

Fathoms

The Newsletter of The Sebasticook Lake Association

Volume 32
Number 2

*Our association was formed in 1972 to improve and maintain
water quality and the general conditions of Sebasticook Lake*

WINTER
2026

President's Message

"In the springtime, the heart regrows hope." ~ Angie Weiland-Crosby ~

Greetings, and Welcome to the Mid-Winter edition of the Sebasticook Lake Association Newsletter!! This edition is a tad late due to unforeseen circumstances, but it is now in your hot little hand to read in your comfy chair with your favorite winter beverage.

The minutes of the 2025 Sebasticook Lake Association meeting are in this edition. The meeting was recorded and the minutes typed in their entirety - they are comprehensive and contain a lot of information.

There was much discussion regarding whether or not to keep the dam gate open all winter or close it in late November. Some property owners questioned whether or not closing the dam gate contributes to two nuisance plants that are proliferating in the lake. There has been an increase in Cladophora, a plant that grows on submerged objects in the lake – think rocks and stumps. This is an indigenous plant in many Maine lakes, and is not considered invasive. That said, once the Cladophora dies and disengages from its growing surface, it moves around with the current, suspended in the water column, and in this lake, the current delivers the free floating debris to the east end of the lake. While dried Cladophora is light and fluffy, in its wet state, it is heavy and difficult to corral. During the fall drawdown survey, there were numerous areas around the lake that had long stretches of dried Cladophora on the lake bed, which is NOT a new sighting. Ironically, Cladophora grows in clear, clean water, which seems as though we are being penalized for improving the lake water quality.

Another nuisance plant is a tall, grass-like plant with tassels that contain rice-like seeds. These plants are choking off the inlet on County Woods Road. If any of you are so inclined to pursue more grant opportunities to study these two phenomena, please have at it. Despite numerous federal programs being cut, the DEP, EPA and University of Maine have grant programs available.

Things are off to a great start for the roundabout – very few collisions or large trucks getting stuck. The street lights will be installed when the snow melts and the anchor plates can be accessed.

The results of the 2022-2024 Watershed Management Study were submitted for yet another grant to continue improvements around the lake. The town of Newport received \$70,000.00 +/- to apply towards improving some of the >140 areas identified as having deficiencies that may contribute to poor water quality, such as culverts that need replacing, areas of erosion, road/driveway surfaces, etc.

The 2026 Sebasticook Lake Association's Annual meeting is on **Saturday, July 18, 2026**, which is DIFFERENT from the date voted on at the 2025 annual meeting. The American Legion Hall has a scheduling conflict, and we were asked to move our meeting to the third Saturday in July. We typically hold the meeting on the Saturday after the 4th of July, so this is a CHANGE to note on your calendar.

While Maine winters are long, cold and dark, I never doubt that the ice will melt and Sebasticook Lake, like a much loved family member, will provide hope and deep rooted comfort, while it trusts that we will be good stewards to ensure that its own restorative spring will always come.

See you all soon!!
Muf

ANNUAL MEETING

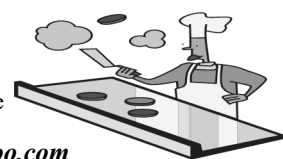
Saturday July 18th at 10 a.m. at the American Legion Hall

**Coffee and Donuts Before the Meeting
Barbecue After the Meeting**



We are asking for Lake Association members to please help with the annual barbecue by bringing a dessert. Thanks.

Contact New BBQ Chairperson: Heidi Hutchins heidihutchins@yahoo.com





Lake Association Officers


President – Muffy Pare 207-368-5424
Herhighnes@midmaine.com
Vice President - Deb Ferrell 368-4769
Secretary- Darcy Parlee 461-2452
dlparlee@yahoo.com
Co-Treasurers – Andre Cushing 207-745-6776
andre@andrecushing.com
Tom Quintino 775-570-1924
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Committee Chairpersons

Dam Committee – Deb Ferrell 368-4769
daferrell11@gmail.com
Membership Committee – Allan Fernald 368-5492
Nominating Committee - Dick Stone 368-2272
Social Committee – Heidi Hutchins
HeidiHutchins@yahoo.com
Claudette Amaroso
amorosojt@aol.com

“Fathoms” Newsletter Staff

Debbie Ferrell 368-4769
Muffy Pare 368-5424
Rick Perlmutter 249-5533



**Sebasticook
2025 Annual Loon
Count**

**25 Adult Loons
1 Chicks**

**TRANSFER
STATION
HOURS**

**Tuesday thru Friday 8 am to 6 pm
Saturday 8 am to 4 pm
Closed Sunday and Monday**



ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS

For those of You
Who Wish To Be Part of
The Sebasticook Lake Association
Yet Do Not Live on the Lake
\$8 Per Year
Includes
“The Fathoms” Newsletter



**Sebasticook Lake
WATERPROOF / FOLDABLE
MARINE CHARTS**

Now available for purchase
At Newport Town Hall

Lake Association E-Mail Data Base

We are continually building an e-mail database of Sebasticook Lake Association members. There will be an e-mail sign-up sheet at this year’s meeting. If you are unable to attend, please send your e-mail address to
PERLMUTTERS@MSN.COM

Of course, e-mail addressed will be used only for Lake Association business and will *never* be given out.

SEBASTICOOK LAKE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES July 5, 2025

The meeting was held at the American Legion Hall in Newport on Saturday at 10:00 a.m. There were 78 people in attendance. Muffy welcomed everyone and introduced the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. The meeting opened with the pledge of allegiance.

New Members - Muffy asked if there were any new members in attendance. Scott and Carolyn Bright on Shady Lane, Michael and Andrea Miller on Hidden Dr, Kym Seavey on Shore Dr, Judy and David Brogden on Grove St, Holly and Matt Giza, Brianna, Kim and Art Guy on Hart St, Danielle Hersey on Grove St, Mary and Toby Maker, Charles and Caroline Kim on McKinley Lane, and Chris Taylor on Moose Creek (off Shady Lane) all introduced themselves. Muffy asked anyone that hadn't been receiving emails or newsletters to please sign the sheet so that you will be sure to receive the communications.

Secretary's Report - The 2024 minutes were printed in the Fall newsletter. A motion to accept the minutes was approved.

Membership Committee – *Allan Fernald* – There was an increase in the number of places on the lake this year. We went from 332 to 337. There was also an increase in the number of people that paid their dues this year. It was 197 which equals \$1970.00 and that's about 60% of the people on the lake. So, that leaves 140 that didn't pay (\$1410). The lowest participation on the lake is from Maplewood - 24, Durham Bridge - 22, Camp Benson - 17, Grove Street – 15. The best sections are the County Woods Rd, Murray Rd, and Kitchen Hill Rd all tied with 12.

Newsletter Committee – *Rick Perlmutter* – The committee has decided to discontinue the Fall newsletter. It costs about \$500.00 and it is largely just for the publication of the minutes of the meeting. Sometime this year, there will be a final Fall edition.

Buoy Committee and Search and Rescue – *Dick Stone* – As some may or may not know, there are buoys out on the lake. We used to have a group that would put the buoys in in the spring and take them out in the fall. We had a boat to do this but about 10 years ago the state agreed after a lot of arm twisting to take it over but the agreement is that we must check them every week. There are seven lakes in the state that they do this for. Dick received a letter from the state this past week stating that they appreciate what we do because if we didn't check them every week, they would not provide the service. The buoys are very helpful because hopefully they keep people off the rocks. Some people don't know the rules. They now publish the rules online, but people aren't sure which side of the markers you should go on etc.

Dick Stone is on the search and rescue committee and if anyone wanted to add their name and phone number to the list to assist with any rescues, that would be a great help. A lot of people break down on the lake. Dick has already towed someone in this year, and he towed a couple in last year as well. If you want to sign up to assist Dick and be on the Rescue Committee, Dick welcomes anyone that would want to assist. At least you have someone to call to come to get you. One person mentioned the Breezy Point area and putting markers there. Dick brought up the fact that you aren't supposed to be that close to shore anyway. Boats are supposed to be 200' from the shore unless you're going at idle speed. It was mentioned that jet skis have been driving around the mouth of the river very fast and there isn't anything that can be done unless the authorities catch them. Dick said that if a couple of people called about them, he was sure they would get the message. It was clarified that they should call the Maine Game Warden service.

It was asked that if someone needed a tow, what would be the number to call? Dick Stone said that was what the list of people's names/numbers were that he was asking for sign-ups and was being passed around the group. Dick suggested maybe we could publish the list of names and numbers on the website and newsletter.

Fireworks Committee – *Mike Vining* – The fireworks are tonight in the cove at 9:15 p.m. We do have a change for next year. They have always been about \$4500.00. We've always raised all of the funds from donations. Mike received a letter notifying us that next year's cost is going to be a minimum of \$7500.00. So, we need to make a decision. We either need to get busy and raise more funds or the other idea is to bring in a partner to share the cost of the fireworks with. Andre shared that we currently have about \$5500.00 including what we had in reserve and what we've collected, so we're well on our way towards next year's cost. Mike said the lawn has been mowed, so the area is all ready for tonight. Please be safe out there tonight and make sure you have your lights on your boats. Mike had an announcement about his daughter being married next year. (*see next page*)

(Minutes from Page 4)

Cookout Committee – Heidi Hutchins – Heidi wanted to thank all the committee members. They put in a lot of work every single year. She hopes everyone will enjoy a hot dog or a hamburger and have a great time socializing after the meeting.

Water Quality Testing Committee – Allen Whitaker – Allen said that he and Donnie Gross have been out once this year. They had some trouble with the meter. They went out last week and the water quality was 4.61 meters which is really good and very comparable to what it was last year at the same time. They go to the deep hole behind the snowmobile club and they go every other week. At the end of the year, they submit the data to the Lake Stewards of Maine. Allen would welcome help if anyone wants to learn how to do it. It was asked regarding the lake action plan regarding the time of the draw-down. Allen said it started last year and the action plan said that we should be starting the drawdown sooner, but we don't want to do that. We drew it down last year in September. He and Donnie went out last year on September 6th - the water temperature was 21.2 Celsius between 5 and 6 meters deep and the oxygen is within .2. The oxygen was 7.0 and 6.8 or .2, so that is when it's time to drain the lake.

Even though it was announced ahead of time, they could tell that it was going to be time to do it in September as that is when the "turnover" of the lake would be occurring. This is based on over 40 years of data. It's unfortunate that we can't always leave the water in the lake until October, but it's decided when to drain the lake based on the science of the temperature and the oxygen levels. Andre explained that we are just maintaining the nitrate levels in the lake currently and if we wait to draw the lake down, we are compounding the problem. We'll discuss more of this in a little bit.

Muffy said she would love more people to come to the Water Regulation Meeting in August and could support one another to keep the gate open all winter long. There is no set date for the Water Regulation meeting as it depends on when the lake quality starts deteriorating and they decide they better get together and have a meeting. It was kept down for a couple of years in the past, but some snowmobilers mentioned that they wanted to have the lake level kept up during the winter as there are some hazards on the lake if the water level is kept too low. Andre mentioned that the membrane on the dam can be damaged if the dam isn't closed before it freezes and that can be a great cost. If the dam is left open, we have no control of the water. There is a neoprene sleeve on the dam, and it costs about \$80,000 which would be a cost to the association and the town. Again, it was stated that the draw-down is based on science, and it is not pre-set to the week after Labor Day. It just seems that is the time when science says it should be drawn down.

Treasurer's Report – Andre Cushing – We used to have all of our funds at the Seabasticook Valley Credit Union but the board decided to have a little more separation with our funds as well as receive a better interest rate for our reserve funds, so we decided to go with Key Bank for a CD and a Money Market rate of 4.5%. We were required to open a checking account with Key if wanted the other accounts, so we now have just our Fireworks fund at SVFCU and the rest at Key Bank. Currently, we have about \$37,000 in the CD and Money Market accounts and about \$600.00 in the checking account at Key Bank. At SVFCU as of July 1st, we have \$2343.00 in the checking and about \$910 left in the Money Market. We have about \$5500.00 in the Fireworks account at SVFCU. Our goal is to have next year's fireworks funds this year, so that we can stay one year ahead. The rate on the CD has matured and the best rate they can offer us is 3.5%. Andre looked online and there are some out of state that are a little higher but if we want to stay with Key Bank, that is about the best we are going to do. It was suggested to stay local. The money will stay segregated, but will shift some of the Fireworks money over to receive the better interest rate on it. This year to date there is approximately \$2948 dues money that has come in, more that has come in today, fireworks donations as of July 1st totaled about \$3645.00. We receive \$1800.00 from the town for those that register their watercraft. That hasn't arrived yet, but it usually arrives mid-July due to the fiscal year. The total from last year, 7/1/2024 to 7/1/2025, we've received \$8588.00. If you take out the firework donations, the dues, money from the town and donations come in at just about \$5000.00. Our expenses in total this year were \$9867.00. Without the fireworks, it's about \$5367.00. This year we were about even. We voted last year to have Jen Jespersen to write a 319 grant for us. The grant is about \$84,000.00 and with the grant we'll be able to do some of the major areas that need assistance with the runoff. The association would receive some plantings, volunteer hours, in total of about \$5000.00 in funding and would also be able to provide some training on how to improve properties. The grant would run from January 2026 through December of 2027. It would be a two-year period or two summers that we would have to expend those monies. \$3500.00 was submitted to the applicant on June 16, 2025 and we will know sometime this fall if the grant application was successful. We are an impacted lake, so it gives us a little higher scoring on receiving the grant. It's based on how many grant applications, who falls into the impacted watersheds and how much money they allocate to both of those pots of money. We'll put something in the newsletter to let you know the outcome. A motion was accepted and approved for the Treasurer's Report and to keep the money for the CD at Key Bank which is an 8-month CD at 3.5%. (see next page)

Old Business - Andre prepared a summary for the Watershed Action Plan and it has been added to the SLA website. It was about \$4500.00 that we committed from the lake association. We paid \$2000.00 of that in 2023. We also covered the cost of the mailing for the septic survey. The Town Manager is supposed to bill us for the balance of what our share is of that portion. The money that has accrued over the years, we're starting to invest in getting the information so that we can understand the issues that are affecting the lake and we can avoid further impact.

New Business - Proposal for dues increase – We did the Watershed Study which gave us some background data and identified some areas. The range of costs is in excess of \$4 million total. We're eating away at the items slowly. If we get the grant, it will be for two years. It will allow us to do some of the more significant locations. There are, at this point, still some EPA grants that come forward. Andre pointed out some items on the sheet that showed if we had a 10-year plan, we would address further aspects of the Watershed Study in two-year increments over a 10 year period. Over 2026-2027 we have committed up to \$12,500.00 of the current money that we have plus we paid \$3500.00 towards the grant applicant, so that is a total of \$16,000.00 that is committed out of the funds that we have currently. Between the two CD's that's about \$57,000.00. If we look forward to 2028-2029 and applying for another grant and a placeholder of \$15,000.00 for our share of litigation. Using that factor, he upped it to \$4,000 for the grant application. We need to have a strategic plan to address the issues and raising the dues seems justified to assist with what needs to be done to the lake. Over the ten-year span from 2026 – 2035, the cost estimated with the grant application would be \$22,500.00. The cost of our share of the cash match would be \$72,500.00. The combined would be \$95,000.00. If we took half of what we have now, approximately \$35,000.00 and the dues that would be increased to \$20.00 per year would increase our annual revenue by \$2000.00 to \$2500.00 per year. But, being conservative if we have \$3500.00 over a two-year period with the money we have in the bank right now, \$35000.00 divided over the 10 years and then add another \$2000.00 to that for the increase in dues, that gives you \$5500.00. Over a 10-year period, we gain \$9500.00. So, we're halfway there with what we know is in place. With the items in Money Market accounts, we are averaging about \$1800.00 in interest per year. If you add the \$5500.00 plus the \$1800.00, you've got \$7300.00 per year. We would need an additional \$2000.00 per year to supplement the plan. A question was asked as to when the last time dues were raised and Andre answered with 1972. Another question was asked if we've looked at other comparable lakes/associations and what their dues structure looks like and second, if there is any type of enforcement for those around the lake that don't pay their dues. Some lakes dues are a lot higher, \$50 - \$100. Some also have full time staff like Cobbosseecontee and the Belgrade Lakes. We're stepping into how to educate people, what the lake association has done for years as a volunteer group, and what we hope to do. We've had a lot of dedicated people who have monitored this lake, put the buoys in and out and many other things. Muffy goes to about every town council meeting. There are a lot of families that have been here for a long time, but there are also a lot of new people coming in, we welcome them and are so happy that some are at the meeting today. But there are a lot of people that use this lake that don't know what it takes to keep the lake maintained. One thing that we've done is the brochures. We're going to take those to the campgrounds, the town offices, some businesses, and we've also talked about sending these out with tax bills or some other method to get them out to those around the lake to educate them and what it's taken to get the lake to where it is now. Allan Fernald mentioned that just this year alone, we lost \$1400.00 and he's been doing this for 30 years. If you round it off to \$1000.00 x 30 years, that's \$30,000.00 that we don't have in the fund. Allan and Andre have talked about composing a letter and getting it out to everyone trying to explain exactly what we do as an association. exactly what we do as an association. Allan said that he gets beaten up every year with excuses from people saying they pay their taxes or that we're just a club, or we have a cookout and socialize, that they don't use the water and the best one is that they don't like paying our salaries. Allan said they are going to compose a letter, but the face-to-face conversation would work the best. Andre created a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in attending a Zoom meeting and discussing how the association can promote things. There was a question about the businesses in the area donating to the association. A lot of the donations have been based on the fireworks, but as Mike Vining mentioned we have talked about possibly getting some larger signage with businesses that want to sponsor the fireworks and having their name on the signage with ours.

We handed out a brochure that we produced. Last year, the association approved \$2500.00 for educational materials. We designed and printed this. Andre produced the information in the brochure in about 30 seconds using AI. We've printed 500 of them and are going to hand them out. But we'd also like to have approval from the association to commit some money to distribute this wider. It was motioned, accepted and approved to create more brochures and distribute them for up to the amount of \$1500.00. The proposal was for a dues increase to \$20.00. It was motioned, accepted and approved to increase the annual dues to \$20.00 and \$15.00 for an associate, which is a home that doesn't have lakefront property. (See page 6)

Cooks Corner



By Rick Perlmutter



Quick Chicken Noodle Soup

*This easy chicken soup is one of my “busiest” recipes. It has a surprisingly deep flavor and is hearty enough to be a meal by itself. I keep quart bags of it in my freezer and it is always great for a quick meal. FYI, I do **not** put the noodles in until I serve it, otherwise the noodles get too soft.*

1 stick of Butter
1-2 Leeks, white part only, thinly sliced
1 1/2 carrots, finely chopped
4 1/2 stalks Celery, finely chopped
1 1/2 quarts Chicken broth, Canned
3/4 cup Dry White Wine (I prefer dry vermouth, cheapest at Bear’s)
1 1/2 whole chicken breast, skinned, boned
9 mushrooms, sliced 1/4 inch thick
1 1/2 cups Egg Noodles, Cooked
3 oz. green beans, julienned
3 Tbs parsley, chopped
1 1/2 tsp Salt
3/4 tsp Pepper

1. In large saucepan, melt butter over medium-low and add: leeks, celery, carrots, salt and pepper. Cook gently for 5 minutes until vegetables become soft. Remove from heat.
2. In second large saucepan, heat chicken stock and wine to a boil. Add chicken and reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove chicken and let cool.
3. Add stock and mushroom to the vegetables and simmer for 10 minutes. Add noodles and green beans and simmer for another 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Salt and pepper as needed.

A Big “Thanks” To All 2025 Fireworks Sponsors!

Angler’s Restaurant
H&S Hydroseed
Rick Berry Jr.
Rick and Maryanne Berry
Sullivan Trust
Doug and Gail Rice
B. Guinta
John and Victoria Hammond
Maine Fireworks
4 Seasons Floral and Gifts
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Delroy and Linda Dixon
The Loconte Family
Lakeside Concrete Cutting

Teresa Fernald
David Hartford/Diane Garnelis
Judith and David Brogen
Sonja Frey
Charles Morris
Charles Kim
Alan and Teresa Fernald
Lisa and Myron Winders
Mike Miller
Brian Hovey
Scott and Carol Bright
Ann Bullett
Andre E. Cushing
Margaret Gamboa

Bear’s One-Stop

There was a second motion for \$30.00 but others thought it would be difficult to get those that aren't paying now to pay \$30.00. It was said that if you want to pay more than the \$20.00, you can. There had been discussion about 10-year dues being \$165.00 but that was dropped and just going with the \$20.00 per year. Debbie Ferrell has maintained the website for many years and has done a great job. We have approached a woman who would redesign the website for \$500.00 and for \$50.00 per month to maintain the website for us. It was motioned, accepted and approved to pay the \$500.00 to have the website updated. There was an offer from a volunteer of the association to maintain the website instead of paying the \$50.00 per month maintenance fee.

Andre talked with W S Emerson about printing some items for us and they can also set up an online web store for the SLA. It would be linked to our website if anyone wanted to order a fleece or a shirt. That way the association wouldn't be spending money on those items and then having some items not sell or taking up space for storing them year after year. Someone mentioned about going with a more local company. We don't necessarily have to use W S Emerson, but to at least have the board explore this matter further and put a link on our website to whomever we choose up to the cost of \$400.00. It will be discussed to have both association items and Seabasticook Lake (not association) items. It was motioned, accepted and approved to spend up to the \$400.00.

Miscellaneous – Allan Fernald asked for anyone to please go see him if anyone is interested in going door to door to explain who we are and get the word out. A member asked about Territorial Moss. Muffy said it is non-invasive, and Dick Stone said it seemed to be less prevalent when the gate was left open in the winter rather than when it was closed. It seems to be only in certain areas. Muffy suggested to please come to the meeting in August, and we can vote to keep the gate open all winter.

Guest Speaker – Dr. James Paruk, Biologist, Author of Loon Lessons – He's been studying loons since 1993. He's traveled throughout the United States and Canada studying them. Loons weigh between 10 and 14 lbs., which is the same as an eagle. When a loon is nervous it swims. 94% of all loons breed in Canada. There are about 15,000 pairs of loons in the United States. Maine has 2200 pairs. Dr. Paruk has studied loons all over the country and has watched them at times for over 18 hours per day while making notes and charts while studying them.

Loons have an 80% return rate meaning 80% of the loons you see in your area will come back to the same territory. Also, once a reached adulthood or 5-6 years old, there is a 92%-94% rate of survival. But, up until that time there are higher chances of mortality. Loons do not mate for life. But the average age of pair bonding is six years. The longest length of a pair bond is 17 years. Male loons usually mate between 5-6 years old and females 6-7 years old. Most loons live between 20- 30 years.

As soon as the ice is out, there is an urgency for the loons to return to the lake. The males usually go further north than the females. Sometimes one of the pair doesn't return to the same area or they might not return at the same time. This means another pair bond might occur.

The second egg is always smaller than the first egg and they are laid about two days apart.

The more repeats of the loon call mean the more intense or serious the loon is. When a loon leaves its nest, whether due to human disturbance or other factors, the eggs are left vulnerable to predators and the elements. Loons typically nest close to the water's edge, making their nests easily accessible to predators and susceptible to flooding from boat wakes. **If the nest fails, they will typically re-nest within two weeks.** But, if they are three weeks in, they almost typically will not re-nest. If loons have a successful nest, they will almost likely return to the same nest. If you see the same loons in a different place the following year, that most likely means the nest wasn't successful previously. Loons produce on average one young every two years. The odds of loons living to age 5 is 50%.

For more information on loons, Dr. Paruk has a book available to purchase for \$25.00 called Loon Lessons. It summarizes everything over the last 30 years and is currently the most up to date book about loons. It is also available on Amazon.

Margo Jackish has accepted the position as co-treasurer. Muffy asked for a motion to accept Margo into this position. It was accepted and approved.

Next year's meeting will be on Saturday, July 11, 2026, at the American Legion.

The winners of the gift baskets are:

Dick Barbour: Planter Basket

Charles Morris: Cooler Basket

Charles Kim: Beverage Tub Basket

Motion to adjourn at 1:00 pm.



Sebasticook Lake Association

www.sebasticooklakeassociation.org

Membership Form

Name _____
Address (Summer) _____
Address (Winter) _____
Telephone (Summer / Winter) _____
E-Mail Address _____

Please check if this is an address change

Dues for January 2025—December 2026:
Regular \$20.00 Associate \$15.00

Make Checks Payable To:
Sebasticook Lake Association
c/o Andre Cushing
123 Maplewood Road
Newport, Maine 04953

SPECIAL MID-WINTER EDITION 2026

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



22 Loon Drive
NEWPORT, ME 04953