

# EDITORIAL.

## Hip Hop for Rip Rap

It may be the least probable event to be staged in this area since 1967, when Michael "Doc" Dreyfus gave a concert of electronic violin feedback to benefit the NAACP. On Saturday, August 20, five acts affiliated with the Glens Falls record label Sub-Bombin will perform at the Brass Ring in Bolton Landing as a benefit for the Dome Island Committee, which was created in 1956 to assist the Nature Conservancy with the preservation of Dome Island in its natural state. Called Hip Hop for Rip Rap, the benefit will raise funds to finance the protection of Dome Island, whose shores are vulnerable from erosion from boat chop. The performers are not the kind usually associated with environmental causes. According to Collin Badger, who helped found Sub-Bomin in 2005, the label began as a collective of hip-hoppers, electro-rockers, dj's and dub-heads, who now collaborate on records and in live performances. The label first attracted national attention when one of its acts, the electronic duo Charley Everywhere, was signed by a major independent label in 2009 and changed its name to Phantogram. When the band made its debut on national television, late night host Jimmy Kimmel called it his "favorite new band." Since then, it has been signed to an even more prestigious label. Not bad for a local band; but it says just as much for the highly attuned atteneae of the local label. Sub-Bomin's next project is the release of an album by hip hop emcee Mr. Complex, which is expected to become the label's first international hit. So a performance by five acts affiliated with the label would be an event noteworthy in it's own right; the fact that it's a benefit for a local environmental cause makes it all the more worth supporting. Even apart from whatever funds it might raise, the event is a chance to call attention to Dome Island, which many have a tendency to take for granted or even ignore, for the simple reason that access is forbidden. It's that rarest of things on Lake George, an undisturbed piece of the original wilderness. Lake George would be poorer without it. As the founders of the Dome Island Committee wrote in 1956, "Dome Island has a haunting beauty. It is an isolated tract of wilderness where nature has taken her course undisturbed through the centuries. To a casual observer, or the scientist, this famous landmark remains a vision of beauty and a field for fascinating study. If mutilated, it can never be restored." The island, as most people know, was acquired by John Apperson to prevent a hotel from being built on it, and it was he who donated it to the Nature Conservancy. What would he have thought about a new generation supporting its protection? No doubt, he would be very pleased.

## With Enough Resources, We Can Beat Asian Clams

By Peter Bauer

SPECIAL TO THE LAKE GEORGE MIRROR

Lake George is better defended than most lakes against harmful aquatic invasive species, but as we've seen now with the recent Asian clam (*Corbicula fluminea*) infestation we have a long way to go to truly protect the lake. Dozens of other pernicious aquatic invasives are found in states surrounding us and will likely be transported here. To date Lake George has been infested by two invasive plants – Eurasian watermilfoil and curlyleaf pondweed – and two invasive mollusks – Zebra mussels and Asian clams. We've managed to largely keep invasives in check after playing catch up for a number of years.

To truly protect Lake George we need funding to the tune of \$1 million a year for at least the next decade. We also need strong new laws and regulations to protect the lake from aquatic invasive species.

On the financial front, Warren County is deliberating using \$100,000 in occupancy tax funds to help control Asian clams. This follows \$30,000 already contributed. We're very grateful for this support, but we'll need more to do the job right.

State and federal assistance has been requested, yet I do not hold out great hope of sustained or sufficient funds coming from either source. Senator Betty Little secured funding for control of Eurasian watermilfoil through the state Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) for the past eight years. Even in Albany's new austere budget times, Senator Little lined up \$90,000 in support this year. She has pledged to work to increase this amount next year to help tackle Asian clams. We're grateful, but we'll need more. I see little prospect for federal support.

Almost all the towns around the lake and Lake George Village have financially contributed to the Asian clam effort. But to get the job done we need to take a hard look at two additional sources of funding.

One, we need the Lake George Park Commission to assess the feasibility of a dock and boater registration surcharge of \$20. Such surcharges have the potential to raise \$200,000 - \$300,000 annually. We're facing a situation where we have to manage aggressive aquatic invasive species for the long haul, so we need funds that are sustainable.



Two, we need the towns and Village to take a hard look at the creation of invasive species management special tax districts. Here, each town and the Village around the lake could create a new district of shoreline properties that place a levy on the property tax. The amount per thousand of assessed value would be pennies. Yet with over \$5 billion in real estate value along the lakeshore, and more when state lands are included, the total amount generated would be significant. Everybody pays. Funds would be consolidated through an inter-municipal agreement for management of invasive species.

We need more funds to help pay for stronger interdiction programs, which require more people who carefully inspect boats at multiple locations. We need early detection and rapid response, which means placing certified and trained divers in the water surveying the lake bottom. We need aggressive management actions, which include supplies and trained personnel. We need sustained and effective public education, which means advertising and promotional materials.

Increased funding is a major issue, but beyond that we also need new laws and regulations to protect the lake. We need to take a hard look at a mandatory inspection and certification program for all boats entering Lake George.


Boats that are solely operated on the lake would be relatively easy to certify. All other boats should face mandatory inspections. This would create an inconvenience for the boater, but this system is needed. As

we're seeing with the Asian clam infestation, which was most likely brought here by boats, we cannot continue to allow Lake George to be so freely infested. Other looming invasives like the Quagga mussel will be even worse. Prevention is always cheaper than the cure. Here, we need leadership from the Lake George Park Commission to create this program and defend the lake.

Over the past 25 years the Lake George community has managed to effectively control, though not eliminate, Eurasian watermilfoil, curlyleaf pondweed and Zebra mussels. We're just at the beginning of a major infestation of Asian clams, which stands now at somewhere over 10 acres in at least four different locations. Additional infestations are likely to be discovered.

Lake George's invasive species problem requires a much greater response. Stormwater pollution and aquatic invasive species are the two giant threats and challenges facing the lake. There's an emerging consensus about controlling invasive species. Few argue that aquatic invasive species are not a serious problem or that business-as-usual is an adequate response. To fully meet this challenge we need greater financial resources and we need new regulations.

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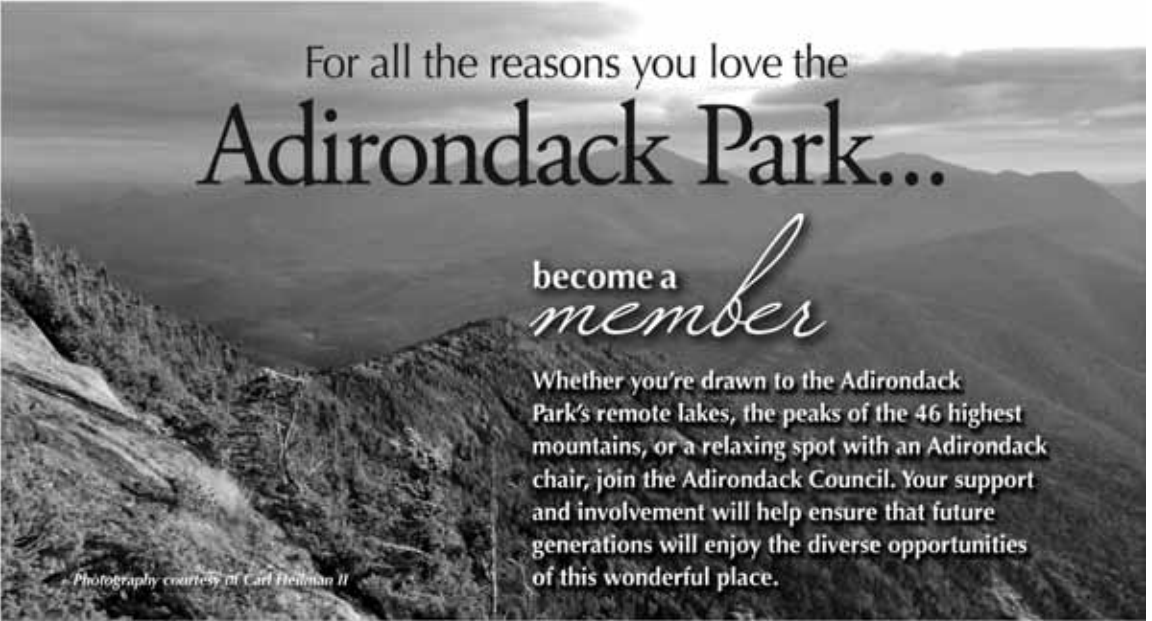
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