

# Returning to our Golden Pond

Bills Lake residents of a certain age will recall *On Golden Pond*, the 1981 film starring Katherine Hepburn and Henry Fonda as an elderly couple who begin the movie by opening their cottage in New England for the much-anticipated summer season. Although afflicted with a noticeable tremor (also in real life), Hepburn's character is filled with good cheer and enthusiasm as she hurls open the window shades and takes off the sheets that have covered the furniture throughout the winter months. In contrast, Fonda's character is a grouchy curmudgeon who, among other things, is suffering from early-onset dementia, possibly Alzheimer's.

A focal point of this beginning – filled with the promise of spring and an upcoming summer of sunshine, nature's beauty, and leisure – is the sound of the returning loons. They are symbols of the coming months



which will stretch out with great anticipation of happy days and contented nights. The couple rush out to greet the loons, a veritable symbol of nature in all of its blissful sights and sounds. The sunshine beams bright reflected yellows amidst them on the clear water. Diamonds.

Inevitably, the movie goes on to encounter various conflicts. In mild form, so do we but of a more mundane nature: getting the dock in, stocking the pantry and refrigerator, launching the boats, cleaning the yard of winter's messy accumulations, planting flowers, making repairs. But we, too, are able to pause to hear our lonely loon. Yes, we have one too, at least last year we did.

This fictional Golden Pond was actually Squam Lake, located near the town of Center Harbor in central New Hampshire. The lake is indeed a nesting site for loons. Bald eagles and great blue herons can also be seen there. In the east, lakes are known as ponds regardless of size.

One definition of happiness is the anticipation of something good. What is spring on a lake --- and for that matter, Memorial Day weekend -- if not the expectation of summer with its longer days, quiet nights, lapping waters, ritual sunset cruises, campfires, and open windows.

“Let my people go surfing” has been a battle cry of a certain generation. “Let us go napping while listening to gentle wave action” is the version of another generation, the one that enjoys the lake for its aesthetics, not for its playground potential. It comes complete with background noise of gentle wave action and an occasional sound of a loon.

Yes, God's blessing are everywhere but we prefer the ones on Bills Lake.