpa's Maple Lodge (he named it for the many maple trees surrounding it) and called it "The Wigwam" for the Indian decor we adopted. Indians are known to have camped at the lake. Grandpa had begun a small collection of Indian things which we enlarged upon and now use in our den. The cottage is now owned by Lib and Charles Meyer who have converted it to year round use.

I cannot resist a few personal notes of people and events I enjoyed.

Does anyone remember when, after many years, Mrs. Rourke transformed her log cabin and grounds from one of the ordinary to a jewel in the ringlet of lake homes?

I remember the day I had occasion to visit her in the late 1920's. Walking down the path from the road, I passed through a fairyland of trees and beautiful flowers. Off to one side,



to be viewed from the house, was a bank of fir trees below which were tall hollyhocks, delphinium, larkspur, graduated down to medium tall plants, such as day lilies, phlox, iris and shorter ones like petunias and alyssum. Green grass grew between graceful curves of smaller flower beds right up to the rear door. It was a riot of color. Better Homes And Gardens could not have done better.

Gazing up at the cabin, I saw all bark had been removed and the logs painted a deep Old Dutch red. The shutters and trim were apple green - a delightful combination. The interior natural wood dark floors were highly polished, covered with just an occasional throw rug. Fireplace, furnishings and appointments were appropriate to it all. Awestruck, I asked Mrs. Rourke how she had created such magic and so beautiful a setting. I will never forget her answer, "My dear, I spent seven years in a New York art school". Mrs. Rourke had a devoted maid who stayed with her in N.Y.C. and at the lake. They came early and stayed late into the fall.

The next winter, while I was a freshman at Barnard College, Mrs. Rourke invited me, as her guest, to the N.Y.C. spectacular Flower Show. Afterward we had tea and cakes at Schrafft's. I will always remember this interesting lady.

Then there was Mrs. Harry Rhodes, mother of Harriet, Harold and Owen. We had wonderful talks as we swam and dove from their new dock and springboard. She was an easy person with whom to talk, warm, down-to-earth and filled with Irish humor.

Mrs. Baird is high on my list too. As a girl of eight or nine I used to pass her house on the lakeshore path to the bathing beach. I loved to go there to watch people swim. One day she asked why I did not swim there too. I explained I did not know how, so was not permitted in the water. Mrs. Baird promptly gave me a swimsuit of her then-grown daughter and cloth water wings to blow up. She said, "Take these home and ask your mother to allow you to go swimming". I did, with Clara Neubert, our neighbor who knew how to swim. She showed me how to use the water wings and I soon became a swimmer. I never learned proper form, but kept afloat and loved it!

The Neuberts had a swing suspended from a tree limb in their back yard. After asking permission I was allowed to use it. Such fun! The Neubert cottage is now the Kreiger's. Mary Kreiger is a good friend from whom I hear several times each year.

Mr. Schlubdibier was another of my adult friends. The Schlubdibiers occupied the Baldwin Palmer cottage for one month of his vacation for many years. After Mr. Palmer's death, they bought that rear lot house. He was an architect for the City of New York with an office in the then famous Woolrich Building. His occasional letters to me were illustrated with wonderful sketches. The Schlubdibiers had no children. When I was a very little girl I remember him bringing a wheelbarrow of weeds which looked like rhubarb and other produce, so I could "play store". Such simple pleasures! Years later we played Bridge - I had to be on my toes or be in big trouble with Mr. S. He was a man of fixed habits. Every evening he and Mrs. S. rowed around the lake. Every afternoon he had a nap in his porch hammock. Everything was timed and always meticulously done. Ever the architect, and always a gentleman.

Dr. Bleiman's passion was fishing. He rowed on the lake too, but rarely had a bite, except mosquitoes, he would say, as he slapped one away from his beard. A retired N.Y.C. physician, he could be called upon in an emergency, of which fortunately there were few. I remember he tended mother once when she was ill.

Mrs. Bleiman entertained large groups at times. I can remember a fund raiser there a few times. Theirs was an expansive piece of land and suitable for these purposes. Her parties for lake members were always enjoyed, especially the picnics. The property, after many years, was purchased by the Wallace Taylors of Troy.



Lest we forget, it took many years to carve the Taconic Lake Shan-gri-la from its somewhat primitive beginnings of 1901, to today's package of convenience. Who was responsible for making it work? It was the many Taconic Lake Association Boards which spent hours, summer and winter, managing lake affairs. The store and icehouse came into being; the camelback road was eventually graded, widened and macademized; the steep hill was shaved down to a satisfactory angle; fieldstone pillars with a sign identifying the entrance to Taconic Lake were built; the road around the lake was completed; a survey was made; the bathing beach and other pieces of Taconic property were improved; arrangements were made for regular surveillance by the State Police; and, mindful of the importance of our drinking water, the wonderful Spring was boarded and screened to keep animals away. By-laws and rules were under constant revision and all the business of taxes, dues and bills were handled by these capable men and women who served without compensation.

As a resident of northern California for the past 18 years, I have been too far removed from the lake of today. I can only write from memory. Surely there are others who are in closer touch with records, dates and more information. It has been a real nostalgia trip to have had this opportunity to express my memories of the lake, which will always have a warm place in my heart. Best wishes to all. Have a happy 90th! Wish I could be there!

## *Random Thoughts*

*Dorothy Barnes*

We bought our cottage from the estate of John Morton in June of 1957 when Jeff was 9 months old. Mr. Morton's wife was a Duffy and her father was one of the early founders of the Taconic Lake Association.

When we started going to the lake there was an old sink in the kitchen with a hand pump which supplied the only running water -- if you had enough strength to work it. The floor was built on a big rock and you had to walk up and over it to get to the other side of the room. The old wood stove would either roast you out or not work at all. The walk to the outhouse in the middle of the night was precarious -- if you got off the path you were really in trouble.

We eventually replaced the kitchen and bathroom and enclosed the porch and returned every summer to the peace and friendship that was Taconic Lake.

At least once a season everyone would find their garbage cans in the middle of the road, usually on nights when we all would walk around the lake singing and finding our way by the light of the moon. Often on those night everyone's boat would mysteriously find its way to the beach or the cove to be found and returned by its owner the next morning.

One of my fondest memories is spending nights after supper on the porch of the store where people congregated to talk and let the kids get their treats. The Friday night "Swindle Your Neighbor" card games at the store or various cottages were an institution and lots of fun. Art Breton and Joe Cavanaugh were the champions.

Our children grew up on the lake and loved going back every year. Now our grandchildren are enjoying the lake. But now, since the porch and store are gone, some of the togetherness and friendliness are missing and people tend to stay more in their own cottages.

# **Reflections**

Mike Cavanaugh

Life in the 90's is confusing and complex with ever increasing demands on our time, talents and attention. Experts in "Stress Management" (the latest fad) talk of taking a mental trip back to a favorite place and time to help you relax. My mental trip takes me to Taconic Lake in a time when little things in life were important. Little things like...

*Cold, rainy, August nights with the smell of wood fires clinging to the earth like an aromatic blanket...*

*Cross the lake swims and round the lake walks...*

*Summer romances and best friends...*

*Sitting in the playhouse listening to scratchy 45's and listening to the stories the "big kids" told...*

*Two of the best role models a kid ever had - Ace & Artie...*

*Sing-a-longs, Bingo using beans for markers, rented movies shown against a bedsheet, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, talent shows and the adults who lovingly sacrificed their time to make these things happen...*

*Pausing for a moment on the store porch to chat with the grown-ups who gathered nightly...*

*Mrs. Breton patiently reciting the entire soda, ice cream and candy inventory to every kid who came into the store with a few coins clutched in his grimy hand...*

*The screech of the spring and bang of the store's screen door echoing across the lake on a glass calm night...*

*The pride of a wet, tired kid resting after his first solo trip to the raft...*

*A beach with 20 or so volunteer lifeguards, babysitters and mentors watching a band of wet, suntanned junior terrorists build sandcastles, dams and character...*

*Casting a jitterbug into the depths of the cove; looking for the big one that never was caught...*

*Jack Grogan, a friend who regarded us as adults - even in our impressionable youth...*

*Red salamanders after a rain...*

*Tar bubbles on the road on a hot July afternoon...*

*The sound of a Ping-pong ball, the rustle of cards, darts against a red "Toohey" dart board, the laughter of friends...*

*The tears on "Get away day"...*

*Being treated to trips to the Bennington Monument, movies in Troy, Mount Graylock, ice cream at Langmore Farms, softball games in Grafton, square dances in Petersburg - all escorted by "the big kids". Being included was the real treat...*

*A raft, a sliding board and a rock without a float tied to it...*

*Dad's sailboat, the men gathering at our camp for cribbage and pinochle games, the pungent smell of sharp cheese and Schafer beer drifting in from the kitchen, deep voices speaking low lulling me to sleep...*

*Mr. & Mrs. Breton, who had three kids of their own and a hundred of everyone else's - and loved them all. It was amazing how every kid had "just enough" money for a treat at the store. They patched scraped knees and healed broken hearts, calmed fears and always managed to laugh at an eight year old's latest joke...*

*A sense of community, of belonging that transcended our social status in "the city"...*

*A memory of something good.*

*We don't need stress experts and social psychologists - we need Taconic Lake.*

## ***Sparkling Waters and Lifetime Friendships***

*Peg Cavanaugh Poulin*

My memories of TLA are over 40 years of warm summer days, cool nights, sparkling clean water and friendships that have lasted a lifetime. During my early years there were 3 age groups, the ballbearings, spokes and wheels. As you graduated through the ranks you of course gained prestige. Those were the days when 16, 17 and 18 year olds stuck around summers, didn't have to work and, of course, didn't have cars.

Juniors and Seniors alike had a wonderful time on Friday night hay rides to the big square dance in Petersburg. Night life on Taconic hasn't changed that much except that then we had a larger population to do things with. We entertained ourselves playing cards, late night swims, games of hide and seek, building huts in the woods, walking around the lake- sometimes backwards; finding our own hideaways and being hunted down by Art Breton and my father with their "everready" flashlights. This got to be a game to see how long it would take them to find us.

Probably the biggest part of our night life was trips to the store and Marion and Art Breton and Mrs. Mac. What would we have done without them! They played referee, first aid center, message center and were tested day in and day out with "how much is that?" and "what kind of soda do you have?" When the store closed, that was the signal for the younger ones to go home - after all, they weren't allowed in the playhouse after 10 o'clock with the "Wheels".

The store porch was a communication center for all. Adults gathered nightly on the porch for relaxing conversations and an ice cream after their walk around the lake. The porch phone booth, besides being Tom Walls office, was the center of attention for important phone calls such as the birth of Kathy Breton Hoag and Artie Breton Oliver. Everyone didn't have a phone in their cottages as they do now.

Summers at Taconic brought many "firsts" for many of us. Finally being able to swim to the raft or across the lake; learning to dive off Cushman's diving boards; introducing your spouse and then your children to "the Lake" and then, finally, some of their children.

Jack and I feel so blessed to have the riches of Taconic passed on from my parents. We, in turn, have been able to enjoy seeing our girls and now grandchildren grow in the wealth of what money can't buy. Clean air, sparkling water and an atmosphere of peace and contentment that we should not take for granted.

## ***Peaceful Seclusion***

*Debbie Poulin*

I've been coming to Taconic Lake for as long as I can remember. One of my earlier memories is of visiting my grandparents, Jim and Peg Cavanaugh and being exposed to the "nightlife" at Taconic. Year after year, the on-going kick-the-can games along with capture the flag and flashlight tag seemed to occupy everyone under the age of 13. Of course my favorite, the annual Scavenger and Treasure Hunts, always seemed to get the competitive side of everyone involved. Those nights seemed to last forever until the blinking of our lamppost light signaled it was time to come in.

I can't pinpoint one particular reason why I like Taconic Lake so much. The peacefulness, the beautiful scenery, the clean water and seclusion are just a few to mention. But the most important reason why I love Taconic Lake is the friendliness of the members and their guests. Although my family doesn't live at the Lake year round - it is home.

When reminiscing of younger camp days, the beach is the first thing that comes to mind. The Fun Days at the beach with young and old converging to compete in the balloon toss, denim overall relay to the raft, timed slide, and the favorite - 3 man canoe race. On less exciting days the never ending card games of "spit" and "spades" occupied us on the "kids' dock". Also, the ongoing boat wars which always ended with everyone wet and each boat sunk with no survivors. Of course, all these occurrences happened to the dismay of the occupants on the "adult dock".

Night time and the Breton's store - The inseparable pair! Always opened at 7:00 sharp and was well stocked with the favorites. The Bretons - second parents to everyone on the lake - made the nights at Taconic Lake even more special. The term "customer service" had no limits. I thank them for everything.

Taconic Lake means the world to me. It is an isolated getaway from the rat race of everyday life. In a society full of crime, pollution, hate and greed, Taconic Lake is in its own little world. I cringe at the thought of developers moving closer to our land boundaries at the Lake. Taconic is a part of each of our lives and something I cherish dearly. I would do anything to protect and keep it the way it was meant to be 90 years ago.

## ***Serenity***

*Joan & John Brendese*

A place out of the past and difficult to duplicate. Here is found serenity, friendliness, and untainted nature due to the enthusiasm of the members. We are happy to be a part of it.

## ***May the Tradition Go On!***

*Helen Oberg Kennedy*

My earliest memories go back to the stories my grand-father John Oberg, and my father Bill Oberg, would tell. They would go back to 1915 when John first happened upon Lake Taconic, advertised in the N.Y. Daily News as lake front property in a virtually mosquito-free environment. He traveled from Brooklyn on the Albany Night Boat and then Allen Stewart from Petersburg picked him up for the longer trip to the Lake itself.

They told stories of the ice house, the butcher and the grocery man coming in with their horse and wagons, and, in general, the good times enjoyed by all. My Dad was only two years old when he started spending his summers here and I'm sure that they were some of his happiest times. I am fortunate to have many photos that were taken and developed by my grandfather.

In the early 1950's Mom and Dad, my brother Billy and I came up for our 2 week vacation every summer. My grandfather was not a believer in modern conveniences, so it was not much of a vacation for Mom, who had to gather wood to cook, heat water to wash clothes and bathe us kids. Mom was not what you would call a pioneer. I think she needed a vacation after spending two weeks at the Lake.

I remember getting into the rowboat with my grandfather every day, rowing down to the post office to pick up the mail and groceries and then rowing down again after supper for ice cream and time for Gramp to chat on the porch with the Bretons and other neighbors.

Every summer our ritual included a visit to Allen and Lucy Stewart's farm and a trip up the Mohawk Trail. Of course, we were also joined by my grandfather Mike Dugan, Aunt Kay and Uncle Chick (my godparents) plus an assortment of friends and relatives.

I was absent from the Lake scene for a number of years before and after Joe and I married. However, in the mid 70's we started coming up for the season with our children Stephen, Craig and Denise (Christopher followed in 1978). It was only after spending a summer here that I realized what we had truly missed. The years past could not be brought back but we were determined to take advantage of all future summers. The kids just loved coming here from Brooklyn for the peace and quiet, the freedom, the beach, and of course their summer friendships which are still strong. Stephen, Paulie and Jason built many forts, followed by Craig and Matt O'Brien. Today Damon and Christopher are following the tradition. We still have many laughs recalling those days.

Many of our friends from the City and now, from Hoosick Falls have spent time at Lake Taconic and they all agree how lucky we are to escape to our own Shangri-La. I have accumulated 76 years of memories of Lake Taconic. How lucky my family and I have been to be part of such a wonderful community, to have enjoyed some of the best times of our lives, and to have made the best friends anyone could ever hope for. May the tradition go on forever!

Over the years, Joe has said many times that Lake Taconic is probably the closest we are going to get to Heaven. I believe he is right!

## *Dreams of Indians*

*Dr. Marge Grogan*

Uncle Jack always said the first night you slept in the camp the Indians came to visit. Though I had slept there many times as a guest, my first night as owner was filled with Indian dreams. I walked down the path to the lake, through the thick foliage Uncle Jack had allowed to grow, and there were feathers sticking above the bushes on all sides with Indian faces peering at me. I awoke with a start. Was it a welcoming, or is the cove haunted?

It seems like yesterday, though it was the 30's or 40's that Pop Grogan would take the early rising grandchildren down on the six seater swing by the Lake, and try to keep us quiet. Someone was always snatching Kate's (Grandma Grogan) fresh baked doughnuts



from the window sill. Many evenings were spent playing Bingo, often interrupted by the swoop of an attic bat.

Still in the 30's, the story is that Ed Grogan, Sr. said to Ed Grogan, Jr. in his office at the Capitol:

"How was the party, Ed?"

"Great, Pop."

"It must have been, the camp burned to the ground!"

No one was allowed to smoke in the present camp after that.

Back in the 50's, before the road was plowed in winter, a friend and I started up the hill towards the Lake, through several feet of snow. At about Hess's, my adventuresome friend said: "Don't look now, but there's some guy with a gun following us." It was Bill Schemerhorn checking out the intruders.

Uncle Jack was as happy as a newly elected official the day he was crowned "King of the Kids." In that same spirit, my brother Jack was always delighted when he won the three man canoe race - especially the first time.

Pleasant times, happy memories - the store, the BRETONS - people come and go, and some still dream of Indians in the cove.

## ***It's About Music***

*Annie Grogan (Tahoe City, CA)*

Torrential rain drums the lake and appears to be dancing. The wind and the trees sway together in their own harmony. The thunder resounds through the Berkshires, the crescendo of nature's stormy symphony. It's about music.

My earliest recollections of Taconic Lake is listening to my great-uncle, JACK GROGAN, singing to his guitar on that rickety dock of his in the cove. I don't recall which relatives of mine were there, but they loved me and we were having fun. I was probably four years old.

When I was seven or eight years old, I witnessed what was then to me a most silly event. I don't recall the tune, but thinking back it doesn't matter, for I will never forget seeing the full moon dancing on the water and hearing JOHN RODIER singing an opera so that all could hear. I listened for about twenty minutes when suddenly from the Store came PEGGY POULIN's song of response. What was silly to me then, is now a most romantic memory.

The songs that filled the air of Taconic Lake were many. KATIE O'BRIEN and I sang to our hearts content while swinging at The Store until our stomachs were sick. There were several nights one youthful summer when, from the deck at the BALL's place, we listened to the sorrowful songs of a mysterious guitar strumming woman. The sound was crystal clear as it flowed across the water. We sought out the source and that was how we first met my neighbor, SHANNON CHAMBERS.

The beauty of Taconic Lake has inspired many of us to spontaneously burst forth in song. MIKE BALL first played the harmonica at Taconic Lake. Mrs. DEVANE's bagpipes filled the mountain air with their mournful wail for all of us to contemplate. I've heard SUE, MIKE, and KENNY BLEAU sing out together and share their Motown medleys with us. ANDY HEPFINGER played his keyboard across the water for some of us on

an evening years ago. MRS. MEEHAN's laughter has danced across the lake and contagiously touched our souls.

The most poignant of all songs shared at Taconic Lake was sung on my family's porch on a day in August when my parents celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary. Daddy had been sick with cancer for almost a year. There was so much love in the air of Taconic Lake that day. It was filled with the songs of life and love, and hope and the prospect of what might be. And though many of our loved ones are no longer with us, we can remember with joy all the precious moments shared at Taconic Lake. The music will live on and will simply be enjoyed by those generations fortunate enough to inherit, to care for, and to listen to the songs of the good life which Taconic Lake has to offer.

## *A Very Special Place*

*Mary Millard*

A book could be written about the 33 summers since 1958 when my husband Steve and I found Taconic Lake and fell in love with it. Taconic Lake is a Shangri La -- a place where joys and sorrows, laughter and tears are all tied together with LOVE. It is a very special blessing which inspires all us Taconic Lakers to preserve this place as a Haven of Peace and Serenity.

Some very special memories are tied in with the Store and MARION and ART BRETON, the patient, friendly, loving and giving proprietors. They were always on hand to wait on customers, pass the time of day, take care of the mail, deliver messages at all hours of the day and night, apply band aids, wipe away tears, give away "treats," lend sympathetic ears to people's problems and worries; and thru it all, maintain their wonderful senses of humor.

When we first came to the Lake the store was always open. Some of us prevailed upon the Bretons to close the store for a couple hours in the afternoon and at dinner time. They deserved some time off and privacy.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Allegheny spent several summers in the Brendese cottage, which they bought from Judge Tedpidino. Mass on their front porch overlooking the lake was as near as you could get to heaven on earth. Their altar was a card table with a white cloth and 12 year old Mike Cavanaugh was the altar boy.

Around 1960, Tony Thomas taught swimming and arranged for a Red Cross instructor to teach the kids Life Saving. I was the one (and maybe only) senior in the class. TLA President Jim Cavanaugh gave me a special certificate, lettered on birch bark. It said "Mary Millard is qualified as an intermediate swimmer and may go to the Raft alone"

Much has happened since 1958, and there have been changes, but the woods are still wild and beautiful, the lake water clean and refreshing for body and soul, the mountain air fresh and invigorating. Congratulations to those who came before us, to all of us, and to those who will come after us for keeping TACONIC LAKE a Very Special Place.

## CHAPTER TWO

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*Thomas, Rodier, Nagel  
Bulger, O'Brien, Breton,  
Hoag, Oliver,*



### *Memories*

*Helen Thomas*

We were told by Dan Dole that there was a farm on our hill before the Association was founded. This farmer is the one who, with horse and wagon, met the night boat in Troy or train in North Petersburg, to bring the first boarders to the cottages on the Lake. The vacationers would pay him a toll to use his road into the Lake. The road went off to the right facing our cottage, to what is now County Road 88. Often the people would get as far as Grafton and stay at the Grafton Hotel and then finish the journey the next morning with the farmer's assistance.

Our cottage was built just like Kennedy's and was a boarding cottage at one time. Willie Schermerhorn said the farm house stood in the area of where our house is now.

When we first came here 29 years ago, we used the cottage by paying expenses, since there was not a clear title to the property. Deeds had not been transferred (recorded) through the years as they should have been. This was settled the following year through letters from Mrs. Helmuth to our lawyer.

We, our six children and many friends and relatives have enjoyed the cool breezes and waters of Taconic Lake for many years. This is what led to our decision to build a permanent residence here. This is our third winter — and we love it.

Lasting friendships have been formed — parents as well as children. Alas, this will not be so for succeeding generations as our children and everyone else's have not stayed in the area. There will not be the nucleus formed in our descendants to give our grandchildren the safe, happy, healthy environment that our children have known. No matter where they live, one of the first things done on arrival at our doorstep, each one must take a walk around the Lake.

## *Family Ties*

*Bill Rodier*

This will be my 81st summer at the Lake. Phil Elgeiser, delivering milk, always shouted: "ELGEISER" as he came down the path. I am reminded of that because my parents told me one of the first words I spoke as a baby was "Elgieser", which I shouted back at him.

Elgeiser ran the store and built the Millard house for himself. For a time he delivered milk and ran the shirt factory in Petersburg. He also farmed in Petersburg. Hiram Bently is another who ran the store although most of his notoriety is based upon owning a speak-easy in Petersburg. Art Powers father also ran the store in the early days. Charley Weeden furnished the ice he cut from the Lake which was stored in ice houses, first in front of the store and later where the play house is located.

In the days when State Troopers were stationed in towns with their horses, Peter Kirsch, Sr. was the resident trooper in Petersburg and rode this area. That is how the Kirsch's became interested and bought on the Lake.

My father was treasurer of the Association for a long period in those early days. In the Association records is his account book, a yellow New York City school attendance book about 4 by 7 inches in size, with the names of early members. The initial composition of the members of the Association were local people, college professors, Brooklynites of German extraction and New York City school teachers. My family was of the last group - my father, my aunt and uncle, the Wolfe's and my Aunt Marie Rodier who owned the Dr. Jack Grogan place.

My parents were married in June of 1909. For their honeymoon they took a state room on the Troy night boat and then took a train to North Petersburg Junction to meet a train going south to Petersburg. They missed the connection at Petersburg Junction and walked the tracks to Petersburg. (I have the pictures). They had arranged for a wagon there to take them to the Lake to spend their honeymoon at my aunt's cottage. My aunt was Susan Rodier Wolfe and her cottage, now torn down, was in the space between Hoag's and Kozinn's. My father built our house in 1911, my first summer at the lake.

My Aunt Susan subsequently purchased the Kozinn cottage. My cousin, Dr. Edward Wolfe, acquired the two houses by inheritance. My brother Ed later purchased them. Ed took the honeymoon house down as the other was in better condition.

In 1931, my wife, Marty first came to the lake as my guest and girl friend when she was 16.

One happy memory is of coming out of the Berlin Church with Marty and having Mrs. Rourke run up to us waving the NEW YORK TIMES, announcing that I had passed the bar exam. This was in 1939.

Another fond memory is when the Army sent me home from Germany when the war ended to attend the University of Michigan and learn to prosecute war criminals. I flew to London and then home the next day. I had no opportunity to call home so I decided to play it out and arrive home unannounced. Unfortunately, Marty was at the Lake and I had to call and reveal my coming by train. I met Marty and my three year old child at the old Albany station. My son's first words to me were "Where's your Jeep?"

As you know, the Lake was a very friendly family place. Strangely, I got the most pleasure out of sitting on the store porch with the likes of the Walls, Cavanaughs, Millards, Barnes, Bretons, etc. Unfortunately, times and circumstances have eliminated

most of the participants. I have always looked at the Lake as my permanent home — not the other houses I lived in.

## *Our Golden Pond*

*Paul and Marion Bulger*

WALLY and ISABELLE TAYLOR introduced us to TACONIC LAKE in the early 1960s while we were on a visit from Buffalo. We became members of the TLA in 1967 and have been very happy about it ever since!

Taconic Lake means many things to all of us. We have enjoyed friendships, good times, and the beautiful "Golden Pond." Our canoe rides give us joy and a sense of belonging to a good and serene world.

We are grateful to the founders of the Association, and all the members who, over ninety years, have fostered and preserved this special spot on earth!

Our children and grandchildren have told us that they want to carry on in the happy tradition of the Taconic Lake Association.

## *God's Gift*

*Stan & Florence Nagel*

Our camp is one of the original camps on the lake and goes back to when it was owned by William Duffy. In 1906, he sold the camp to Baldwin Palmer who owned it until 1932 - when it was sold to Stan's uncle, Charles Butzgy. It has been in the family since that time. We became owners in 1958.

We will never forget our first trip up from Glendale, N.Y. - fully packed for the summer - Stan and I, Mom Nagel, Mary, Kathy and Noreen and our dog, Binky all in one car. In later years, a cousin, John Hayde and nephews, Ken and Rob Barbera stayed with us and became our "Summer Sons".

We soon realized it was a "Children's Paradise". Most every camp had at least 2 or 3 children - some had 5 or 6, and in no time, we saw groups of them getting together and enjoying one another's company at Tucker Hall or at the Store where they went to buy their treats and chat with a very special couple, Marion and Art Breton. On most days, they would be at the Beach where one time, Tony Thomas and the Red Cross gave the children swimming lessons. What a great job they did!

The beach was so crowded with children and parents that the beach area had to be enlarged. The children always had a parent with them at the beach in case of an emergency. The Moms had fun forming a Water Show and even had a water exercise group routine but we never forgot to keep an eye on the little ones. The Seniors always seemed to have one dock and the Juniors had the other one.

The Juniors arranged weekly Movies, Chinese Auctions, Bingo or some other event at Tucker Hall. It was here that they formed lifelong friendships and even today, they greet one another with smiles and laughter, as they reminisce about the wonderful times they had together as kids. Some of them now bring their own children to the lake and there's no greater joy for us than to see life repeat itself through our children and their children - here at Taconic Lake.

The Juniors also planned "End of the Summer" parties with the help of Mary Kreiger and other parents. We'll never forget the Masquerade Party when some 4 or 5 of us "gals"



dressed up in "Mu-Mus" and had "Smiling Face Masks". Even our husbands didn't know who was who. Maybe they didn't want to know!!

While the Juniors were in the Playhouse at night, parents very often gathered on the porch of the Store where many a good story was told and many laughs were shared by all.

We are very thankful to have spent 33 of the most happy and memorable summers of our lives here at Taconic Lake. With every year, we have gathered and treasured more and more memories of this peaceful place. Here we have God's gifts of a beautiful sky, a calm clear lake, cool nights and a wooded area of tall pines, maple trees and wild flowers. Thank you, dear Lord.

My Dad always said, "It's the closest to Heaven one could ever be". How true and how blessed we have been.

## *A Special Place in My Heart*

*Mary Nagel Jakubek*

The sights, sounds, and fond memories of Taconic Lake have a special place in my heart. Thanks so much for this "assignment" because it allowed me to "go back" in time and cherish all that the lake has meant to me over the years!

I remember taking the trip "up to the lake" and the excitement of looking forward to another wonderful summer! For a family living in the "city," this was always a dream come true.

I remember the sight of clear, amazingly blue "typical lake days" as we liked to call them, as well as dark, gray, stormy days when thunder would roll the house endlessly. We could see streaks of lightning between the closed shades as we scrunched into our cushiony beds for protection. On clear nights the lights from the camps mirrored colorfully into the lake, and many of our nightly walks around the lake were guided by a canopy of twinkling stars.

I remember lying on the beach hoping the cloud above would move along quickly, anxious for the sun to peek out again! Some afternoons were so warm and beautiful at the beach that we would never want to leave. Having a friend at the bottom of the slide to wet it gave you a cooler and "squeak-free" ride. There was always the famous rock at the beach and finding it again at the start of each summer was somehow like finding an old friend. Some things were just meant to be... how else could we have known how much taller we had become since the year before? Dad's towel on the dock would be our signal, and home we would go.

The sight of the Store and Tucker Hall were always welcome. I can still remember the old wrap-around store porch where people rock and talk, talk and rock, each and every evening. We would enter the store an endless number of times - never quite knowing which Breton would be coming out to pleasantly help us. The best days were the ones when the candy cabinet was full and lots of mail was peeking out from our square little mail slot! Again, the Bretons would help us out - always with a smile.

Some special sounds come to mind when I trace over many summers past... the sounds of car tires on the gravel road, small waves lapping up against the boat, soft echos of canoe paddles cutting through the water at night, and the squeak of the slippery water lilies as we glided through the water. I remember hearing the sounds of laughter from the beach on a "beach day," and the sound of the vibrating diving board to tell all that the "older" kids were there! I'll always remember the crackling sound of the kindling burning

in our kitchen stove and the echoes of screen doors from one side of the lake to the other . You could always tell whose door was slamming - each one had its own special sound.

The pump at the spring had a special sound also, as we waited for that first cool gush of water to flow . I can still hear the gate latch as we closed it and made away with our cold, wet, heavy jugs. Tucker Hall would welcome us nightly. We could hear the record player going, or the rhythm of the dart board. The sounds of the "Sing-alongs" were always (?) sweet too!

The wonderful scent of leaves and pine needles always gave the lake special meaning, as did the smell of smoke from the fires on cold mornings and evenings. In the fall, the air would turn sweeter as the falling reds, oranges and yellows covered the ground. One familiar aroma at our camp was burning toast, as my dad would try to manipulate our challenging "slide-down-and-flip-over" toaster! We always enjoyed mom's meals at the lake, and eating out on the porch was even better!

The lake memories I cherish the most are those of all the wonderful people we've known through the years . The names Kreiger, Breton, Wall, Thomas and many others were so much a part of our lives - and we have many friendships and happy times to share. In those days there were so many kids at the lake... Janet, Mary Kay, Kathy Taylor, Pam (from France), Susan Bryce, "Ace," Artie, "T.M.", Bill Merrigan, Johnny Dalton, Jack Taylor, Freddie and Johnny Hess.

One of my earliest memories is writing letters and oil painting in Janet's aqua blue boat! We'd row under the low birch trees, and park there for what must have been hours! We loved to share clothes too, and spent days upon days doing lots of fun things together, passing through many seasons of our lives as really good friends.

Tucker Hall was a big part of our lives. We used to sit on the porch railings and talk and talk. I remember the old J.T.L.A. meetings with rows and rows of grey wood benches, and the movies in Tucker Hall, complete with hand puppet shapes on the screen. We played Bingo complete with zillions of dry beans to cover the spaces! I can recall running feverishly along the "Indian Trail" in the hope of winning the Scavenger Hunt, as well as countless trips to Troy in Mr. Prediger's car. I can still see Miss Cushman trying to teach us dance routines for the annual show and how we practiced, practiced, practiced ! We spent many evenings playing cards at Jack Grogan's and many a brrr-cold morning in our Red Cross swimming lessons. A night for us "kids" with Tony Thomas was always filled with laughter and good times and the square dances in Petersburg were really special too.

Each summer would have to end in order for the next one to begin, but leaving the lake became very difficult for us. We'd all gather at Tucker Hall with our friends and wait for the sound of the "Nagel car." We had become close over the summer months and the thoughts of returning for a weekend in the fall or during Christmas vacation seemed so far off. We'd share hugs and tears and say our good-byes, looking back on another wonderful summer.

The lake has meant many different things to me over the years which I now enjoy re-living through the eyes of my own family. Jeff and Kristin look forward to going "up to the lake" as much as I did! It's nice to look back on so many beautiful memories and to be able to appreciate them so very much!

Thank you and happy 90th Anniversary, Taconic Lake.

## *Memories Too Special to Forget*

*Noreen ("Neen") Nagel Newcomb*

Taconic Lake is a very special place to me. I was four when my family started spending summers at the lake 34 years ago. Many special and long lasting friendships were made and great times will always be remembered.

Looking back...I can remember the bingos, the fun of shopping for those special prizes in downtown Troy and the excitement we felt of possibly winning. I remember the Scavenger Hunts and trying to be the first team to find all the items on our list. The hot dog roasts and the movies seen at the "Tucker Hall Theater" were a real treat. The Bretons were always at the store to greet you with a smile when we bought our nightly treat. I can remember sitting on the store porch waiting for the Freihofer truck to deliver those delicious rolls (which often never made it up the hill to the house). Endless hours at the beach filled with fun...waiting in line for a turn on the slide, jumping off the "big rock", being old enough to swim out to the diving board or trying to find foil covered coins at the bottom of the lake during fun days.

We would have canoe and swimming races, firework displays at the store every Fourth of July, the end of the year theme parties and the salamander catches over by the beach. We had many a salamander summer pet.

Remember the baseball games up at the tennis courts with both parents and children playing? They were always full of excitement, and so much fun whether we won or lost.

But more important than all the activities were the friendships made at Taconic Lake. There were so many over the years...the Walls, Thomas', Rodiers, Meehans, Bretons, Cavanaughs, O'Briens (that was a big addition to the lake and a good one too!), Stevens and Rhodes. It was also a place where my cousin Ken (or "Paramus" as some would call him) became my summer brother who brought a lot of laughs to the lake. All of the families grew up together and it seemed like one big family. The Playhouse was always full of life...ping pong, listening to records, darts and just sitting on the porch talking with each other. When it got dark, all of us would go for our nightly walk around the lake (flashlight free..just following the sky peeking through the trees). Then, one by one, we'd say goodnight to each other and home we'd go. I can remember running down the hill to our house in the dark while trying not to trip over the roots! The next morning we'd start the whole routine over again.

Our friendships were special. We couldn't see each other for a whole year but come next summer, we'd pick up right where we left off - like we'd never been apart. It's still a special feeling when we see each other now.

The only bad part about Taconic Lake was the leaving! Since we lived in New York City, we were usually the first family to leave to go back to school. All our friends would gather at the Playhouse...my sisters and I were there too because we couldn't bear to see our parents close the shutters on the house and leave for another year. A lot of tears were shed both at the lake and during our car ride home.

Even after all these years, I still look forward to our summer visits at the lake...only now it is with my husband and our two daughters. What is so special is that they, too, love the lake and feel it is a special place. It is a place to relax, to spend some time with family, a place to swim, to take canoe rides, to pick blueberries...just a place to have a great time. The excitement of driving to the lake is still there for me and I guess it always will be.

Taconic Lake may be quieter now, with less children and activities, and new names and faces. But for me, it will always be a place where forever friendships were made. It will always bring to mind all those wonderful childhood memories which are too special to ever forget. Taconic Lake is a place to treasure always.

## ***Our Good Fortune***

*Ray and Marian O'Brien*

Our first glimpse of Taconic Lake occurred in July of 1967. We had called a phone number in the Troy Record which listed a cottage for rent. Our good fortune began as we drove up to the store and met Art and Marion Breton. Marion had the key to the Keays cottage, and was eager to show it to a family. "A wonderful place for children" were her exact words. As soon as we saw it, we knew it was just right for our large brood. Once we had lived in it, we also knew we could never give it up. So, by late August we had become the new owners of the former Keays cottage. We have never regretted our purchase.

Lots of freedom, fresh air, clean water and good friends all combined to make the summers of their youth happy and healthy for our three daughters and six sons. Ray and I have cherished the peace and quiet while seeing our children enjoy the beach, the lake, the woods, the games and other good times at Tucker Hall.

One of our fondest memories is of a lovely event in August, 1975. That month we celebrated our Twenty-Fifth wedding anniversary, and our children had sent us to Maine for a week. We returned to Taconic Lake on a Saturday afternoon, and were told that Jack and Kathleen Grogan wanted us to come over to their cottage for dinner that evening - very casual, no fuss.

A couple of hours later, we walked into the Grogan's, and were greeted by most of the adults on the lake. Jack and Kay had surprised us with a Twenty-Fifth anniversary party. It was a wonderful evening with Jack Barnes at the piano, Dorothy Barnes singing and a tiered cake baked by Bill Zmud.

We have so many beautiful memories of our summers at Taconic Lake, that it is not possible to list them all. But, our entire family is grateful that we have had the chance to share these many summers with so many good people. Our grandchildren are enjoying the lake now, but we regret they never had the chance to be here when Art and Marion ran the store and kept a kindly eye on all the children. They were the heart of Taconic Lake, and we miss them dearly.

This will be our Twenty-Fifth summer at Taconic Lake, and we pray that our family will continue to enjoy the beauty and tranquility of this place for generations to come.

## ***Store and Post Office Memories***

*Marion Breton*

About 1929 my mother and father, Mary and Jim McCarthy, went to see about running the store at the suggestion of Dr. Bleiman, president of the Taconic Lake Association. They fell in love with the place and decided to take the job. My brother Vince and I appreciated the beauty of the Lake and the surroundings but the living quarters were so terrible we thought our parents had gone mad.

But my mother said "it was OK, and if it makes Jim happy we can survive." My mother always said you can be content if you have your health. We proved her words by staying forever as far as the post office and store were concerned.

At the time, the screened in porch at the store served as an ice cream parlor with tables and chairs for the Lakers and their guests.

Back in those "good old days" my parents couldn't get any bakery but Wards in Albany to deliver. Their truck came in at 7 AM three days a week but the selection was poor so my mother would bake pies and make salads to sell on weekends. In those days most families had only one car, so many of the men of the families would arrive on Fridays for the week end.

Everyone called my father Mac and everyone loved him - especially the children. He would sit telling stories in a rocker on the porch with a child on his lap and children at either side of him. Helen Keays, Mrs. Cushman and Marge Curry always told how they tried to get their mail in the morning so they could hear Mac's stories as he told them to the children.

My father used to get the boys together to play soft ball and they formed a team. I remember that everyone was surprised to learn that the Schermerhorn's father once played ball as a pro in Albany. My father asked Allen Stewart to play and asked if he could find a ball field for the team. The field was down the back road and they played ball there for many seasons. Ruth Baum Altura was one of my father's best friends, a real baseball fan. My father appointed her the official score keeper. Once when Babe Ruth came to Albany my father, Vince, Ruth and I all went to see him play. All Ruth wanted for her birthday that year was a car so she and Mac could go to all the ball games each evening without waiting for a ride.

My father died in 1948, the year Tucker Hall was built and named for FRANK P. TUCKER, president of the Association. Mr. Tucker was very fond of my father and came to see him shortly before his death.

Some famous writers came to the lake. QUENTIN REYNOLDS often stayed at his father Jim's place (where the Lochners are now). ARTHUR MANN, who wrote the Jackie Robinson Story, and his wife Marion lived in the place now owned by Dr. Hook. Someone gave us a piano for the porch and Arthur Mann delighted my mother by playing all her favorite songs. He was also a sports writer and scout for the New York Yankees.

One time, a boy visiting relatives caught 3 or 4 small fish out in front of the store. He was so excited and wanted his aunt to cook them. She, not knowing how to do this, suggested that the boy ask me how to prepare and cook fish. In between waiting on customers that evening I wrote down the instructions which Billy took home to his aunt. Next morning when I opened the store Billy and his aunt were waiting. "Oh, Marion, thank you for all your help but when Billy came home the fish had died and we had to bury them."

Some of us may remember "take off day" when adults would gather in cottages to clear out the refrigerators on that last weekend before closing up for the season. On one of those occasions, after games and fun, a group of us were walking around the lake. One of the men carried a bag full of assorted bottles over his shoulder. We were singing and having a fine time when suddenly there was a noise like a shot. "Get down everybody," someone called and we all stretched out on the road. "Maybe someone didn't like our singing," one of the ladies said. There was another shot and suddenly our friend was laughing. "Get up girls," he said. "It was the bottles popping and there's beer and soda running down my back."

My mother kept her sense of humor to the very end of her life. She died at the lake on September 20, 1961. We had three wonderful days together and she was more like herself than she'd been in a long time. She was witty and full of life and all we did was loaf and laugh. We were alone, but all of a sudden others came: Marie Prediger, Jack Roark and several others. I was able to get Father Frank Mullin and the Doctor. She had the grace of a holy and happy death.



In October 1987 when we learned that Art had such a short time to be with us, our son Jim came home. Trying to suggest something to make Art happy, he asked his father if he'd like to go for a ride. I'm sure many of you remember how Art would cringe at any jar of the car because of his shingles. To my surprise he said yes. Jim said, "Where to?" and Art replied "Only one place." Jim drove slowly, not hitting any bumps. We drove him right to the store porch. I opened the door, and Art went straight to the rocker. We stayed on the porch looking out at the Lake while Jim went for a walk. When he came back he asked "Where to?" and Art said, "Home." Looking back, we didn't say a word. He died on October 29th, shortly after that last trip to the lake.

## *Mostly Quiet and Quite Dark*

*Jim Breton*

From what I can remember of the 40's at the lake, it was mostly quiet and quite dark at night. The woods were so dense then, you couldn't see a light any place around the lake. We swam and fished during the day, played hide and seek at night. We had a piano on the porch at the store and Joani Comesky, Jessica Mann and Henry Cushman (Henry was quite good) would play and we would all sing.

My grandfather would tell entertaining stories about himself, John Morton, Teddy Van Deusen, and others that always brought a smile. We used to serve Wagars ice cream by the dish on the porch at the store in those days — never had any better.

In the late 40's the great Cavanaugh family began to arrive at Taconic Lake. Jim and Peg provided friends for all the kids regardless of age, and when Frank and Mary Kreiger and Joe and Mary Cavanaugh arrived the Kid Group got even larger. What a group we had during the 50's! The Cavanaughs, Kreigers, Devanes, Doles, Coyles, Kirsch's, Rodiers, Thieringers, Predigers, Baums, Stewarts, Fagans, Daltons, Tepadinos, Hesses — all with kids big and small.

We got to tear down the old boat house/ice house and build Tucker Hall for the Jr. Taconic Lake Association. Things really didn't change a lot though. We still played hide and seek and "1-2-3 blacksmith" at night and spent all day in the water. But now we had a club house for rainy days. We played cards, ping pong, darts, built model planes and boats (or watched Jerry Cavanaugh build them) — and we carved our initials all over the place. For a while we had an old juke box that played 78's.

By now there were so many of us we felt we needed some distinction among the Ranks. We formed a system based on a bicycle. The older Jr.'s, like Jim Cavanaugh, Bob Thieringer and Tommy Whalen were the "Big Wheels". The next class was the "Spokes", and the lowest or youngest group was the "ball bearings." I was one who had the distinction of being all three. But regardless of our attempts at segregation, it seemed that each night would end with all united in a walk around the lake singing songs. Some, especially Peggy Cavanaugh, could sing great, and I remember Butch Baumis did a great "Frankie Lane" and even an OK "Don Cornell." (How about that one?).

We really "shined" on Labor Day weekends. Each year we would try to beat last year's performance. My personal favorite was interchanging name signs on camps around the Lake road so that the Labor Day weekend visitors would go to the wrong camps — how creative and clever we were!

I remember watching Mr. Coyle (Taylor's house) trying to master staying upright in his canoe. I don't think he ever did but people who were down by the store certainly were entertained watching him trying several times.

Watching the cars leaving the lake back in the 40's and 50's always gave people a chuckle or two at the store. They wouldn't be able to make the hill without a running start.

I remember the men like my Dad, Jim Cavanaugh, Joe Cavanaugh and Tom Whalen, to name a few, who always had time for us. They played basketball with us and horse shoes, ping pong, darts, all sorts of water sports and games. In later years Tom Wall and Tony Thomas were a couple more who I think enjoyed spending time with the kids. I've never known any greater men than these and don't believe I ever will except maybe for one, my brother Artie.

We were so fortunate. Could any kids anywhere ever have had such great times and friends and such wonderful seniors looking after them, caring for them and loving them? I can't possibly express to all of you, wherever you are now, what you meant to me all my life, how often I have thought of you and how much I love you all. God bless you!

## ***Beautiful Lake, Beautiful People***

*Kathy Breton Hoag*

I've been coming to Taconic Lake for almost 40 years, my husband Doug about 15 years and Stephen for 6.

Some of my earliest memories are from when I was a child growing up here summers. For me it was always fun because we lived in the store, where everyone would come to talk, laugh and play. For about 8 or 9 weeks you'd hear kids laughing and playing, and the store door slamming from kids going in and out for ice cream or candy or sometimes just to find out what time it was. The playhouse would be alive with music and ping pong balls bouncing back and forth. People would be visiting at the store and chatting to everyone who came by. Maybe they came for milk or bread or just good conversation.

Remember the long porch on the store? I had so much fun on that as a child. On rainy days I could ride my tricycle up and down and around on it. I also had great birthday parties on that porch. All the kids on the Lake were invited.

One summer, two women came to teach the Junior Association swimming and life saving. The lessons were at 9 in the morning and all I remember is that there were a lot of cool, cloudy days that summer. The water always felt warmer than the air.

One particular end of season party I remember was when HELEN CUSHMAN volunteered to work with the juniors by teaching them tap dancing so they could put on a little show for everyone. I really dreaded every time I had to go to Cushman's camp for extra lessons. I did a solo dance to "Yankee Doodle Dandy." Although now I'm glad I did it, back then I was terrified. I wasn't the only one who had to go for extra lessons. My brother Artie and his pal Ace Kreiger did too. They did a song and dance skit to "By the Sea" dressed as girls in 20's style bathing suits. What fun it was for all of us!

We had a lot of masquerade parties where kids and adults alike dressed up. One very funny one was when we all dressed up as Beatniks. Another was a Hawaiian party when a group of the Moms wore muu-muus and sang as they danced the Hula!

The camp Doug and I now own was once owned by the LATTI family. JACK WARNER of WARNER BROS in Hollywood was a friend of theirs and visited often. He frequently sent my grandmother tickets for shows. When the FAGANs owned our cottage they were good friends with LORETTA YOUNG who visited often with her children.

An interesting bit of information (at least to my family) is that when my mother was in the hospital having me, she was in the same room with Mrs. Fagan's sister. She knew about Taconic Lake because her sister, GLADYS FAGAN and her husband, DR. FRANK FAGAN were in the process of buying a cottage here. She told her sister to be sure to visit the BRETONS and their new baby girl. It was September when they got the camp and they went to meet Mom and Dad at the store. MRS. FAGAN held the baby girl and said "Frank, wouldn't she be beautiful sitting over at our place?" Little did anyone know that 27 years later that same little girl and her husband would buy their camp.

One recent joyous occasion was when the OLIVERS and KENNEDYS hosted a party at OLIVERS' camp to welcome our son STEPHEN to Taconic Lake. It was wonderful that so many were able to come. It made such a wonderful memory for us. Joyful remembrances for our family are partly due to the fact that we are near other family members, the OLIVERS. Being able to watch the boys grow up at the Lake has produced so many loving, heartfelt memories that we have been able to share with each other.

Taconic Lake has brought me so many good friends. I treasure them and the memories we share each and every day. Being able to grow up there as a child and then be able to have my child grow up there is a dream come true. Unfortunately he has missed out on a lot of things that I had at Taconic Lake but he'll have other ways to have fun and enjoy summers there, I hope.

Taconic Lake isn't just beautiful because of its scenery or its clean, clear water and mountain air. It's also beautiful because of the people who have been there in the past and the people who are there now. When the letter requested that we write from our hearts and let ourselves go writing our memories, I couldn't help but think that it would be automatic for most of the people from Taconic Lake. Taconic Lake has been a part of me all of my life so far. Hopefully, it will continue to be part of me and my family for many years to come.

## *A Piece of Paradise*

*Mary Kay Wall Oliver*

When I think about Taconic Lake, I remember the swimming lessons at the beach on very cold mornings. My brothers Tom and Jim and my sisters Anne and Kathy and I would spend most days at the beach and every evening would trek to the playhouse to meet all the "kids" and to make several trips into the store to buy as much as you could with a quarter. Mr. and Mrs. Breton never got upset no matter how many times you slammed the screen door.

On our front porch we celebrated many birthdays and anniversaries. These were very happy family times together. I remember our end of the year parties when we would celebrate Christmas and my dad played Santa Claus. As young people we always enjoyed seeing our parents dress up in silly costumes to enjoy a Hawaiian luau or a Halloween party in the playhouse.

My memories include young love that grew and led to marriage, uniting two Taconic Lake families. God took Art from all of us but gave us a child who was baptized at Taconic Lake surrounded by all the Taconic Lake families. Artie has spent his summers here enjoying all the lake has to offer.

When I met my husband John, I was very anxious to have him see this beautiful spot. I told him about the good times we always had here and how relaxing it would be. Of course he now enjoys the lake but I think many of his memories would include fixing the

pump and cutting the grass. Our son Damon learned to swim and to ride a bike here. I'll never forget the first time each of them swam across the lake during Fun Day at the beach. The sense of accomplishment was written all over their faces. We have the ribbons to keep these memories fresh in our minds.

Life at Taconic Lake is very different now that there are so few children who spend their summers here. The store is gone, the Bretons no longer host the evenings on the porch and the slide and raft are no longer part of the beach. It saddens me to know my children won't have the memories I have saved but I am confident they see this piece of paradise in a different light and will pass on different but equally valuable memories to their children.

*Ives, Bleau, Kozinn, Kreiger,  
Buerger, Zmud, Thieringer*



### *Peaceful Surroundings*

*Bob & Joan Ives*

Bob has spent time at Taconic Lake off and on for 48 years, Joan's first visit was around 1962 and the rest of the family started coming to the lake in the '70's.

One of Bob's earliest memories is of his father, Morris Ives, and his uncle, Paul Buehler, building the porch surrounding Camp Al- Paul which is now our cottage. He also remembers sitting on the original dock with its birch log railings.

Several people rented our cottage when it was owned by Althea Buehler and most of them signed the back of a very unique toilet tissue holder. Two of those renters were Bryces and Brendeses and I'm sure they can tell many tales of crooked walls and slanted floors.

There is not enough space to say what we best like about Taconic Lake but the natural beauty of the lake, the wildlife and the peaceful surroundings top the list, as well as the wonderful people who live here.

One year in the '70's, members of the Junior Association came to our door looking for donations for a food basket which was to be a prize at the bingo held in Tucker Hall that evening. We donated a cake. We all went to the bingo that night and much to our surprise we won the food basket with our cake in it. The kid's couldn't get over the fact that we got our cake back along with all the other goodies. The community spirit was wonderful then, as it is now.

Taconic Lake has a very special place in our hearts and it also means never having to travel the Northway on holiday weekends.



# *The Joe Cavanaugh-Bleau-Theilemann Cottage Peaceful, Tranquil Summers*

*Joanne Bleau*

My first recollection of Taconic Lake is the summer of 1949 when I was invited for a weekend at the Jim Cavanaugh (now Poulin) camp. On Friday night we had a hay wagon take us to the Petersburg community hall for square dancing. What a wonderful time we had. In 1954, we spent two weeks as renters at what is now the McKay camp - then it was Jack Rourke's place. We all loved it so that the following year we rented for the month of July. It was a summer we all dreamed of, 90 degree temperatures and no rain. That summer, Milton Flanders decided to sell his camp and my parents bought it. August, 1955 began 36 years of wonderful memories, friendships, and peaceful, tranquil summers at Taconic Lake.

During those 36 years, business transfers took our family to many different states, but summers at Taconic remained a constant bond with family and friends.

From their birth, Ken, Debbie, Susie and Mike experienced so many wonderful times. There was a large group of children and a very active junior and senior association. Summer activities were scheduled so there were few weeks that saw no less than one or two gatherings.

One event that was planned and practiced for was the annual playhouse party. A theme was selected (Christmas, Halloween, or a made-up theme) and everyone, kids and adults, showed their talent - singing, dancing, comedy or whatever hidden expertise you had. We packed the playhouse, standing room only, enjoying the show and party of food after.

Each night the kids looked forward to going to Breton's store for a choice of ice cream, soda or candy and playing at the playhouse with their friends. The adults looked forward to gathering on the front porch where we relaxed and enjoyed many hours of conversation and many good laughs.

On Friday night after the store closed and children were tucked into bed for the night you could always find a good card game of poker or "swindle your neighbor". The game moved from camp to camp but the enjoyment, laughs and good company remained constant.

The peace and tranquility of our summers at Taconic cleansed our minds and bodies and gave us all renewed energy.

This year brings the fourth generation of our family to Taconic Lake and I know their love for this piece of heaven on earth will be as special and enjoyable as it was to all who have been here before them.

## *True Love Always*

*Ken Bleau*

T.L.A.- True Love Always. No truer words can be found. As I am a "lifer" of Taconic Lake, I have many fond memories. Since 9 months old, I was one of many children of the late 50's who called Taconic Lake my summer home and later just "home".

Every Memorial Day we would tentatively approach last summers' friends, in hopes of finding that our friendship had survived the winter and that no dreaded change had occurred that would put them in a different group. The usual first day of conversation would go something like; "So, you wanna go hang out on the rock or something?".

There really was a lot to do. The store was open every night from 7 p.m. till 9:30 p.m. (or later if the grownups were having a good time). The store was the social hub of the lake. Everybody would walk over after dinner, the kids with 25 cents for candy and the grownups working on the "penny for your thoughts" plan. Can you believe, nutty buddies that actually had nuts and chocolate around the top, and fudgsicles that were a nickel-that was just in 1963! In the Forties they must have been giving them away!

The playhouse didn't used to be a place where you just kept the benches dry either. There's been just about everything except a television set in there. I can remember watching movies like "The Wackiest Ship in the Army" on the big screen with popcorn and everything. Beach Boy 45's were played even after they were broken (you just had to line that crack up real good and you hardly even noticed the skip). There was bingo at least 2 times a summer and shuffle board (well, it was a shuffle board for about three years then a land bound dock for about ten).

I remember a scavenger hunt Andrea Thomas planned and one year. To be sure that the items weren't impossible to find (as they had been before) she made the list from just items in her camp. But everybody hated the hill to Thomas' so much, that we all put off going up until last anyway.

We used to think there were haunted areas at the lake. We were sure the old camp in the cove (gone) had a body in the upstairs bedroom - the cove is haunted you know! Just take a walk around the lake some night (no flashlights!) and as you reach the cove it gets real dark and quiet, except for those tiny footsteps in the woods.

Speaking of real dark, one of the most amazing things for guests is how we can walk around the lake in the complete pitch of the night and not wander off the road and how we can find the entrance to the beach in the dark. That one I can't answer.

There are plenty of abandoned forts around the lake as well. Out behind our camp is the bottom half of a log cabin. It never got any higher than that cause we got the saw caught in a tree and broke the blade chopping it out. It was a great place to sleep out though.

Behind Marge Dalton's camp there used to be a platform about 40 feet in the air between 2 trees. If you care to climb the tree you will still find an ash tray half grown into it. There's an abandoned rock fort behind Poulin's camp too. There were tree forts all over the place. Honorable mention has to go to Mike Ball who built one between 3 trees behind his camp that has everything but a flushing toilet.

Until only a few years ago you could take a walk in the woods and find massive pine trees 75 feet tall. We would go out on all day tree climbing treks. It was actually hard work and by the end of the day you'd be covered in tree sap (Lestoil is the only thing that would remove it). The reward was great though because at the top of these old Grandad's was invariably a kind of natural seat. You could sit up there and look out over all the other trees and get a spectacular view of the Petersburg valley. One time John Meehan and I spent about 2 hours making our way up a "new" tree. We were about 15 feet from the top when we saw the raccoon. It took us 2 minutes to reach the bottom.

There are so many stories and memories from "TLA" you don't know which one to pick! Like spending from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the beach - never once leaving the water. We'd go home, our chests aching from holding your breath under the water all day. Mom would make us take a nap before dinner. Blue fingers and toes, a pile of sand on the floor from your bathing suit bottoms, nice clean sheets, drifting off to sleep in our superheated upstairs to the sound of birds chirping.

Ah....that one will do.

## *Taconic Lake Memories*

*Mike Bleau*

My earliest memories of the lake are of swimming off of our dock. We were in the water more than out. When we were out nothing could deter us from going back in, not even the cold and clammy life jacket we had to wear. I remember how tortuous that was - my teeth rattled so much that I'm surprised they didn't fall out.

I've been coming to Taconic since I was a baby in 1965. Over the years to come, the lake would hold a special place in my heart, I like to call it home.

We came to the lake every year. Rain or shine, whether we were living in Buffalo, Rhode Island or Detroit, our mother and father made sure the four of us kids were at T.L.A.

Driving to Taconic every year wasn't so bad for us kids, but I'm sure for our parents it wasn't at the top of their list. I'll never forget driving through Clums Corners, the sixth or seventh car behind an eighteen wheeler, with our station-wagon loaded with 6 people, a dog, bird, and a few weeks of luggage. My Dad pulled into the passing lane, put the pedal to the floor, engine howling like never before. Everybody was at full attention as the ground sped by. I sat up and said, "Yea, alright Dad" - at that age I figured that, like me, he was in a hurry to go swimming. Looking back though, I guess 12 hours of driving with four restless kids asking "how much longer" had something to do with it.

We knew we were getting close as we started to ride the roller coaster road (which had more hills back then). Then we saw the pillars, rolled down the windows to smell the pines, and with happiness in our hearts, we knew we were at the lake.

As kids, our choice of activities all had one thing in common - and that was fun.

There were the days on the beach packed with friends and family. The word "friend" has a different meaning in this story though, I think family says it better. Growing up through the years at Taconic made us far more than just friends - it made us a big family. In my growing years the lake was like a big house, the beach was our sandbox, our playroom was the playhouse, cabins were bedrooms, the kitchen was the store, and the parents of this big house were Art and Marion Breton. As a kid, I didn't realize how special they were, but as I drive down the hill today and see picnic tables where the store used to be, it feels like a piece of the lake is missing.

One memory in particular stands out. I must have been 10 years old, and my last night at the lake had arrived oh too soon - it was time to go back to Detroit. You can't imagine how I didn't want to leave. I arrived at the playhouse happy to play with my friends one last night. The night was fun as always and at some point in the evening, Debbie and Nancy Poulin and I decided to walk up the store hill. On top of the hill we all sat down in the road close together. It was a beautiful night - the stars were out and the lake was like glass - but I knew that tomorrow at the lake wasn't to be. Then one of my cousins said, "We don't have tomorrow, but we had yesterday", like the song says. Well, that was to be our theme that night. We all sang that verse together in chorus (or the best that we could do) for what seemed like hours. Every time we ended a verse we all started crying. No sooner than we could wipe the tears off our faces, did one of us start it up again and we'd all join in.

That memory, like many of them at the lake, is nice to hold. I hope the next generation will enjoy T.L.A. as much as I have in my growing years.

## ***Our Paradise***

*Susan (Bleau) Delano*

I have a lot of memories with Taconic Lake where I spent all of my summers, from an infant to an adult.

One of my earliest memories, is of the swimming lessons Tony Thomas gave at the beach at 9:00 in the morning. It was always cold - the sun didn't hit the beach until 11:00 a.m. You knew you were a good swimmer when you could swim from the rock to the raft.

Another special time was the end of the year party. My brother, sister and I would practice an act for the talent show. The morning of the party, the Junior Association would gather at the playhouse to clean and decorate. On the portable record player, 45's would be spinning "Put your head on my shoulder" and "Sealed with a kiss".

My memories also include the craft classes Dorothy Barnes used to teach. We still have the pie tin with clothes pins all painted gold hanging in our camp.

I feel very privileged to have "grown up" at Taconic Lake. I will always have a special place in my heart for "the lake" and the life-long friends I have made.

I look forward to my daughter, Annie, discovering the joy, love and warmth of Taconic Lake. If we continue to protect our lake and surrounding woods, generations to come will know the joy and build their own memories at our paradise.

## ***Kozinn Memories***

*Carey Kozinn*

1991 will be our 10th summer at Taconic Lake. I would like to thank all the people since 1901 who have cherished the lake and kept it such a beautiful place. We feel honored to be members of such a group.

Our earliest memories have to center around the fact that we were made totally welcome from the very beginning, and how warm and friendly all our new neighbors were and still are.

The previous owners, the Ed Rodiers, had the house in their family from the very early days and I'm sure they have some interesting stories.

What I like best about the lake is the tranquility and peacefulness. Even at its busiest it is lovely. Living in New York City is just the opposite from the lake - it is constant chaos; the lake is constant peace. I don't know if I could continue to live in New York if I didn't have Taconic Lake.

I was pregnant with Nat when we bought the house. His first summer, I remember being at the beach and letting him get to know water. Nancy Meehan was always willing to hold Nat so I could have a dip. Both our children learned to swim at Taconic Lake and, I know that our summers there will always be a happily remembered part of their childhoods.

My feelings about Taconic Lake are not at all mixed. They are only positive and loving. What a spot - the sunrise, the sunset, the darkness and stars, the community, the healing feeling of the water itself! It is a very special spot and one that I will be eternally grateful to have known. I feel lucky to own a piece of property here and to be with other people who respect the lake and their neighbors.

# *Memoirs from Kreiger's Lakeview Lodge*

Mary Kreiger

In 1953, my sister-in-law, Peg Cavanaugh suggested that Frank and I rent the Tucker cottage for July. As our departure time drew near, we dreaded leaving Taconic so we were delighted when the August renters offered us their time. It certainly was good news to Janet because, due to a tonsillectomy, she couldn't go swimming until July 30th.

In 1954 we became owners, and I have indeed been fortunate not to have missed a summer since. I often say that lazy summers at Taconic meant healthy school years.

However, as I look back, I don't think my vacations were all that lazy. Marge Dalton, Gladys Fagan, Grace Hess, Florence Nagel and I became advisors to the Jr. T.L.A. and, like so many committees at Taconic, it was a long term appointment. The members of that group were always cooperative and excited in the planning stage, usually slowed down until we became the naggers and then - Wow! Let's go! Lots of enthusiasm and a successful scavenger or treasure hunt, bingo, masquerade or whatever. I remember that Janet K. and Mary Nagel didn't want to be president of the group - exhausted, they said, from all the committees they had worked on during the terms of John Dalton, Ace and Artie. At any rate, I think the Juniors were great and they added much joy to my summers.

While Ace was in Vietnam, his wife Madonna and I spent the summer together - a time of worry made even more frightening by the eerie appearance of the trees, and the sounds of the beetles as we walked around the lake. It was also a time of many kindnesses and much concern by others so we both have memories that can bring tears and smiles.

The McLaughlins have been frequent visitors and Kevin says: "For me, camp fun began with the roller coaster or "whee" roads off Route 2 - especially when Gram drove. I have many happy memories of time spent with 'Jimmer' Devane as we compared and shared our star war collections and match box cars. I lost count of the tree forts and sand trenches we built and destroyed. My first sailing adventure was in Jimmer's boat - freedom despite our "life jacket musts". The creek behind my cousin Amiee's camp was a popular spot but Breton's store was the greatest - a place to meet, play games and spend our hard earned allowances, followed by a walk around the lake hoping to scare someone on the way".

From Noreen: "I love my birthday and I am lucky that it's in July and can be celebrated at Taconic. Some years it was an overnight affair for my friends and me. A few times I have shared the occasion with my cousin Steven whose special "date" is close to mine. It was always a "Happy Birthday" for me. After listening to my Mom reminisce about blueberrying by boat with Mary Nagel, Sheila and I decided to give it a try. It was fun but I'd say that eating the muffins was the best part. I loved going with Gram to the general store in Berlin and to Bennington to browse and eat. Few of my friends can relate to scavenger hunts or a mile walk late at night with only the moon and stars for light - scary but part of Taconic Lake".

From Sheila: "Over the years I have become Gram's "moving crew". "pump girl" and "mouse lookout". I love the beach but when I'm lazy I enjoy Meyer's dock. I also love to bring my friends to see their guest house. Each summer Taconic means a chance to be with my many cousins. I think that "fun day" at the beach will always be my very favorite memory and the lake and camp my very favorites places".

The summer of 1985 was indeed a memorable one. After 3 years in Europe, Ace and his family came home for a summer at Taconic. It was terrific! Dori, I'm sure, will always count among her "best friends" those from the lake and among her "best times" all those



parties that just kept happening. Jennifer's flute added to many birthday greetings as did her enthusiasm to activities. She loved being with the Lampheres - Kreiger relatives in the Grafton area.

Steven and Damon are quite a pair. When Steven visits, the Oliver and Kreiger camps become annexes to each other.

Camp life is fun to Sarah and Kathleen. Cold weather doesn't keep them from the beach. We call them our "water-logged" campers. They never get tired of swimming - in fact, they never get tired at all.

Writing these memoirs has made me realize again how fortunate I am to have had a Taconic Lake in my life. Hopefully, it will be a source of many more memories for my family.

## *Special People, Special Place*

*"Ace" Kreiger*

My memories of Taconic Lake start when I was 6 or 7 years of age. My Uncle and Aunt, Jim & Peg Cavanaugh, were the first to buy a camp at Taconic. I was able to visit for a couple of days each summer and it was during these visits that I met my best friend, Artie Breton. From then on, until we grew up and married, we were always - Artie and Ace.

After a couple of years my parents rented for a month, then a second month. From then on we owned Lakeview Lodge, probably for the last 38 years or so. I don't remember much about the previous owners. I guess it was considered a renters camp like the Oberg and Roarke cottages that were usually rented for the summer months.

It was always amazing to see some of the camp owners who would come up from Long Island or New Jersey, carrying everything they needed for the summer, along with four or five passengers, in one trip. We who lived the closest would make endless trips home.

When we first moved to the Lake I was known as one of the "spokes" along with the other young ones. The "wheels" at the time were Mary Ellen & Peggy Cavanaugh, Butch Baumus, Ann Mary Coyle. A few years later there was Joey and JoAnn Cavanaugh. There was a group with Jim Thieringer and Bob Coyle that was somewhere in between.

We had a very active Junior Association with sincere, interested parents who helped in planning activities for the summer. When you weren't swimming you were usually at the Playhouse, playing darts, ping pong, cards, or listening to records. We younger ones always had a curfew in the Playhouse and many nights we didn't leave willingly. Activities for the summer included hot dog roasts, scavenger hunts, swim/boat regatta, movies, and for many years, a farewell party that featured tributes to different people at the lake. The two I remember most were to Mom and to Jack Grogan.

A couple of years we got roped into participating in various skits. One I remember most was when Helen Cushman taught a dance routine. We missed a couple of practices so, lucky us, she offered us private lessons. We couldn't win. Marie Rodier was another who did something similar with us.

In spite of all the planned activities, it was just human nature of the Lake kid that come Labor Day weekend, we'd do something "special". One year in particular caused an uproar. We all watched in wonder as all the canoes somehow got loose from their docks and every sign on the front of the camps got switched.

I remember going to the square dances in Petersburg on Friday nights in the hay wagon driven by Alan Stewart. We catholic kids couldn't eat meat on Fridays, so we'd climb the

hill in back of the barn and wait until midnight so we could eat one of those delicious hot dogs. Alan Stewart died a few years later and hayrides were a thing of the past. We still went to the dances for quite a few years thereafter, but then we went to dance.

Little by little the original "wheels" left the Lake for college, marriage, the military or their family sold the camp and we "spokes" became the wheels. Now we had Marie and John Dalton, Carol Tepedino, Patty and Ed Rodier, Mary Kay and TM Wall, Dave Cavanaugh, Blair Hyiatt, Mary Nagel, Jack & Kathy Taylor, my sister Janet and every once in while, Freddie Hess.

Occasionally, Artie, John, Freddie and I would go camping out. The first year was at the tennis courts; the second year at Snow Hole; and the third year at Mt. Greylock in Massachusetts. We would also bring more food than needed, so on the way home, we'd begin unloading the canned goods so we didn't have to carry them.

There were some special people around the Lake like Mrs. Helmuth, our next door neighbor. Once a summer for several years she would invite me over for lunch, (being from Germany it was her big meal of the day). I was used to sandwiches for lunch but this would be more like a buffet with two kinds of meat, noodles, potatoes, vegetables, salad and dessert. She told me many stories of her grandson, Michael, and her daughter, Anna. She wished Michael could have spent more time at camp.

Once or twice a summer, Mrs. Vetoich would go out in her boat, catch a bunch of fish, fry them up and feed Artie and I. She taught us how to play canasta and make pot holders and baskets. With the store available, Artie and I had a ready outlet to sell our baskets and pot holders.

Jack Grogan was a best friend and model for us all - single, money, sports fan, and no job. For years, a group of us would go to his camp every night to play pinochle. Days were reserved for swimming and tennis. We spent a lot of time together, went on a vacation once to Virginia Beach, ice skated in the winter at Taconic, ate at the Mountain Top Inn and so on. I remember when the Kreiger and Breton children held a 25th Wedding Anniversary party at the Mountain Top for our parents. Jack had enjoyed a few too many Old Fashioneds and after the party wanted to go for a swim. Of course Artie and I felt we had to go in the water with him. In later years, our visits home did not always include tennis or dinner with Jack, but I still think of him.

The Bretons and Mrs. Mac were always at the store maintaining the books when we charged the things we bought. The numerous times, too many to count, they got up from their chairs to wait on us. There was friendship and love that came from them to all children. Years later I saw this same love in the way my children were treated when they went down to the store. Even when there no longer was a store there was still the Bretons and there will always be the memory of them and Mrs. Mac at Taconic Lake.

Now I've been away the better part of 24 years with only short visits to the Lake with my wife, Madonna and the children. We have memories of Jennifer's Baptism under the trees at the camp, Dori, Jen, and Steven learning to swim to the Raft, going down the slide, and Sara and Kathleen having the freedom to walk around the lake, go down to the playhouse, and enjoying the freedom of doing things that we wouldn't have allowed them to do elsewhere. They feel the same warmth and friendliness from people like the Bulgers, Kathy & Doug Hoag, the Myers, Mrs. Millard and many others.

For me it's not the same place as it was years ago. I grow restless after a few days. Maybe the memories of the good old days are too strong and are mixed with happy and sad memories. I'm just glad that I had a chance to be at Taconic and that my children have had this same experience in their lives.

Happy 90th Birthday!

## *My Memories*

*Marla Buerger Friedrich, Rochester, NY*

I was born in 1940 and have been going to Taconic since birth.

My memories include the old victrola and wonderful records left from my Dad's youthful summers there; the beautiful clearness of the water; happy visits to the friendly people at the store and their great butter-pecan ice cream; my mother boiling water for laundry on the gas stove; taking baths in a big metal tub; the humming birds visiting the big patch of bee balm; chipmunks and beaver; spending hours watching the beautiful sunrise; and being profoundly saddened to find dead fish floating after fishermen caught them and threw them back; picking blueberries from the boat; feeling cold a lot; and swimming, swimming, swimming.

## *Peace and Serenity*

*Iona Vetoich Zmud*

In July of 1944, we first set foot on Marge Curry's porch at Taconic Lake. The view of the lake was breathtaking! A feeling of peace and serenity was in the air. After 47 years, these feelings are still alive.

Back in 1944, I was in college. My younger cousins, Harry Fromell, Jr. and Bob Beeble, spent their summers at the lake swimming, fishing for "sunnies", perch, pickerel and bullheads, and playing cards. On rainy or cold days the boys played cards on the store porch (the McCarthys' ran the store). At night the adults took over the porch and the younger people moved their card game to our place or the Eckerts (now Meehans).

The ties made at Taconic Lake still live. Harry Jr.'s children came as infants every summer until they reached high school age. They have stopped by on rare occasions but hope to come in August and bring spouses and their children with them to share their fond memories.

Our own children Tom, Elaine and Carol have always loved the lake and have been coming here since the first summer of their lives. Now Carol enjoys every minute she can. Tom and Mary come over from East Poestenkill and Elaine is bringing her husband and three year old twins, Billy and Stephanie.

Mom, Ella Vetoich, loved her summer home and stayed all summer. Dad, Fred Vetoich, didn't care for the confinement and preferred home - but his truck was always available for the young people of the lake if they needed anything transported - like the first Taconic Lake swing set in front of the store.

Since Mom was alone at the end of the season and she had a telephone, Mrs. Rhodes often spent the night with her. Even back then raccoons were a problem. One night the can was rattling. A raccoon was in the garbage! Mom went out as quietly as possible and put the lid on tightly - trapping the animal inside. The next morning she asked one of the locals to remove the can, and perhaps use the pelt. Well, he didn't want the pelt, but agreed to get rid of the "raccoon". He picked up the cover and immediately slammed it down!! That was no raccoon but a skunk! - which got a ride to a remote part of Grafton.

Writing about the telephone brought back memories of the early phone system. A crank had to be turned to get the operator. Each number had a certain number of rings and you had to listen for your number. Every phone rang, in every house on the lake for every call, even during the night or wee hours of the morning.

Through the years, there have been and still are wonderful people at Taconic. One summer, Dr. Berger, Dr. Marge Grogan and I checked septic systems by putting dye in the toilets. This gave me an opportunity to really get to know Dr. Berger. He was a brilliant man and very far sighted in warning us of the environmental dangers to our beautiful treasure - Taconic Lake.

The beauty of our lake is an asset of which we are very proud. We must not forget that people are a very important and integral part of this community. Mother nature and people have given us a piece of heaven on earth. Let's preserve Taconic for our children's, children's children.

## *Camp Life*

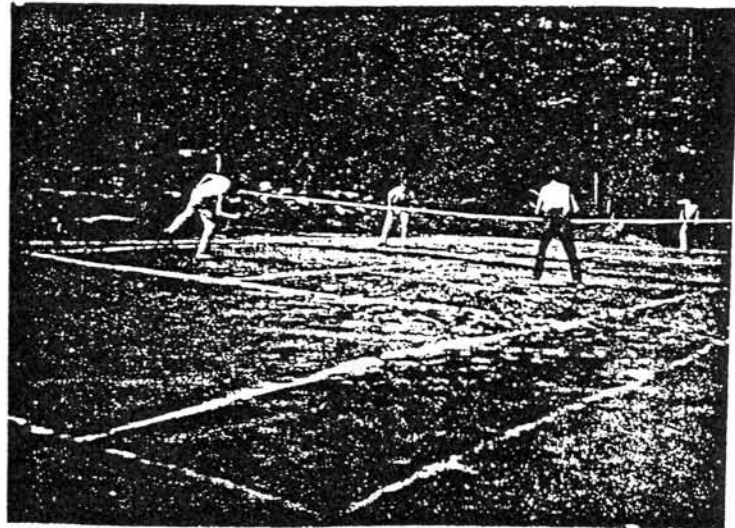
*Peg Thieringer*

We rented the O'Berg cottage for many years and were delighted to buy the Bleuth place even though it was a nightmare in the beginning - first look brought into view a "dropped" kitchen ceiling.

Jimmy was only 10 months old on his first Taconic Lake vacation. I pushed him around the lake in a metal wheelbarrow - suggestion of Mr. Latta - and a good one too, because it took the bumps better than a carriage. It was 4 years before our place was liveable and Jimmy was delighted that he no longer had to brush his teeth under the kitchen pump.

John O'Berg taught me a lot about camp life, and thanks to him I finally mastered the stove. Opening and closing were chores, and every April and October I'd threaten to sell for a nickel. Now Bob has made many nice improvements in the camp and has come up with easier and efficient methods of doing the chores. He, with Mary and Eric, especially enjoyed sailboating. Taconic Lake is so special to them that they have become weekenders, and it's comforting to me to know that Taconic is still a popular place for Thieringers. I think it's the greatest!

*Dole/Deschenes/Duquette,  
Costa, Meehan, Bryce, Lochner*



### *DOLE, DESCHENES, DUQUETTE Family*

#### *Contentment*

*Alice Dole Deschenes*

We all have much nostalgia and great memories for Lake Taconic.

Dan, Brick's father, loved the lake, the surroundings and Petersburg. He, also, came as a small baby. His mother was born in Petersburg, the daughter of Charles Reynolds, one of the founders of Taconic Lake Association. He spent many happy times here with family and friends until his death in 1982.

Our cottage was never owned by anyone but family. Angela is the fifth generation of our family enjoying Taconic. She loves it all.

Personally, my earliest times with Dan's family at camp were days without electricity and the facilities that came along much later. As for local helpers — Bill Schemerhorn did chores for us, as he did for others, building docks etc. The happiest times were at the store with Marion and Art, and visiting with neighbors in the evening. The hay rides to Petersburg in Allen Stewart's truck for the square dances with the children and parents were great fun.

The contentment at Taconic, the air, the lake, swimming, walking, canoeing, visiting with friends — all of it is so great. There is nothing like it anywhere else.

There are so many memories to recall it is hard to pick just one because of the joy involved. It was with such happiness that I watched my daughter learn to swim and accomplish the steps of growing up, especially to have the advantage to be at Taconic summers.

Taconic represents a big part of my life and continues to be so, and always will. Our present situation is a very happy one, to have John with us, and to share memories and events and to plan for future great summers at Taconic together.



## *A Most Precious Gift*

*Danielle "Bricky" Dole Duquette*

My first memories have been related to me by my parents Dan and Alice Dole. I started coming to the lake at the tender age of two months - I am a fourth generation laker. My earliest memories include learning how to swim off my dock, then at the beach, to the rock and the final accomplishment - the Raft! I have super fond memories of all the kids I played with each summer. Although our family is from Vermont, I'd come away talking like a New Yorker by the end of the summer. Other memories pop to mind - walking around the lake, singing at the top of our lungs, the store with Art and Marion Breton, spending ALL day Friday to get ready for the weekly square dance and hay ride (compliments of Allen Stewart), the "ballbearings, spokes and wheels", the annual regatta, swim across the lake, Labor Day weekend "capers", ghost stories, the playhouse and so many more.

My husband Ron came into the picture as a teenager. What fun we had - he will always be remembered as Ron DOLE. Ron and I reinstated the regatta, now known as Fun Day at the Beach, about seventeen years ago. The Sailboat Races were also started at that time in conjunction with the Theiringers. My family donated a rotating cup in memory of Charles W. Reynolds (my great-grandfather and one of the founders of TLA).

Many terrific people lived in our cottage (named Dew Drop Inn by my grandmother, Grace Reynolds Dole). There were Charles and Lucy Reynolds, Irving and Grace Reynolds Dole, Daniel and Alice Dole and of course today Ron, Bricky (Dole), and Angela Duquette. Also my Mom, Alice, who married our dear friend John Deschenes. Party time and lots of fun was had in the olden days and continues with great enthusiasm today. I remember the North-west passage (bridge between Devane and Dole), the out house, "Rosies", many friends and lots of laughs.

Memories with the most joy include: Ron loving the lake, my dear friends, bringing Angela at eight months old on Memorial Day (it was so cold she slept in the living room in her crib with Dr. Dentons and a fire), the good ole days, Angela growing up at the lake every summer and doing the same things I did as a child.

I live at the lake for the summer months (they are getting longer) and can't think of any other place I would rather be. I love "doing stars", enjoying the beauty around me and feeling like a million bucks. I thank Charles Reynolds for a most precious gift.

## *It Means a Lot To Me*

*Ron "Dole" Duquette*

My first recollections of Taconic Lake as a seventeen year old are clouded by teenage love. As Bricky's boyfriend anywhere was heaven. But age brings wisdom, and by marrying Bricky I knew I could have the best of two worlds - Bricky and Taconic Lake.

Those early days of canoeing, fishing, going to the beach and "hanging out" on the raft, the fun we had on the slide were all things we bragged to our at home friends about. It was so much fun to have friends down at the lake especially with their children; the lake had challenges which to this day are talked about. I remember when Angela (who do you remember?) swam out to the "Rock" - what an accomplishment! Then to the Raft! "You can do it", "keep going". Remember? The slide - head first, feet first, all ages, fun times.

The one thing that is missed is the Store. Dan Dole loved Clark Bars, Angela was thrilled with \$.25 treats. Marion and Art were great hosts to adults and children as well. Other things I remember were the parade of children on our front lawn from morning till night - it was great!

Remember the pancake breakfast, the parade of boats, John Rodier singing in the quiet summer nights? Most of all I remember lasting memories of Alice and Dan - their love of the lake was infectious. Bricky certainly caught it, I caught it and so did Angela. It's an infection you don't try to get rid of because it affects the heart. But besides all the beautiful surroundings, the one thing I love about the lake is the people. I am pleased to be part of the Taconic Lake Family and look forward to many more years of TLA life. Especially those years I don't have to leave on Sundays and drive back on Friday nights!

Lake Taconic, it means a lot to me.

## ***Making Memories***

*Angela A. Duquette*

Memories of TACONIC LAKE will remain in my heart forever. I'll never forget those dark walks around the lake when the "little kids" would spy on the "big kids" at the beach - then we became the "big kids". Costume parties, a quarter for a candy bar, the playhouse steps, singing and dancing with AMIEE POULIN in front of the crowd at the store; those nights of the "parents" dinner; and endless days in the water; evenings at the store playing hide and go seek; and nights stargazing with special friends.

Let the memories be continued in the making!

## ***Our Taconic Fortress***

*John and Kay Costa*

Our memories of Taconic Lake began in the summer of 1968. We stayed at Jackson Taylor's camp, now owned by Paul and Marion Bulger. Our children were young - Joseph, the oldest, was only 7, Christina was 6, Carol Ann was 5 and Joann was 3. It was here that they learned to swim, how to row a boat, to jump or dive off the dock, early morning fishing, afternoon lunch on the top deck, Fourth of July cookouts, and "Saturday Night" talent shows on the porch. We had great fun and enjoyment. We often look across the lake and reminisce of the good times we enjoyed staying there.

Ten years later we bought the Charles Baum camp. He had bought the land on June 2, 1908 from "TLA". The camp was later left to his daughters, Ruth and Estelle.

In 1980, Estelle and her husband made a visit to Taconic. They were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. She and her husband had honeymooned at the lake and when they arrived that cold April day in 1930, there was still snow on the ground. It was an interesting experience to actually meet the daughter of one of the original owners of "TLA".

We tried to keep the original camp but, time and age took their toll. John decided to take the old camp down. He designed and built our camp. Our fireplace is built from Grafton stones and brick. Grafton certainly has an abundance of stones (some moveable and some permanent like in our foundation). Finally, after 5 or 6 years of weekends, vacations and holidays, we completed our "Taconic Fortress" - as Paul calls it!

We are celebrating second generation parties here, our first grandson will be 2 on June 2nd and we are looking forward to other grandchildren to enjoy "TLA".

Hopefully, John and I are looking forward to beautiful retirement days on our "Golden Pond" in "TLA".

## **"Yoo Hoo"**

*Nancy Meehan*

Perhaps my earliest memory of Taconic Lake is hearing "Yoo hoo, Marge" or "Yoo hoo, Lucy" called across the lake as Marge Curry (now Zmud cottage) or Lucy Ross (now Bleu cottage) communicated across the lake without the aid of telephones. Later, I recall ice cream sodas served on the store porch by Mrs. McCarthy. Brother Mann's (now Hook cottage) favorite was chocolate ice cream with cherry soda.

As a teenager, I fondly recall riding to local softball games and square dances on a load of hay on the back of Allen Stewart's truck. Also, Henry Cushman loudly playing the piano on the big old store porch and trips by the more adventurous to the bottom of Taconic in the old diving suit.

## **Forty Three Years**

*Helen and Merrick Bryce*

The Bryces first discovered Taconic Lake some 43 years ago when living in a third floor apartment in downtown Troy forced us to seek the coolness of Grafton for a summer getaway.

Thanks to our parents' friends, the Theiringers, we secured the rental of John Oberg's camp (now the Kennedys') for the entire summer that year and for some 21 years to follow. We became fast friends of John, picking him up each trip he made from N.Y.C. at the bus or train terminal and returning him there. We also rented Stevens' (now Hepfingers') and Buehler's (now Ives) for several years giving us the "renter record" for all time at TLA.

Is it any wonder we love and adore Taconic calling it "Home"? It was not until 1977, long after all 3 children had left home, that we became owners of our property following the death of Congressman Dean P. Taylor.

The atmosphere at the lake in those post war years was considerably different from today - the camps were truly "camps" with few conveniences or amenities; life together was simpler but intimate with mothers and children occupying the beach each day while the male population trekked to the city in pursuit of their employment.

The large lake population found its center of gravity to be the store operated by the McCarthy and Breton families for so many years. We not only purchased needed supplies - fresh Freihofer baked goods and milk products - but also exchanged the news of past and present members while rocking back and forth on the porch. Life was so easy and enjoyable in those days!

With few phones on the lake at that time, we personally depended on the Bretons to be our communication link with our Troy business - our funeral home. Upon receiving a message from Merrick's parents from Troy, the faithful Bretons quickly summoned a child playing at the playhouse to "carry the message" for which the large tip of a quarter was given. Away would speed Merrick - often having just arrived! Nothing was ever too much for those McCarthy's and Breton's to do - Nothing!!

Every day was spent caring for our 3 children, laundering their clothes by hand, boiling tons of smelly diapers on the kerosene stove, bathing little ones in a large round tub on the floor and cooking every single meal (there were no McDonalds nearby)....yet loving every minute of it without realizing the hardships!

Twice each week fresh vegetables and meats were delivered to us by Mel Piche in his truck honking his way around the lake. Members of the native Schermerhorn family frequently came door-to-door selling wild strawberries, blueberries, salve and ferns, while Bicycle Willie pedaled his way around the lake assisting all who needed his services.

In my recollection, few swam in the evenings, at least on our side of the lake where the sun left us early in the day. Many more bats flew at dusk, many more frogs croaked, still few magnificently large fish were boasted of - yet the cool, pure, clear water of the lake was little changed from today. It seemed that hundreds of boats plied the lake each evening in an almost Victorian manner - the gentleman rowing or paddling, the lady resting from a busy but beautiful day in the sun!

I shall not forget the Cushman plane landing on the lake facing our camp one afternoon while my babies were sleeping. Nor will I forget the night the Hess boys were lost in the woods and the panic in our hearts until their rescue.

I recall with horror the supertime explosion in Berlin that rocked the earth as far away as our lake and the sight of destruction and death brought on by that tractor-trailer losing its brakes and careening down the mountain. Many thunder and lightening storms raged, causing us to huddle in the center of the camp holding on to each other.

Taconic Lake has always been the most peaceful spot on earth with its healthy air, its crystal water, its delectable spring water and its thoughtful, caring people. Life is changing everywhere, even here where it no longer is the day-by-day slow summer vacation spot for families to renew and rebuild themselves after the hard winter. Few children remain all week like ours did, yet there remains a cohesive, warm spirit of comradeship among us as shown on Fun Day, Sailboat Races, Annual Meeting and Coffee Hour, Annual Dinner and all other occasions of gathering.

We love and respect this beautiful part of earth God has loaned to us and the fine people too who continue to be a part of it. We are truly grateful to have been a part of this history - half, in fact!

## *An Immediate Love Affair*

*Charles & Jeanie Lochner*

Our first introduction to Taconic Lake was in 1981 as guests of the Balls. They generously offered us the use of their camp both in the summer of '82 and '83 for a weeks vacation. It was an immediate love affair with Taconic.

During those stays we used to talk of an "impossible dream" of one day having a place of our own to come to - if not at Taconic Lake then someplace like it... a "retreat". (We've since realized there is no place like it!). The peace and tranquility here was indescribable. We had been told that property at Taconic was almost impossible to come by since most of the camps went back for generations and therefore were just handed down within families.

During one of our stays here in '83, at the height of our 'dreaming', while out for a canoe ride, we discovered the "deserted" camp to the left of the beach and went ashore to investigate. Well, if any of you know what a sorry state this place was in, we don't have to describe it, but it was hardly safe to enter for fear the structure would collapse right under us. However, we did venture in and excitedly began to visualize how we could fix the place up. (We were desperate people!). To say this was a "Handyman's Delight personified" is an understatement.

We were determined to learn the history of our new discovery, and how we could acquire our "dream house". What we found out was that the owners were from New York City and, although they hadn't been to the lake in years and obviously hadn't taken care of it, were not interested in selling the property. Our "dream" went up in smoke and all our hopes with it. (This structure has since been torn down by the Association, I believe, because it was unsafe, the owners not being reachable.)

In the spring of '84 we learned that our present camp was available from the Bitemans, and the rest is history. This really was a "dream come true"! We don't know how or why, but we've truly been blessed with our haven at Taconic and all the wonderful friends we've made here.



A solitary day working the pen on résumés to be sent for what seems  
imaginary jobs

Momentary thoughts of futures and questions becoming complicated  
and worrisome -- feeling myself not being into the work  
but drifting ----

Drifting outside myself, outside my window, an exquisite day  
full of vibrant colours in every imaginable shade, against  
the ever persistent greens of summer already gone.

Turbulent winds scented in pine-filled gusts dancing with leaves  
teased down by the blows.

I think I am in Heaven.

I walk around the crystal blue, looking glass lake set in autumn's  
fullish glory, illuminated by the white full moon on  
dancing tree tops, climbing steadily into a sleepy sky --  
- a cradle.

A sound came, rushing into a year ago past of memories  
Look to the sky . . . . Look to the sky !

The Canadian geese -- hundreds in perfect chevron flight  
Oh, yes, I think I am in Heaven.

Treasures to be had and cherished as gifts from something much  
bigger than you and me,

That truly knows the order of the universe.

Melissa Meyer  
Taconic Lake  
Sept. 30, 1974.

