



**TALES OF**

**GALWAY LAKE**



**GALWAY LAKE CAMPERS ASSOCIATION  
NEW YORK  
2023**

# TALES OF GALWAY LAKE

AS PRESENTED AT THE STORYTELLERS' GATHERING  
JULY 15, 2023

## THANK YOU TO THE COMMITTEE:

Sue Wright, Chair  
Hasna Kaddo  
Beth Krueger  
Lois Rowe  
Bruce Rowell

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Sue Lantelme  
Committee Resource

## EDITOR

Hasna Kaddo

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E-BOOK PUBLISHED  
SEPTEMBER 2023

# STORYTELLERS' GATHERING

Galway Lake is located west of Galway, New York, in the Town of Galway in Saratoga County, New York. On Saturday, July 15, 2023 at 10:00 in the morning, approximately 40 people gathered at Ruback Pavilion, which is located in Ruback Grove on Galway Lake. The group met to share stories or listen to tales of growing up on Galway Lake. The event was very relaxed and intimate as the presenters shared personal stories of things they heard from previous generations or what they themselves experienced at Galway Lake.

Our goal here is to record these wonderful stories in the storytellers' own words so they can be enjoyed by the current and future generations. These stories are introduced here in the order they were presented at the Storytellers Event.

## PRESENTERS

SUSAN WRIGHT

PHYLLIS GERBER (not included)

BRUCE ROWELL

BETH KRUEGER

DEE DEE CLARKE

SANDY SHAPIRO HANDLER

LOU BUHRMASTER

DAVE GREENWOOD

LOIS ROWE - ON BEHALF OF BETTY CUCKOO

## OPEN MIC PRESENTERS

CAROL KURTO

ELIZABETH ROWE

MARTHA LEMMOND

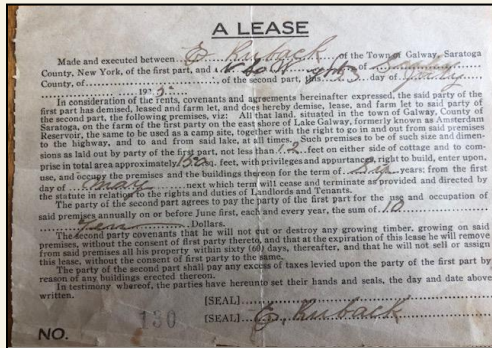
*A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.*

Marcus Garvey

# SUSAN WRIGHT

I count my personal Galway history from birth because Mom met Dad here in the early 1930's. My father was one of the yearly 1920 Ruback's Farm campers, as the middle boy of three with his parents, the family would stake their tents for the summer season to come and go from Scotia, New York.

Eventually the Wrights would purchase a lot from Mr. May in the south end of the lake and built the typical 1920 style four-square cottage with a full width front porch camp. The interior living room space closed off by French doors in cool weather was dominated by a potbelly wood stove. Two bedrooms at one end were merely partitioned so kids tucked in for bed would throw objects over the walls at one another. Grampa and Grandma Wright had privacy from the kids with a cold bedroom off the porch.



Lease Agreement with Ruback Farm C1923

My teenage dad, his brothers Bill, and Wayne assisted Mr. May and his sons in construction of several camps around Maywood Bay.

Mom's camp was two doors down. She was the oldest of three, with two younger brothers. The Richardson family had arrived a few years later and renovated an old men's Hunting and Fishing camp. We've been told it was the original structure on the southern end of the lake.

Grampa Richardson was an Engineer for Mohasco Industries, hired to manage the plant's carpet manufacturing machinery and regulate the flow of supply water from Amsterdam Reservoir (Galway Lake) to the plant. He fell in love with the lake and bought the old camp for his families' summers.



Wright boys help construct Maywood Grove roads, 1929

I vividly remember walks with Grandpa R to the dam where he would open the gate to a footbridge, then clambering across to the concrete structure to crank an enormous wheel that regulated the outflow of Galway water to the Chuctanunda Creek.

For the first ten years of my life as the second child of five, my sisters and I would spend 2 weeks each at the grandparents' places. First the Wright and then at the Richardson camps; my brother a baby stayed at home with Mom and Dad.

Later when best friends back home in Schenectady purchased a place in Hardwoods Grove, my older sister and I would each separately spend an additional week in Galway at the Tytko's camp.

Around 1955, we were both taught the basics of sailing a *Turnabout* dinghy by Doctor Tytko. We would take hikes to visit the Grandmas at the other end of the lake.

When my little brothers were old enough, our family stayed the last two weeks of August every summer at Grampa and Grandma Wright's camp.



Mom and Dad, back row, left



Dad and brother Bill's antics off their homemade swim float



The Wright camp, 1930

At age about 7 for me, sister DD and I met the May kids a couple of camps to our left; boys our age. We would create a path to the Mays camp through an overgrown yard running as fast as we could, to get past an abandoned spooky camp teetering on telephone poles that pitched toward the water, front door to a never built porch, looming 10 feet in the air.

Four years later, Mom and Dad purchased that camp and put a living/dining, and kitchen A-Frame glass addition in front. The spooky old camp part became partitioned off bedrooms for the seven of us, my baby brother Billy having arrived that year, 1958.



Our next ten summers were consumed with sailing Sailfishes practically every day of the week and racing on weekends. Swimming included washing our hair in the lake leaving a trail of soapy suds when we dived in. Aunt Frances and Uncle Bill, their daughters Phyllis and Nancy, had inherited the Wright camp next door by that time so having permanent summer friends, we ran from camp to camp constantly.

We would pack a lunch and hike around the lake at least twice a summer. Cousin Nancy and I bicycled the Jersey Hill and Kania back roads discovering old graveyards. Our ever-widening circle of friends included kids from Ruback, Hardwoods, West Bay, North end and in our own grove. Camp was paradise.

TV was virtually non-existent as the reception was poor. At night we played board games, card games, and made popcorn and fudge.

As teenagers, DD, Nancy and I rowed to the Ruback's store and hung out with kids from other parts of the lake. We danced to the jukebox and flirted with boys. We visited camps there to play games. The three of us barely made it home, bailing our wooden boat all the way back to make a curfew of 10:00.

The lake was lowered in August each year, so we'd have our annual Labor Day family clambake on the newly revealed beach. It was hard to go back home, summers way too short.



I married a boy who I met while distributing our weekly *Mainsheet*, the sailing club's racing results and newsletter. We did not break the tradition of Galway Lake, we stayed at his family camp in Maywood just 10 plots away.

Our two daughters grew up swimming, playing with kids in the grove and Weiss Grove, hanging out at the Ruback's Store. They learned to sail at Jim Millard's Sailing School. Throughout those years, our family raced a Lightning, Flying Dutchman and Sunfish. Later we purchased two Snipes and had each girl crew for us in Snipe races.

In the 1980s I became Commodore of the sailing club, having to produce the *Mainsheet* myself .

My daughters grown, they sent their kids up to enjoy the summer fun and discover the same treasures of camp life as we had. Grandkids learned to sail at Jesse Aronstein's sailing clinic. After a week's time they soloed back home, grandma's heart swelling with pride.

Upon the deaths of my parents in 2015, I acquired the third version of our family camp. In 1986, Mom had the unstable 1958 camp leveled and had a simple carry in carry out cabin constructed for all our families to use.

Today Rob and I enjoy our Maywood neighbors immensely; we are a great group of retired campers that swim, kayak, sail, take walks, have parties and dinners together and sit around campfires.

Walking to the dam will never cease to bring back my memory of walking with Grampa to check the water level at the dam and feeling so fortunate to have had this place for generations.



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## ONE DAY, SUMMER OF 1963

As Presented By Susan Wright At The July 15, 2023 Storytellers Event

Ewww!! I stepped in "gush" again, blackened bottom clay oozing between my toes.

We were doing our annual walk around the lake. August beaches were exposed around almost the entire lake, so we decided to do the walk by way of beaches instead of grove roads.

In the sixties lake water was used by the carpet mills in Amsterdam and was continually lowered throughout the summer season.

As summer neared its end, the six of us, my cousin Phyllis, her sister Nancy, and my 2 sisters DD, and Barby, picked up Mimi Tytko in Hardwoods Bay, cautiously negotiating the stump forest at the lake edge, a notorious snapping turtle habitat.

The day was hot, we took dips whenever we reached a community beach. We gathered people for short treks, they would drop off and go back to their camps after a spell. Hard and sandy beaches after that.

Eating our soggy tuna sandwiches and cookies when we reached the West Bay, our lunch picnic never tasted better, especially topping it off with candy purchased on our trek through Weiss Grove, then up to Ruback's store.

No beach at Rohling's channel to the dam, so we hopped onto the dirt road approaching the increasing sound of its roiling waters. Negotiating its thickly wooded backside into the busy creek where we hopped slippery rocks, this time wary of alleged leeches.

No vicious turtles or leech stories...

Our home stretch was familiar behind Maywood camps, rocky dirt roads all the way, past the big bend, the dip at an inlet, then through hushed pine forest and uphill to the lookout beyond the Aronstein and Heller's places.

At the promontory of Maywood's big point, gazing over the roof of Carol Weidman's camp, we marveled at our day's accomplishment, a grand vista of Galway's west, north ends and to the east, those Hardwood's stumps.

## DR. BRUCE F. ROWELL

During the summers of 1952 and 1953, my family, the Rowell's, rented camps at the South end of Galway Lake. Impressed with the recreational potential of the lake and my father's interest in sailing, the family in 1954 purchased a small camp on top of a high hill in Maywood Grove. With only 400 square feet total, one bedroom, no running water or interior plumbing, we thought of it as heaven. At about the same time, a Lightning sailboat bearing number 3455 arrived. My dad immediately became involved with the handicap sailboat racing.

He let me use the Lightning single handed during summer weekdays and even sometimes after dark when the evening breeze came up, but never on the weekends. I loved the sense of independence, control, and responsibility that sailing the Lightning provided. In fact, Galway Lake and sailing has played a pivotal role in my whole adult life.

Ever the principled father (he was a high school principal!), my dad encouraged me to find my own racing connections rather than crew for him on his Lightning. Many Maywood neighbors crewed for my dad at different times over the years including Phyllis Wright, and John Hollenbeck. Conveniently for me, a new camper had arrived just around the corner from our camp by the name of Martin Heller. He was a Snipe sailor from Kansas City, Kansas who had been moved to the area by GE. Somehow, I don't recall, we were introduced to each other but my position as Snipe crew was soon confirmed. Little did I know at the time he was a potential national champion Snipe sailor and boat builder. With a little help from me, the Heller/Rowell team ruled Snipe sailing for several summers on the lake. This duo even ventured to regattas across the Northeast for several summers, racing on Lake Onondaga, Sodus Bay and lakes in Connecticut. I don't recall any of our race results, but I did find the post-race festivities broadening. I'll let the reader fill in the definition of broadening.



I want to share this personal short story about sailing with Martin.

It must have been a midsummer Sunday afternoon in 1955 or 1956. The handicap fleet was closely bunched together off Hart's Point with the Snipe Fleet located at mid-lake. Under otherwise fair sky, a mass of low-lying, nearly black clouds rapidly appeared from the northwest essentially unseen until it was on-top of the handicap fleet, with very strong gusty winds, lightning, and thunder. I don't recall any rain, but strong winds estimated at 40-50 mph struck the surprised handicap fleet with nearly all sailboats being knocked down or capsizing. From my vantage point mid-lake Martin and I could see the massive storm heading our way at astonishing speed. Martin directed me to immediately lower the jib by releasing the drum winch from the port side of the daggerboard trunk. With that accomplished we were in little danger of a capsize. As we headed into the oncoming storm winds with roiling dark clouds overhead and the mainsheet thrashing wildly, he directed me to lower the mainsheet using the starboard cable winch. I tried multiple times to release



the cable, but it was cross threaded with multiple turns of cable overlapping one–another and I could not budge the mainsail either up or down. At that point, fearing for our safety, Martin directed me to jump into the water to avoid possible electrocution from a possible lightning strike to the mast. I did so without hesitation. Martin remained aboard to attempt to free the tangled winch. To free the cable, he had to put his right forearm between the daggerboard trunk containing the metallic daggerboard and metallic starboard shroud, a total distance of about 16 inches. I don't recall if he ever got the sail down during the short–lived storm, but afterward when all sailors had returned safely to the dock, it was time to review the afternoon's events. Relaxing in his deck chair, Martin recounted to me how when he had put his right forearm arm between the two metal objects the muscles in his forearm contracted involuntarily and that his immediate thought was "frog legs". There was no lightning strike to the boat and Martin was not injured, but apparently there was enough static electricity near the boat to discharge down the mast stay and across to the dagger board and through his right forearm. Why frog legs? Apparently, Martin had instantly recalled the high school laboratory experiment demonstrating the electro–conductivity of nerves in a dead frog's leg when stimulated with a small electric current. His forearm had precisely duplicated the classical electrical nerve conductivity lab experiment. There was enough static electricity surrounding the boat to duplicate the parlor game of scuffing leather shoes across a woolen rug and then touching someone's ear to create a spark, only in this case the discharge was hundreds of times or more powerful as the static charge traveled more than a foot.

Some years later, reflecting on this unusual summer event, I wondered if jumping into the water beside the boat was the safest alternative to avoiding personal injury from a possible lightning strike to the mast. I still don't have a definitive answer, but I've since learned that the inverse distance law applies. That is, the greater the distance from a lightning strike source, the weaker the effect on nerve tissue in humans.

Ever since, whether sailing or racing I've always kept my eye on changing summer cloud patterns to ensure my safety. I also believe that **that** summer event was the start of the sailing club monitoring the short–term weather forecast before the start of a race or even canceling a race mid–event if weather conditions similar to that unusual day seem possible or likely.

## BETH KRUEGER

Ferdinand Greene had something on his mind as he sipped his coffee and leafed through the Schenectady Gazette that July 28 morning 1923. President Harding had just returned from Alaska. The NYS Attorney General had issued subpoenas in the pricing investigation of independent ice dealers. John Phillip Sousa had drawn a big crowd and a good review for his concert at the State Theater. He made a note to tell the family that all-wool bathing suits were on sale, starting at \$5.95, and swim caps were 25 cents at the Wallace department store.

He decided to go ahead with his plan. On Monday, he bought a lot at Galway Lake, or the Amsterdam Reservoir as some folks called it, for \$100 from Samuel Weiss. He put \$25 down with an agreement to make 3 more payments of \$25. The family had been vacationing at the various area lakes. It was time to have a place of their own.



It would be good for his three sons, ages 19, 15 and 8, and 10-year-old daughter; and he loved to fish, carefully noting in his diary the results of each foray onto the lake. Back in those days, it required extensive lot clearing, tree and stump removal to get a view of the lake and place to build a camp. They did it themselves.

It was a good move. Two years later, they added two bedrooms. Three years later, Ferd purchased the lot next

door and sold it to friends. They also were good neighbors with the people on the other side, the Kruegers, who bought it in 1924. Ferd and wife Libby's daughter married the Krueger son. And today, Ferd Greene's idea for a summer spot is still a gathering place creating memories for the family – five generations now – celebrating 100 years this month.



# DEE DEE CLARKE

## OUR OUTHOUSE

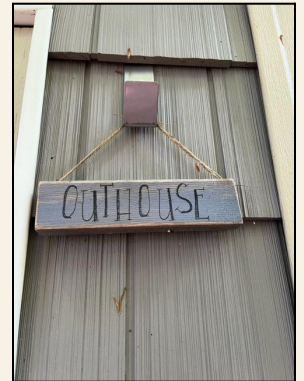


My name is Dee Dee Clarke. We are the first camp on May Road. Our camp used to be a hunting lodge. In the rear of the camp was an outhouse.

The camp had been owned by the Richardson's and the Kasch's and was built up by each of them. The Richardsons were head of the Sailing Club at the time which they were there.

I am not going to talk about the camp. I am going to talk about Our Outhouse.

The first outhouse was supposedly older than the original camp. This would have made it around 100 years old. After we bought the camp and looked in the outhouse, we discovered it was not an outhouse but a tool shed with a little screen moon on the door. The tools were all rusted and could not be used. So, we decided, at some time in the future, we would make a brand new outhouse.



After working on the inside of our camp by putting new pine boards throughout it, which looked beautiful, we were ready to work on the outhouse. It was about 15 years later.

My husband, in the Fall, dug a deep hole. The next Spring he dug so deep that he needed a ladder to get into the hole. I would take out the ladder while he dug, and hopefully (for him) I would put it back in.

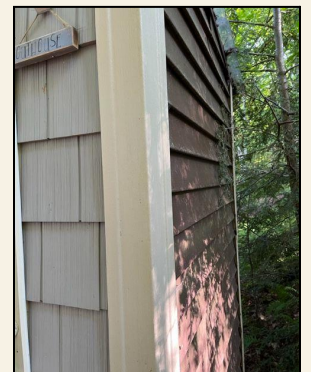
When the hole was dug, he then put wood up around it as the frame of the outhouse.

During this time, he worked with Lenny Weiss fixing up camps. He would bring back to the camp scraps of siding, trim and flooring.



He finally asked me what color I wanted the front of the outhouse to be. He gave me a choice of brown, gray or tan. I picked tan, since that was the color of our camp. I said I wanted tan all the way around the outhouse.

He said that can't be. It's either tan which there was not enough of, so it would be mixed with either brown or gray. What could be a color that would cover the whole front of the outhouse? It was gray. All the other colors were used around the outhouse. The wooden door was cream and the edging was white. It looked good.



Then... the inside... he had gray vinyl flooring, from Lenny. He even put shelves for hand cleaners and a magazine rack.



Lenny gave him a painting of a sailboat. We had nowhere in the camp to put it. Bruce asked me to come into the outhouse. Voila! Right over the toilet bowl was a beautiful sailboat painting.



## SANDY SHAPIRO HANDLER



In order to explain my Galway history, I have to start with my family's camp history. My paternal grandfather bought a camp in Lake George, which was about a three block walk from what became the Million Dollar Beach. I, being the oldest in the family of grandchildren, spent several summers with my mother and grandparents at Lake George. My father came up on weekends, as it was a long drive from Schenectady, before the Northway was built. My father decided it was too much of a trek and my parents started to look for a camp closer to home). They rented camps on Mariaville Lake, Saratoga Lake, and finally on Galway Lake in Jeffers Grove. They decided they liked Galway so much, they would look to purchase a camp on Galway Lake.

They found a camp in Maywood Grove in 1955. By then I had a younger sister and brother. The camp had four tiny bedrooms up a narrow stairway which had no handrail because the handrail would take away too much room from the stairs. So, you had to be agile and not too large to climb up the steps. The day school closed we moved out to camp and closed up our house. My father would commute daily to his office, because he only had a 40 – 45 minute commute. My sister and I shared one bedroom, my grandparents shared another bedroom, my mother and father the third, and my brother had his own room. There were partitions that went up only about seven feet from the floor, with open space to the roof. The second floor was set up like an A-frame so you could only get out of bed, on one side. Every bedroom had a curtain as a door so there was basically no privacy noise-wise. My grandmother was a snorer, and if I woke up in the middle of the night I couldn't fall back to sleep because she was snoring too loudly. Eventually my father raised the partitions and increased them to the roof line, and we put folding doors on to replace the curtains. We had a porch that went around three sides of the camp. Another improvement is that we pushed out the longest section of the porch and made two additional bedrooms. We always had company. No matter who wanted to come, my grandparents and parents would say we'll make room, we'll make room. In fact, one neighbor asked my mother, "You always have so much company. Where do you put all these people in this little camp?" My mother asked her do you want to come in and look. She said yes, I've got to see where all these people sleep. She was amazed!

There was no shower in the bathroom and like most other residents on the lake, we left a bar of Ivory soap on the raft along with shampoo. When it was determined that the soap was a detriment to the lake, we increased the size of the bathroom and added a shower. It really wasn't much of a luxury, as we had only a 5 gallon hot water heater which didn't do much for seven people who were always there. The drill was we had to wet ourselves, shut the water off, soap up, put the water back on and then rinse off. No matter how quickly you did it, there never was enough hot water for more than three in a row to take a shower.

My aunt and uncle bought a trailer the first year we bought the camp and set it up adjacent to the camp. They got a farmer with a tractor to bring the trailer down the road. Originally the plan was to position the trailer parallel to the camp. But the ground was very soft, as you all know. It started to tip over and the farmer was told to just back it up a little, and just leave it. It was hooked up to our electricity and septic system. My aunt and uncle had two boys so the four of them slept in the trailer and they were up just about every weekend. After it was installed, the lake association banned trailers from being set up permanently.

In the evenings we played a lot of cards and games. It was very unusual in those days to have a warm evening at the lake. We wore sweatshirts every night and slept with winter quilts and the windows were closed to keep the

night air out.

Watching TV was a bit of a hassle. We had three major TV stations plus PBS. Depending on which channel you wanted to watch, with lots of "snow in the picture", my father would climb out of the window in the upstairs bedroom to adjust the antenna. This endeavor needed three people because one person would be stationed at the television, and another person at the top of the stairs yelling to my father, out the window, "No, that's not good. Turn it the other way."

I would walk with friends to Ruback's Grove at night, in the dark, without a flashlight. We just knew the way. We would cross over the little creek by Lenny's place. There were boards across the creek, and we made it without a problem to buy ice cream and then come back home.

Initially we had an eight party phone line that dropped to four and then to two. Before we got our own private line, if there was a storm, the phone would ring when the thunder would clap. So, we were told to stay away from the phone.

We had an enormous picnic table with benches that were attached on both sides. In other words, the boards were attached to the table. We were able to accommodate 14 people around this table and because we had a lot of company, this table was used a lot. What we discovered, though, was when too many people left the table on one side, the table started to tip one way or another, because the weight wasn't distributed evenly. We had a lot of laughs over the picnic table.

I married a Jersey guy years ago, and we continued to come up to the lake for long weekends most of the summer. When we had children, they also experienced the dream of Galway Lake, spending much time here. Many years later, I became divorced and no matter how difficult the times were in my life with stress or emotional turmoil, my sanctuary was my parents' camp on Galway Lake. I could truly relax and push aside the difficult emotions I was experiencing.

I remarried another Jersey guy and when we first started dating, I said you've got to come up to my parents' camp at Galway Lake. Anyone who isn't from this area thinks a camp is a children's camp. Steve thought oh my God, they've got a children's camp. When he first came down the Maywood Grove Road, he thought where the hell is she taking me. Steve enjoyed my parents' place as much as I did, and we bought our own house in 2004 in Adabar/Fink. We were originally going to knock my parents' camp down and build a bigger place, but because we had too many people involved, it was going to be difficult. Because my husband didn't want the weather dictating when we came and left, as we were eventually going to be snowbirds still working and had to leave to go back to NJ at the end of an extended weekend, I wanted to cry. I just felt that this special place was so peaceful, special, and wonderful, I didn't ever want to leave. When I finally retired 14 years ago and was able to spend six months a year here, it was my dream come true.

I will conclude with when my parents sold their place in 2008 to the Horowitzs', we became friends. I am still able to visit my old camp with fond memories. And as an aside, my mother's maiden name was Horowitz, so it turned out that it was all meant to be.

Thank you.

## LOU BUHRMASTER



Every one of the stories I've heard here is very similar to what I went through in my life. I came to Galway first in my mother's womb in 1939 so I have a lot of history. I thought I was going to come here to talk about the history of the lake and when we took ownership from the Amsterdam Water Works which owned it and used it as a reservoir to provide water to the mills downstream. Instead I will cover some funny things that happened during my life at Ruback's Grove. I actually only missed two summers during my lifetime and that was when I was serving in the Army in 1962-64 and was stationed in Germany.

The camp that my wife Judy and I are in now and my sister Lois Seyse's camp (originally my parents and grandparents camp) were originally done with a group of people that got their leases from Ed Ruback who owned the farm house and surrounding acres. I have the original lease from 1922. All those camps were restricted to a 10x15' size and when you look around Ruback's Grove you can see many of the camps' original size and how many of them have been added on to over the years. First was usually a kitchen addition, then a bedroom and later a bathroom. So way back then everyone had outhouses. My camp had a "two-holer" which

dates back to the mid30's. Per my wife's wishes it has now become a tool shed after a huge tree knocked it down a few years ago.

My father, Ken Buhrmaster, was a great prankster and I followed in his footsteps. One-night Ken and his friends had been out drinking until late in the evening. They knew the neighbors, the Hicks family, would both get up every night to go to the outhouse. So they waited until around 2 AM and decided to pull a prank by taking off the screen around the outhouse door and turning the outhouse completely around. They then replaced the screen so it led to the back of the outhouse where of course there was no door. The guys were hiding in the bushes trying not to laugh when first the wife comes out of the camp and heads to the outhouse and sees there is no door. She just stands there looking perplexed and then turns around and goes back into the camp. Shortly thereafter the husband comes out and heads to the outhouse only to find the exact same thing—no door! He returned to the camp and according to legend no one ever spoke about the event again even though the guys returned the outhouse to its original position and replaced the screen.

Continuing with the pranks, my friends and I decided we would put an outhouse on the raft at the Ruback's main beach in front of Livingstons' camp. At around 2 AM the four of us (one weighing about 300 pounds) tried to push the outhouse over and we would catch it and then take it to the beach. However, the sand beneath the outhouse gave way and the 300 pounder slipped, ending up in the hole amid all the mess. So we had to get him out before we carried the outhouse to the beach and onto the row boat to get to the raft. I decided the 300 pounder would have to stay in the water to guide us because he didn't smell very nice to say the least. It was a lot of fun and there were many comments about the outhouse on the raft. I don't think anyone knew who had pulled the prank and we didn't tell until many years later.

Another outhouse story involved the one between my parents' camp and the Irwin neighbors. It was 1976 so we decided to paint the outhouse a patriotic red, white and blue. Everyone laughed and it was fun so we decided to take the outhouse to Scotia and put it on the mayor's lawn, the Village Hall and in other places as well. Other pranksters later put the outhouse in front of the First National Bank of Scotia. My brother Jim and I were watching this from afar and as the pranksters pulled away, we drove our truck to the bank and quickly loaded it using the tail gate lift. The pranksters came around the corner once again and were dumbstruck when the outhouse was no longer in front of the bank. Jim and I took the outhouse to the Irwin's house in Niskayuna, dropped it off and never saw it again. Al Irwin would never talk about the event and we always wondered what had happened. Many years later, after his passing, his wife finally told us that the two of them had taken the outhouse apart board by board, moved their Niskayuna neighbor's wood pile, and placed the boards underneath the logs. And it's probably still there!

One other prank happened when Fred Sindel, son-in-law of the Irwins, first came to Galway. He grew up in Brooklyn and was a real city guy. He was also very afraid of snakes. So when my sister Lois caught a garden snake she got up on the Irwin porch roof and when Fred came out she dropped the snake on top of him. She laughed but he did not!

I have loved every year at Galway and as a teenager met my future wife Judy, the sister of Galway Lake Campers Association current President Bruce Rowell. Their family had a camp across the lake in Maywood Grove and we all enjoyed sailing together. Both Judy and I went to Syracuse University and after graduation went our separate ways but stayed in touch with Christmas cards over the years. About 25 years later I was going through divorce and was living in an apartment. When my daughter brought me the Christmas cards to share, I noticed one had an Ms. as a return address. Since I didn't know what that meant she explained it was to note a woman who was not married. So I wrote back and told Judy I was going through divorce also and we agreed to meet when she came to Glenville to see her father. When we met again after 25 years it seemed like picking up a conversation from days ago. It was just perfect for both of us and after dating for 3 years driving and flying back and forth between Scotia and Washington DC, we got married and have just celebrated our 31<sup>st</sup> wonderful wedding anniversary—thanks to Galway Lake.



## DAVE GREENWOOD

Those of you who sail on Galway have probably seen my smiling face out on the water. I have been sailing here for 50 years. My family came here in 1952 and in 1972 I became a member of the Galway Lake Sailing Club. Well, fast forward to 1976. I was in high school and my sailing mentor was Erwin Buschmann. A lot of people on this lake have been trained by Erwin and there's still a few of us around who continue to sail to this day.

Back in the day, we had a number of fleets here. We had Sunfish, Flying Dutchman, Snipes, Lightnings and Catamarans. It was quite a menagerie and it was very competitive. But in spite of all the competitiveness we did have some fun and every fleet has its own gag trophy. The Lightnings had the "Dunkin Donut award" for flipping over. It's an old ring shaped life preserver with an upside down Lightning in the center and a scroll with your name on it as a recipient. There's another one called the "Wrong Way Corrigan award". You'd get that if you sailed the wrong course. I'm a recipient and only the best make the most outlandish mistakes. It takes skill to go the wrong way!



The Flying Dutchman did not have a trophy like these. For those of you who don't know what a Flying Dutchman is, it's a 20-foot long, very sleek racing boat with a lot of sail area, trapeze, spinnaker, and a huge jib called a Genoa. It's a very powerful boat and only really good sailors tend to sail them. So these are experienced people; these are not neophytes sailing these boats. Okay, so it's 1976, mid-summer and the wind is clocking out of the West Bay with green water. We're probably talking 20 plus with gusts of 25 or more. I'm in a Sunfish and coming downwind from West Bay and this is in the day when the faster boats went ahead of the slower boats so we always had separation so we didn't get in each other's way. Well, I had a grand seat for this debacle being just off Rohling's Point at this part of the race. This green water gust comes across South Bay; probably about, oh, about three to four hundred yards long and 50 yards deep and there's six Flying Dutchmen all sailed by good crews coming up from South mark. I mean these people are experienced and I'm like 17 years old; pretty competent in a Sunfish; and learning to sail big boats and still kind of "so so" in my abilities on them. In utter amazement I watched this gust hit and just like dominos - bang bang, bang, bang; all six FDs go down. I said well, geez, you don't see that every day, hey that's pretty impressive! So now the crews are trying to get their boats up and luckily nobody was hurt. But these were the days before the boats had open transoms so the water could flow out and so they kind of stayed almost like a submarine with decks awash and they had rolled up their jibs. FDs had this cool rolling/furling jib so you can instantly reduce the sail area.



One of the boats trying to make its way back home was Erwin Buschmann and he was in Harts and I'm in Harts. I had finished the race and was heading home and "Busch" tools by me going about two knots even though the wind's blowing like crazy and his boat is just above the water. As he gets going, the water accelerates to the back of the boat - oh - now that's too much power so he lets the main out which slows the boat down. Now, all the water goes to the front of the boat and this rocking motion of the bow going down with the stern coming up and the bow going down again keeps repeating. Well, Erwin had a very dry sense of humor. He was an engineer by trade and most engineers (pointing to some attendees in the audience) - I know, yeah, we have some Clarkson

guys right here yeah, yeah, we have a dry sense of humor I guess. Busch yells out “DIVE, DIVE!!! as his bow goes underwater for the umpteenth time! I had never seen a sailboat do that before! Completely amazing!! I never laughed so hard in my life!

Now, I've always had a fascination with submarines although I spent my military time in the New York Army Guard as a combat engineer, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. My lifelong friend, a guy who had crewed for Buschmann, and I found a submarine model. She's a Skipjack class and we suitably modified this submarine with Buschmann's boat colors. They're accurate right down to his own personal burgee on the stern, with his personal number on the sail. The award reads “Submarine Trophy, FD Fleet, E. Buschmann, 1976”.

Well, at the annual banquet, as they were getting done with the Flying Dutchman Awards, my friend and I said “Wait a minute. We have something else!” In a box, all covered up, (it was like my first black ops mission) we pulled this thing out (showing the Submarine Award to the storytelling attendees). We called Erwin to the front and he's looking at us wondering “What the heck are you guys doing?” Upon presentation he laughed so hard the tears were coming down and he kept this award for the rest of his life. He passed away in 1999; his wife 10 years later. When the family sold the house they asked me if I wanted anything and I said “Can I have submarine back?” So, now I have the submarine back and that reminds me of one of the greatest days of sailing on Galway Lake I ever saw. Thank you.



# LOIS ROWE

(ON BEHALF OF BETTY CUCKOO)  
FROM VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

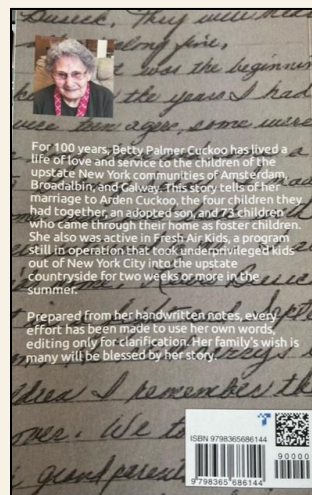
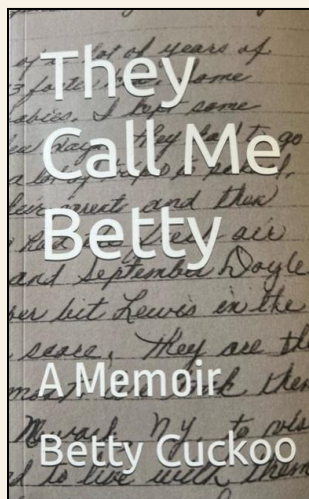


Lois Rowe, pictured left, reads excerpts from Betty Cuckoo's book "They Call Me Betty, A Memoir".

Betty Cuckoo was born in 1923 and she's still alive. She is 101 now and we were hoping that she would be here today but she's not, so I'm going to fill in and just read a few excerpts from her book. It's fascinating how she grew up in the area, how things got built back in the 1920s and so on but these are just little pieces about the lake that she wrote about.

*We bought land across the lake from Mom and Dad to build a camp. We had to cut down a lot of trees to clear the land. Ada lived next door. She and I used a two-man saw to cut down trees. It was a good thing Arden, my husband, was handy. He built the camp himself with me holding things for him. We had no running water or a bathroom. We decided to build a garage for the camp near the road so we wouldn't have to shovel the long driveway from Crooked Street. We got the framework in Cinder, Florida before winter and used that as a can. We never got alone and worked on it ourselves as best we could. We had neighbors John and Ada who had a camp. Arden helped them jack up the structure and put a cellar under it. In turn, John helped us put in a cement floor. We mixed the cement in a wheelbarrow and took it in a little at a time. The next year we had Woodcraft put an addition on the camp. We put beams on the concrete and plywood floors down. We started from scratch with no money but made it work. Our house was still not done. We had to make partitions but we hung blankets to separate the rooms. Arden went to work every day and I stayed home and worked in the house and yard while attending to young Peggy.*

And then Betty goes on and talks about her life working and stuff but she has little snippets of Galway Lake in here but most of it is about living in the Galway area, having a farm in Galway, and how they basically did things by hand and by themselves with the help of neighbors. It's a great read and to those of you who win this in the raffle you'll really enjoy it.



# CAROL KURTO

## FROM VIDEO TRANSCRIPT



Number one, let's give everyone a rousing applause. There are so many wonderful stories that have invoked so many memories. We've been here only since 1973 so we're kind of like newcomers but anyway it's our third generation of family that is now here and enjoying it tremendously. I wanted to say quickly because I promised this wonderful young woman who lives at the end of the road named Trish, she and her husband have spent the last four or five years restoring the Ruback's original homestead. I'm sure you've all noticed how absolutely pristine and beautiful it is. Trish is having a very hard time finding any history about the place. I said I would mention it at this meeting. She's found old newspapers that say 1797 in the eaves of the old home but there's not any written history about it so if you or you know anyone that might have any particular information about it I'm at 4009. Give the information to me and I'll go up and chat with her because she's a wonderful lady and she's really increased in value of all of our properties as well I think because it's so beautiful but thank you to one and all you did a fabulous job.

## ELIZABETH ROWE

My husband John and I and our friend Brad bought Betz's camp in Hart's Point and just a quick thing popped into my head as I've been listening to these stories. There seems to be a theme of "stuck in the muck" and "how physics can play a role in dealing with the lake." This story kind of illustrates both.

We bought our camp in 2001, and this was the first deep draw down after that year. We came up in October or early November to close up the camp and drain the water and all that good stuff. But, before we did, we looked out at the stumps and the whole eerie look of the lake and thought, "Let's take a walk around the lake." We had done it years before behind all the camps but now we thought maybe we could walk around on the lake bottom.



So we started off and we went from Hart's point toward the West Bay and when we got around to the doctor's (Millebirche) house on the end of Point Road, the mud got really, really mucky. John and Brad went off onto the grass but I thought, "Oh, I can make this!" So, I just kept going in the muck. But suddenly my feet just disappeared up to my ankles! I got pretty scared and immediately remembered how, when I was a little kid, we went to the drive-in and we saw this movie called "Quo Vadis." I remember a scene where a Roman soldier pushed a Christian off the cliff right into this quicksand where he got swallowed up and just disappeared.

Picturing this, I cried for help but, of course, the guys were at least 50 pounds each more than I was and there was no way they were going to be able to get out there and get me.

For some reason I remembered, though I'm not a top science student, but I remembered some laws of physics. I remember a story about airline hostesses who wore spiked heels and it was a problem because the small heels took all their weight, putting too much concentrated pressure on one spot on the plane.

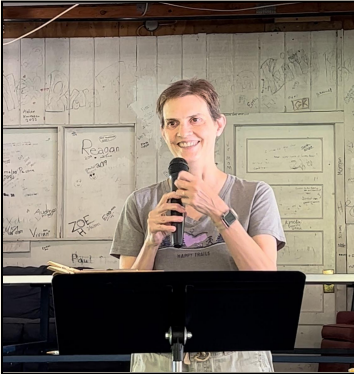
I thought "Okay, I've got to distribute this weight." So, I just got down on all fours and my hands sunk in a bit, as well as my knees, but I was able to pull my ankle up and my foot out, shoe and all. That was better! But now what?

I moved sideways, like a crab, toward the shore, one limb at a time. It worked! Obviously, since I'm here.

So, consider this a cautionary tale if you or your children may find yourself in a similar situation.

You can only imagine how filthy I was when we got back to the camp. Yet, I was grateful for two things, besides my life, of course. One was that we hadn't yet turned off the water and drained the pipes. The second one was that Thank God it was before the era where everybody had webcams on their camps!!!

## MARTHA LEMMOND



My name is Martha (or Marty) Lemmond, and I thought I wasn't old enough to do this and then I realized that no, my parents bought our cabin 50 years ago. I remember vaguely that my sister, brother and I got hauled around in a station wagon in the winter to various lakes where my parents looked at cabins. It was muddy out and we had to stay in the car. I found out just a few years ago from my mother the reason they chose Galway Lake was my father was a Scotia Rotarian, and “who is in Scotia Rotary? the Buhrmasters” (Lou, Jim and Ken) Bruce Clarke's brother, Bob Bishop, Dick Rankin... all these guys, and they said “no, you want to be on Galway Lake.” And that was wonderful. In my father's later years in the Rotary, and he was in that Rotary I think for about 50–60 years, all Galway men

that would sit together. Occasionally I'd go with my dad as a guest and that's where they sat, so that was a great thing. My parents really appreciated knowing other people but also that recommendation.

As I said, my parents bought the cabin in 1973—oh I should have said we're the cabin between Clarke and Gerber, or if you're older, between Richardson and Wright before that. We believe our cabin dates to about 1928. If anyone knows how we can seal the windows up front... We want to keep them. [*Photo on right is of me and my mother, 1970s*]



The first thing my parents did was have three or four trees taken down. Phyllis (Gerber) has some pictures of Maywood Grove from way back and you can't see our cabin because of these trees, they were that big. Around 2005, 2006, I think it was, we burned the last of that wood. My parents had to buy some firewood then and had no idea what it cost because they not only burned at the cabin, but they would take loads home to their house in Scotia for the winter to burn in the fireplace there. That wood lasted a very, very long time.



Early on they found out that the Richardsons were looking to sell and so my father told one of his best friends, Howard Kasch, (they had been friends since their bachelorhood at GE and the Kasches also lived down the street from us in East Glenville). They bought the Richardson cabin. [*Photo on the left is of me on a sailboat and my sister on dock, circa 1977*]

The Kasches had four kids and my family had three, and it was they had a kid, then my mom had one, and so on as a ladder, making us all within the same group. One of the games that we played was a variation of hide and go seek where one person hid and then you

searched, and if you found them you hid with them. Two cabins next to each other to do this, and as you know, very, very, very dark, and so it got very spooky because you'd be walking around and then people would disappear. One night when I was the one to hide, in front of Clarke's cabins was a big pine tree with a light on so there was a shadow, and so I decided to just stand in the shadow. I should mention that playing this game we would all put our darkest clothes on—I had a blue hoodie—and I just stood there and watched everyone walking around. It was hilarious. They just couldn't see me in the shadows. They finally gave up and were very angry when I said I've been standing right here.

We also got involved with sailing. My sister and brother went off to Jim Millard's for Red Cross Sailing instruction. It was a full week, and the Buhrmasters kindly loaned their Sunfish for the kids to learn on. Two years later I got to go and get my sailing lessons. Within that time though my sister and brother joined the Gold Fleet which many of you here probably remember, but for those who don't, this was for beginners on Sunfish. They didn't start in the middle of the lake with everyone else, they started in front of Buhrmasters' Boathouse. My parents and I volunteered to help start those races. Now this was handicapped, so that if a sailor did well one weekend, they would start later the next weekend, and the people at the end would start sooner to try to even out and help these beginners. The way they knew the time was by these large cards from here down to the ground with numbers on them. There was a clock up behind us on the boathouse. Usually my father and I would handle this: my father would say go and I'd slide this big card off for when the next minute had gone by. My mother and Sally Gardner, one of the other volunteers, would watch the boats to note the exact time that they crossed the start line and then again on the finish to establish the starting sequence for the next week. Lou Buhrmaster did that math to determine what the next week's starting sequence would be. So it was nice to see a different part of the lake, and I got to know some of the Buhrmasters. John was racing then, I think. My brother won one year and several years later I raced in the Gold Fleet too, which I greatly enjoyed. (Lou Buhrmaster remarks that the cards are still there.)

Those years were the idyllic years, the summers that we moved up here. My father and Howard Kasch, however, stayed back in Glenville to work at GE, coming up Friday night. Often my sister and I and Marjorie Kasch would walk barefoot up May Road to meet our fathers. Whichever one came first, we'd get in their car and come back down.

We did not have a shower like someone else here said, and not only that but the door to the half bathroom was in my parents' bedroom. They bought the cabin in 1973 and it wasn't until maybe 1989, 1990 that they put in a shower and moved the door into the kitchen instead of the bedroom. It was very strange to have to go through their bedroom to get to the bathroom, particularly after I graduated college in 1987 and had friends up and you're trying to sleep while people are coming through to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. So that was a nice upgrade.

I got married to this wonderful New Jersey man [Joe pictured on right] in 2001. We live where he grew up in South Jersey. That's a five-hour drive. The first summer we were together we bought a house, and we were getting that set so we didn't come up that much, so my mother said "aha, I can sell now." For the past maybe 20 years I had really been the only one of my sister, brother and I using the cabin, but I came every weekend when I lived in Boston and New York City. I loved it. My brother had moved to the West Coast, my sister's kids became teens and got jobs



and all that kind of thing, but I was coming. I was very grateful to my parents for keeping the cabin, especially when I lived in New York City. Halfway up the drive I'd open my car windows to smell the clean air. Here I enjoyed the greens and the blues instead of the grays of the city.

So my mother was negotiating to sell the cabin and I said "we've got I've got to go up and say goodbye to the cabin." It hurt to think of losing it. I looked a little bit online at some other places in the Poconos, but they just weren't the same. We came up, and as my husband loves to tell it, I cried. I was awake almost all night. In the morning I said I think if we could commit to coming here every other weekend of the summer it would be worth it to me to buy it, and he said okay thankfully. So in 2002 we bought it, and that's what we did, we came every other weekend, getting here late Friday night. And then we started taking Fridays off, and then about six years ago Joe said "you know I could drive up Thursday night." Covid was fantastic because also at that time I had tons of vacation time. We could work remotely. We came up with four separate full weeks. Then this year we retired, so we are now enjoying our first time living here for the whole summer. I will mention that my husband was not the first boyfriend that ever came to the cabin and said "I would marry you for this." That was not the turn-on that they thought it was. But Joe's gone from a South Jersey Boy to the one who makes all the fires and cooks over the fires, chops wood, swims, kayaks, and everything has just been wonderful. We don't have kids so are hoping that we'll have nieces and nephews to continue on in ownership someday from us some day.



*[Photo is of me in a kayak with my cabin in the background, 2020]*



# THANK YOU

## PARTICIPANTS AND ATTENDEES!

Special thanks to the participants for the time they spent sharing their stories about Galway Lake. We also thank the attendees for their interests and hope to hear their stories at the next storytellers gathering.

Special thanks to **John Buhrmaster, Sue Lantelme, Kimberly Solomon** for their continued support and the use of Ruback's Pavilion.



"WE ARE ALL  
STORYTELLERS.  
WE ALL LIVE IN A NETWORK  
OF STORIES. THERE ISN'T  
A STRONGER  
CONNECTION BETWEEN  
PEOPLE THAN  
STORYTELLING."

JIMMY NEIL SMITH

