

faking pride in our waterfronts

(Editor's note: the following is a report prepared by officials of the Mirror Lake Watershed Association.)

While there's an old saying that "Clothes do not make the man," how we look and feel about ourselves tells a lot about the inner self, whether it's a person or a community. Our clothes may be old, but if they're tidy and we are too, with a smile on our faces, it's going to show. Likewise with how we feel about our community.

Four out of six of the community's parks border water bodies, either Mill Pond or Mirror Lake. How we feel about these parks will also reflect upon how we feel about the adjacent bodies of water. The land and the water are inexorably connected, one with the other.

Sitting on the grass on a summer's Wednesday evening, listening as the Lake Placid Sinfonietta plays in the Paul White Memorial Band Shell, allows one to take in the families, children and friends listening to the happy music. Beyond, is the quieting Lake, with its canoes and other craft making Mirror's surface shimmer. In the distance and mirrored by the Lake, the afterglow diminishes as darkness creeps up to the summits on the far off Sentinel Range. The fore and backgrounds stimulate thoughts which wander. They are about Beth Master, who loved the Sinfonietta's music so much that she wanted to share it with the community and as a result the Band Shell came into being. Even earlier, there were those citizens, nearly forgotten now, who found the money to purchase the land and give it to the community as a Park. While contemplating the ambiance which surrounds, questions arise as to how those just mentioned would react, were they able to revisit what they wrought so long ago?

And what about those numerous

summer visitors who were present the evening just described? Now that they have moved on to other places, what memories have they taken with them? While here, did they notice the tired, worn out condition of the lawn, or the eroded shoreline with corrugated conduits extending into the Lake to discharge Main Street's silt and debris? At other times, when the Band Shell Park is not so busy, the disrepair is even more obvious. Is this the community's "Best Foot Forward?" Probably not!

A series of photographs, taken over the last six years, indicates a record of continuing degradation. This is not to say that efforts have not been made to throw down some topsoil on the bare patches and re-seed them. Unfortunately, this is a non-solution, because the continuing traffic will simply repeat the cycle another time, and another... Perhaps a few well placed, flat stones on the worn spots, or some shrubbery to redirect pedestrian traffic, would be a better solution. And a low, gabion type wall along the water's edge might tidy up the shabby appearance of today's shoreline.

Perhaps second only to the Band Shell Park, is the Public Beach. Over several generations it has had much attention from the perspective of landscape design. But its uses have grown, and changed, as the community has itself. Tired, worn out, it needs updating to make it responsive to the needs of our times.

One can go from the Band Shell Park and the Public Beach to the other ones: No. 1 Main Street, Mill Pond, McKinley Street and Hillcrest. No doubt each could benefit, to one degree or other, from similar attention.

A carefully crafted landscape

plan by a professional, which addresses the problem areas, could prioritize the steps which are needed. This would permit corrective action to be implemented in stages, as time and money allow.

Remember the Joint Comprehensive Plan of the Village and Town, to which so many citizens volunteered their time?

Among its Goals and Objectives were: "...to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of vistas and open spaces..." and: "...to maintain and enhance area public parks."

A number of local, civic associations either already address these issues, or contemplate doing so. Among these might be the Lake Placid Garden Club, the Merchants Assn., the Millennium Committee (96 Weeks To Go!), Mirror Lake Watershed Assn., LP-NE Water Management Committee, and perhaps others. Coming together as a cohesive force, perhaps something might actually happen!

The forgoing topic is on the agenda for the forthcoming meeting of the Mirror Lake Watershed Assn., at 5:00 pm on March 11th, at the Town Hall. The public is encouraged to attend.