

SUMMER 2010 BRINGS JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF OUR LAKE AREA BEACH COVES THAT STILL SPARKLE
"LIKE A DIAMOND DROPPED FROM THE SKY"

by Michele Guttenberger

This summer will be a hallmark summer for many of our lake communities in the Skylands Region. Over a hundred years ago the NJ North West Lake Region was "The" North East travel destination of our country. While many out west joined in community barn raising, we were here building docks, boathouses, cabanas, and gazebos overlooking our scenic lake coves. It was also a time of developing societies and social clubs that brought in well heeled travelers looking for a majestic escape from the hustle and bustle of the city but close in distance to spend many summer weekends together with friends and family. In 1908 there was trolley service from Dover to Lake Hopatcong and tracks that extended to the new bridge providing passenger stops at Mt Arlington Blvd and the Beach of Bertrand Island. Convenient transit prompted the construction of the LHYC -Lake Hopatcong Yacht Club clubhouse in 1910. A century later on July 10, 2010, LHYC members celebrated their club's Centennial Anniversary.

In 1905 T.C. Whitlock wrote in this travel guide "Lake Hopatcong Illustrated" the following passages: *Magnificent in its scenic grandeur, with its majestic mountains rising proudly above its placid water, broken here and there by picturesque islands, Lake Hopatcong spreads itself among the hills of New Jersey like a diamond dropped from the sky; ... thousands gather to enjoy its matchless splendor. Without a doubt, Lake Hopatcong is the most popular mountain resort in New Jersey and is surpassed by none anywhere in the country.*

Besides travelers from Manhattan, Whitlock's 25 cent travel guide included information on rail connections for those traveling from Trenton or Philadelphia. Whitlock wrote: "Many people of the United States spend time and money in going to foreign countries for the benefit of their health, totally ignorant of the benefits of the dry, bracing atmosphere and the pure drinking water found at Lake Hopatcong ...". Travelers would follow heed to his advice with the outbreak of World War I in August 1914. This increased Lake Hopatcong's summer tourism. Summer journeys to Europe stopped for travelers fearful of Atlantic ship attacks.

The NJ Lakeland Region gradually declined in



popularity as the ideal resort location when the automobile made travelers more mobile to venture to other lake and coastal beaches. However, the personal automobile eventually brought a renaissance to the NJ Lake Region with the advent of Interstate 80 in 1958. Summertime only bungalows were being replaced with many permanent full year dwellings and many eastern NJ folk moved west to Sussex and Morris Counties. Any lake community town along the new Route 80 corridor had enticing family living and commuter appeal. Thus, family home construction started to boom.

The Hopatcong Homestead Beach Association on Lake Hopatcong's Ingram Cove was one of those little gems on Lake Hopatcong that provided a beach community with nice family residential homes. Unlike the high societies and private clubs of the early 1900's, this 1960 association was a home community with deeded beach property for its members. Members in professional contracting businesses helped raise new boating docks and beach shelters for their own private beach community. The late Phil Winbush was a heavy equipment operator and provided the pole digging for HHBA's first dock. Decades later other talented members such as professional carpenter Joe Kolaya and home construction builder Mike O'Leary helped build swimming floats, better dock slips and a fine-looking beach cabana. To celebrate their 50 Years, President Linda Klusick had tee shirts made with the words "HHBA the Little Gem on Lake Hopatcong". With so many lake communities in our area, I am sure 2010 will be a jubilee year for many community beach coves that sparkle "like a diamond dropped from the sky