



Dyken Pond-erings

Newsletter of the Friends of the Dyken Pond Center

Issue 113

Promoting environmental awareness in people of all ages

Winter 2011

Dyken Pond Environmental
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Otter Cove Paid Off

At last we can close the books on Otter Cove. The land is paid for and owned fully by the Friends of the Dyken Pond Center. It was a somewhat complex process to finance and then raise the funds but through the efforts of many individuals and Friends of Dyken Pond we were successful. The Friends actually closed on the Otter Cove parcel on June 9, 2009. We used a loan of \$92,000 from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation to finance the purchase. This interest free load was due in full on June 30, 2010. We were awarded a grant from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for \$50,000 to be used for the land purchase. We were getting close to our loan deadline and had not yet received the funds so we asked for and were granted an extension until Dec 31, 2010. We received \$45,000 of the funds from the State in time to pay the loan off before the end of July (only one month beyond our original deadline). We received the final

\$5,000 from the State in February, 2011. The remainder of the funds were raised through several major donations and fundraising efforts.

Land at Sylvan Way donated

Lot 13 was donated to the Friends by Merideth Mueller on November 18, 2010. Merideth purchased this lot during the first round of lot sales by Stonybrook to protect the end of the cove. Not only did she donate this land to the Friends but she also made a donation to us to cover our first property tax bill on the parcel. Merideth also purchased Lot 14 in November 2010. She intends to keep this parcel but to keep it undeveloped. These 2 lots in conjunction with the Otter Cove parcel now protect the entire cove on both sides.

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Also in this issue:

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Ice Safety

By Kenneth Anatriello

Now that we have a real winter with cold temperatures and snow and the lakes and ponds are frozen, we now have a new way to enjoy the outdoors. Activities such as ice skating, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and fishing can be done on top of the frozen surface of a lake or pond. Although these cold weather pastimes are enjoyable ways to spend your winter days, they can also be very dangerous. Although this is turning out to be quite a winter, we have had several mild winters recently. Accidents due to poor ice conditions seem to be more frequent every year. So here are some useful tips to take into consideration when approaching a body of water.

- o Remember to dress appropriately and keep dry.
- o Try not to go on the ice alone, but if you do tell someone your expected time of return.
- o Always have a rope.
- o While on the ice look for soft spots, springs, and other blemishes on the surface. If you see one stay away.
- o If the ice looks unsafe it probably is.
- o If you are by yourself and fall through, stay calm and place your arm on top of the ice and wait a few seconds. This allows your arms to "stick" or "freeze" to the surface, and then pull yourself out.

Clear/black ice is the strongest ice, it will hold:

Ice thickness	Permissible load
3 inches	One person
4 inches	Group of people
7 1/2 inches	Small car (2 ton)
12 inches	Heavy truck (8 ton)
15 inches	10 ton
20 inches	20 ton
36 inches	100 ton

Friends of Dyken Pond Center, LTD.

Treasurer's Report

December 31, 2010

Account Balances

Account Name Balance

CD - 1119 \$815.58

Credit Card - Sefcu \$11.47

Credit Card - Staples \$0.00

SEFCU Checking \$7,904.82

SEFCU Preferred Savings \$15,803.04

SEFCU Regular Savings \$69.29

Allocated Funds Balances

Name Balance

Cabin 3 restoration & pavilion \$919.29

Edward's Endowment \$500.00

Rough Riders Program \$5,078.81

Scholarship Fund \$340.00

Equipment/Repairs \$209.60

Natural Areas Book (\$50.00)

Programs Donations \$896.98

Program Material Fund \$8,182.16

Land Protection Fund \$5,050.00

Total Bank Assets Total Allocated Funds

\$24,679.31 \$21,126.84

Available

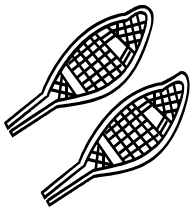
\$3,552.47



Do our children have Nature Deficit Disorder?

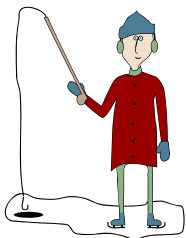
By Lisa Hoyt

There is a national movement to reconnect children to the outdoors which has come about largely from the award-winning book, Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv. If you have not read this book yet, run out and get it. It should be required reading by all parents and educators working with young people. Subtitled Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder, Louv makes the case that many children today lack focus, have low attention spans and problem solving skills and are increasingly diagnosed with ADHD. Many of these problems stem from a nature deficit and can be avoided if kids connect to nature and have unstructured free time to simply play and be physically active. It appears that unmanaged time in the outdoors can teach a lot of useful skills: critical thinking, problem solving, conflict resolution, using your imagination and a lot more. Louv cites extensive research in the book to back up his claims and a growing body of research agrees with him:



Sixty minutes of daily unstructured free play is essential to children's physical and mental health. (*The American Academy of Pediatrics*)

Time in nature encourages children's innate curiosity and imagination, which fuel problem solving skills and complex thinking ability (*American Medical Association*)



Playing outside combats obesity and depression (*Journal of Community Health*)

Baby boomers are the last generation to spend a large part of their childhoods having the freedom to run outdoors unsupervised, climb trees without fear of liability suits or simply explore a patch of woods or vacant lot. Children born after 1980 are growing up with most of their time managed by adults and end up with little direct contact with nature.

Winter is tough, but there's many things you can do to reconnect yourself and family to nature. Go snowshoeing, take a walk around the block, hang up a bird feeder, watch a sunset together. Most importantly, start planning on giving your children the gift of free time. Bring them to a park or the backyard and let them decide what to do. As adults, we always want to have a plan. Next time you go outside, try giving up control and let your kids lead you on an exploration. It might surprise you where you end up!



Friends of Dyken Pond Awarded Community Art\$Grant

The Friends of the Dyken Pond Center have been awarded an arts grant by the Arts Center of the Capital Region. The Community Art\$Grants fund community arts and cultural programming to enhance access to the arts in all communities throughout the region. This competitive grant will fund a portion of a community art project at the Center. The remaining portion will be funded by the Friends of Dyken Pond and Rensselaer County.

The artist is Tamara DeMartino who has over 25 years of mosaic experience creating tile mosaics for New York State as well as many commercial and private commissions. She has also taught art at several area colleges and at the Arts Center in Troy.

The project will involve the general public and groups participating in learning mosaics and helping to create works of art. The nature-themed ceramic art will hang outdoors at the Dyken Pond Center, creating a permanent exhibit. Interested groups and individuals can contact the Center for more information on how to be included in this unique opportunity to create art.

Find out more about the Arts Center at <http://www.artscenteronline.org/index.cfm>

DYKEN POND-ERINGS,
THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE FRIENDS OF THE
DYKEN POND CENTER

Snowshoeing

Excerpted with permission from Drive magazine- a production of Subaru

Winter weather- snow, in particular- affords experiences that help to put life into perspective. Newly fallen snow makes the world new again. Everything is clean and white. When you're the first to cross any open area, you feel like an explorer and a trailblazer, marking the way for others to follow.

Animal tracks and markings left by blowing grasses and other vegetation that remain from warmer months serve as messages: They are singular signs that humankind is not alone and that we share the planet. Snowshoeing on a new layer of snow gives you the opportunity to contemplate that relationship.

Outdoor winter travel does not need to be at speed. There's an alternative to using skis, snowboards, or ice skates to cross the season's frozen surfaces. With snowshoes, you can enjoy winter at a different pace, whether for overland travel, recreation, communing with nature, serious exercise, community building, seeking isolation, or competition.

Snowshoeing has enjoyed a renaissance the last few decades. Once necessary footwear for enabling members of native tribes to mobilize during winter months, snowshoes are just as useful today as they were as many as 6,000 years ago.

The concept behind snowshoes is that they spread out a person's weight across a wide area so the snowshoer doesn't sink like he or she would if just wearing shoes or boots. As an early human invention, snowshoes have a long history.

A historical perspective

In his book *Snowshoeing: From Novice to Master*, author Gene Prater claimed that the invention and development of snowshoes were as important to humankind as the invention of the wheel. The 6,000-year history of snowshoes places their origination in central Asia, probably as crude slabs of wood. One theory is that both snowshoes and skis developed from this technology. As it spread to the west, the wooden slabs became skis in what are now European countries. To the east, the

slabs were taken across the Aleutian land bridge from Asia to North America and became snowshoes.

North America's Native American tribes further modified snowshoes to the point of their being crucial for survival. They were used extensively from the northwest across the plains to the northeast.

Usually, snowshoes were made with wood frames that had leather cords crisscrossed from side to side. Footwear was bound to the leather webbing and/or frame.

European settlers adopted Native American snowshoe technology, finding it just as necessary for transportation as the natives did.

Designs reflected application -- that is, form followed function. Long snowshoes with emphatically turned-up toes were developed for use in powder snow in open country. Snowshoes that were narrow in front were for pushing through brush as well as for reducing the amount of snow that accumulates on the tips. Shoes intended for climbing had wider, flatter fronts.

Native American snowshoe designs have carried into the 21st century, and basic traditional snowshoe shapes used for walking through different environments often carry the names of tribes. For example, among the basic snowshoe shapes are Huron, Yukon, Ojibwa, and Cree.

Snowshoes Today

Modern snowshoes were introduced in the 1950s and had another spurt of development in the 1970s. These tested the applications of aluminum and plastics for frames and a variety of synthetic and high-tech materials for the rest. Instead of a toe hole and toe cord for binding, metal mechanical bindings are now a part of many designs.

Through the course of the last 60 years, some of the materials have proven to work better than others, and today's snowshoes reflect substantial refinement. Contemporary snowshoes are lightweight and durable.

Snowshoes are made for individuals of any size -- from children through adults. Wood-framed snowshoes are still available, and most outfitters have snowshoes of different types and materials for whatever your destination and application might be -- casual hiking, backpacking, or climbing.

Snowshoeing is an activity for just about anyone, provided, of course, you have access to approximately six inches or more of snow. There are no restrictions on age or skill level. Men, women, and children participate in this activity, which has grown by more than 50 percent during the last decade. It is inexpensive and easy to learn. If you can walk, you can snowshoe! Plus, barring a misstep off a cliff or into a tree, it is a safe, low-impact activity that provides several health benefits.

The Benefits of Snowshoeing

The bottom line on snowshoeing is that it's one of the best forms of exercise you can find for burning calories. It's a relatively safe form of exercise that combines aerobics for cardiovascular fitness, strength training, and muscle endurance.

When it comes to burning calories, snowshoe walking is in league with jogging, racket ball, and squash. Snowshoeing is a little more effective than the other three. Also, snowshoeing burns approximately twice the number of calories as walking at the same speed.

Although snowshoers easily can exercise themselves to improved health, their contact with the outdoors leads to mental and emotional benefits as well. Plying through the snow on a cold, crisp day and enjoying the surroundings is relaxing, and the experience often is reflective. That's especially true if you're the first to cross freshly fallen snow.

Two resources about snowshoeing:

- *Snowshoeing: A Trailside Guide*, by Larry Olmsted; W.W. Norton & Company
- *Snowshoeing: From Novice to Master*, by Gene Prater; The Mountaineers Books




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Center**

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We're on the web!
www.dykenpond.org



Alcott Smith on Dustin's Swamp
2/6/2011