

## Split Rails

THIS FEBRUARY the Adirondack Park Agency approved a proposed compromise on the longstanding rails versus recreation trail debate. The resulting Unit Management Plan splits the 119-mile Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor into two sections: railroad tracks will be maintained and upgraded between Remsen and Tupper Lake; from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid, 34 miles of rails will be replaced with a multi-use trail open to hikers, bikers, skiers and snowmobilers. Final approval of the plan rests with the Departments of Environmental Conservation and Transportation. Supporters of the railroad have threatened a legal challenge.



## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

### EASTERN NEWT/RED EFT (*Notophthalmus viridescens*)

**Description:** Juveniles (efts) are orange-red salamanders with black spots and are about two inches long; olive-green aquatic adults are up to five inches long.

**Habitat:** Efts are found in moist woods, while the adults live in ponds and vernal pools.

**Behavior:** This amphibian begins as an egg floating in water, then becomes a tadpole, then a terrestrial eft for a couple of years and finally a swimming newt with gills.

**Fact:** To deter predators, the salamanders' skin secretes a nerve toxin like that found in pufferfish. The scheme works: this species can live up to 15 years.

## Algonquin 2 Adirondacks

INSPIRED BY the journey of a 700-pound moose named Alice, a Canadian environmental organization hopes to create a long-distance transnational trail connecting Algonquin Provincial Park, in Ontario, with the similar-size Adirondack Park.

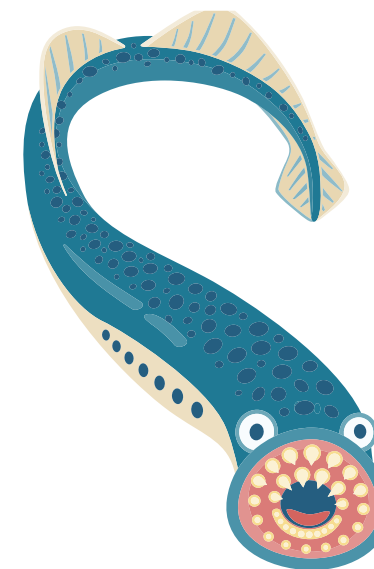
Alice was collared and released in the wild near Newcomb in 1998 and eventually traveled more than 350 miles to Canada's first provincial park. The Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative was formed in 2000 to protect Alice's route as a wildlife corridor. The proposed recreational path would initially connect nearly 200 miles of existing trail, 56 miles of rail-trail, 60 miles of main roads and 115 miles of back roads. See a map and learn more at [www.a2acollaborative.org](http://www.a2acollaborative.org).



ADIRONDACK SCENIC RAILROAD PHOTOGRAPH AND ADIRONDACK TRAIL PHOTOGRAPH BY NANCIE BATTAGLIA (2); RED EFT PHOTOGRAPH FROM ISTOCK

*"Conservation was an afterthought on political platforms, slightly ahead of Esperanto and a single tax."*

—Henry Diamond, who died in February at the age of 83, referring to environmental attitudes before he became the first commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation, in 1970. Diamond is remembered in the Adirondacks as one of the architects of the Adirondack Park Agency.



## Battle for Champlain

IT SOUNDS LIKE something out of a horror movie: a slimy, eel-shaped predator that stalks Lake Champlain, attaching itself to a host and draining its victim's body fluids. But the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced in January that it's winning the fight against sea lampreys.

As part of an effort that began in 1990, applications of lampricides to several of the lake's tributaries—including Putnam Creek, near Crown Point, and Mount Hope Brook, at the southern tip of Lake Champlain—are controlling sea lamprey populations and improving conditions for Atlantic salmon, lake trout, northern pike and walleye. The treatments, which target larval sea lamprey, will continue in 2016.

## Catching Waves

GROWING UP in Indian Lake, Joshua Smith gazed up in awe at the nighttime view of the universe afforded by the Adirondacks' dark skies. Little did he know that he would someday have a role in one of the most significant astronomical discoveries of our time.

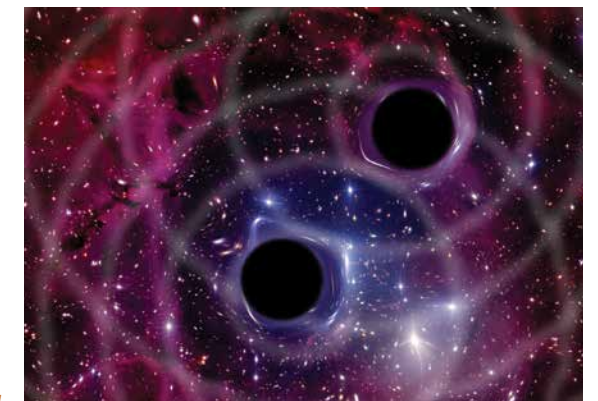
Smith, 35, is a physics professor at California State University, Fullerton, and a member of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) scientific collaboration, which built sophisticated instruments to

detect gravitational waves, as theorized by Albert Einstein a century ago.

Smith was one of six primary editors of a paper published in February in *Physical Review Letters* explaining how waves of gravitational energy from two black holes merging were detected for the first time in September 2015, confirming Einstein's theory.

The discovery "opens up a whole new type of astronomy—new ways

to see things" in the universe, says Smith. He credits Anthony Malikowski, his science teacher at tiny Indian Lake Central School, with inspiring his love of science. "I had some really amazing teachers."



LAMPREY AND GRAVITATIONAL WAVE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM ISTOCK



## Postscripts

UPDATES to articles recently published in *Adirondack Life*:

Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the state's \$14.5 million purchase of the **Boreas Ponds tract**, the last piece of the former Finch timberlands, in April. See "Boreas Ponds," 2016 *Annual Guide to the Great Outdoors*.

In May, the governor also announced approval of a controversial \$23 million plan to turn a portion of a **historic railroad** into a 34-mile multi-use trail and rehabilitate another segment used for tourist rail excursions. See "Keeping Track?," April 2014.

Basil Seggos, acting commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation, signed the unit management plan for the **Essex Chain of Lakes** Primitive Area in March, despite a pending lawsuit by two environmental groups that object to the inclusion of motorized corridors and other provisions of the plan. See "Coming Attractions," 2013 *Annual Guide to the Great Outdoors*.

Read these articles at [www.adirondacklife.com](http://www.adirondacklife.com).



BOREAS PONDS PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL REEDMAN II

*"Thousands of people have mistaken house cats for cougars because they couldn't determine size."*

— Howard Quigley, of the nonprofit organization Panthera, in an *Adirondack Explorer* article about a mountain lion sighting in Crown Point that wildlife scientists determined was actually a house cat.



## Sideways Glance

A PAINTING OF LAKE GEORGE that's been shown publicly only once since it was first exhibited in 1923 was sold for \$12.9 million at Christie's auction house in New York City on May 19. Georgia O'Keeffe's five-by-three-foot *Lake George Reflection* was originally hung vertically, calling to mind the artist's iconic flower paintings.

O'Keeffe, though often associated with the American Southwest, spent a significant amount of her early career

in Lake George, where she and her husband, the photographer Alfred Stieglitz, had a summer home. Documentary filmmakers from the BBC visited Lake George in 2015 for a profile of O'Keeffe, whose work is currently the subject of a major retrospective at Tate Modern art gallery, in London. The documentary won't air stateside, but the Hyde Collection, in Glens Falls, plans a screening this summer. Visit [www.hydecollection.org](http://www.hydecollection.org) for details.

## Maurice Kenny (1929–2016)

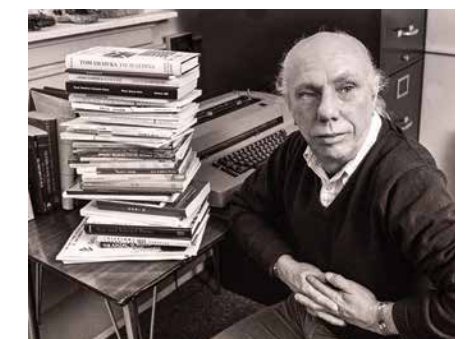
AFTER A LONG, peripatetic and productive life of teaching and writing, Maurice Kenny died at age 86 in Saranac Lake on April 16.

Kenny's father was Mohawk and Irish, his mother part Seneca, and the Mohawk way of life pervaded his work. His epic poem about the trials of Jesuit Isaac Jogues is the subject of *Blackrobe*, published in 1982.

He wrote about crossing the country

on a Greyhound bus; lived in Chicago, Mexico, the Virgin Islands and Brooklyn Heights; and taught in Oklahoma as well as Victoria, British Columbia. But after all these journeys he returned to the North Country.

*Adirondack Life* published "Dug-Out," about the discovery of two ancient canoes in the mud of a northern Adirondack pond, in 1987; an excerpt from *Tekonwatonti* appeared



in the magazine in 1989, three years before his book of the same name. In 1994, "Cudweed," a celebration of an under-appreciated native plant, was the back page of the December issue.

## Hamilton County By the Numbers

*With about three people per square mile, the Adirondack Park's least-populated county turns 200 this year.*

**4,773**  
year-round residents\*

**2**  
primary care physicians

**1,834**  
tent and RV sites at state campgrounds

\*as of 2013

**0**  
McDonald's

**0**  
permanent traffic signals

**346**  
k-12 students†

†in 2014

VEERY PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF NADLER



## New Faces

ROLL CALL AT THE Adirondack Park Agency changed in June, when commissioner **Sherman Craig**, of Wanakena, replaced Leilani Ulrich as chairman. Craig is a retired educator who has been active with the Adirondack Common Ground Alliance.

Three new commissioners were also appointed: **John Ernst**, owner of Elk Lake Lodge and former board member of the Adirondack Council; **Barbara Rice**, a Franklin County

legislator from Saranac Lake; and **Chad Dawson**, a professor emeritus of recreation resources management at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

Meanwhile, **Basil Seggos**, formerly Governor Cuomo's Deputy Secretary for the Environment, has replaced Joe Martens as the commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

## A Big Score

THE MUSIC OF ONE OF SARANAC LAKE'S most celebrated former residents, the Hungarian composer **Béla Bartók**, will soon fill the healing mountain air that drew him to the village during the last summers of his life. The lineup at this year's HoboFest, an annual free music festival at Riverside Park in Saranac Lake, features the United States premiere of Bartók's *Slovak Songs*, performed by internationally respected Hudson Valley musician **Iva Bittová**, who is originally from the Czech Republic. According to HoboFest organizer Peter Seward, these works existed only on paper until the 2016 recording by Bittová and the Mucha String Quartet. Bartók died of a form of leukemia, in 1945, thinking his composition had been lost to World War II.

Learn more about Bartók's Adirondack convalescence at [www.historicsaranaclake.org](http://www.historicsaranaclake.org), about Iva Bittová at [www.bittova.com](http://www.bittova.com), and this year's HoboFest, September 4, at [www.hobofest.com](http://www.hobofest.com).



## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

### AMERICAN BEECH (*Fagus grandifolia*)

**Description:** Our only native beech, this sturdy deciduous tree (up to 70 feet tall) has smooth, light-gray bark. Toothed leaves turn golden in fall.

**Habitat:** Upland woodlands from Maritime Canada to the Midwest, often where sugar maples and yellow birch are found.

**Behavior:** In late fall, nuts—covered with prickly burrs—open to send edible kernels to the ground, an important mast crop for bears, turkeys, deer and other wildlife; Native Americans and Adirondack pioneers ate them as well.

**Fact:** Many of our beeches are dying from beech bark disease, caused by a fungus that attacks where non-native scale insects have penetrated. Trees may die slowly, and suckers sprouting from roots often die as well.



## Postscripts

UPDATES to articles recently published in *Adirondack Life*:

Longtime guests of **the Point**, a luxury resort on Upper Saranac Lake, bought the former William Avery Rockefeller retreat for \$12 million at auction in June. See "The Luxe Life," December 2013.

In June, a year after the **manhunt for two violent felons** from Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, the state inspector general released a scathing report on conditions at the maximum-security prison prior to the escape of David Sweat and Richard Matt. See "Manhunt," December 2015.

Read these articles at [www.adirondacklife.com](http://www.adirondacklife.com).



BEECH PHOTOGRAPH FROM ISTOCK. THE POINT PHOTOGRAPH BY NANCIE BATTAGLIA

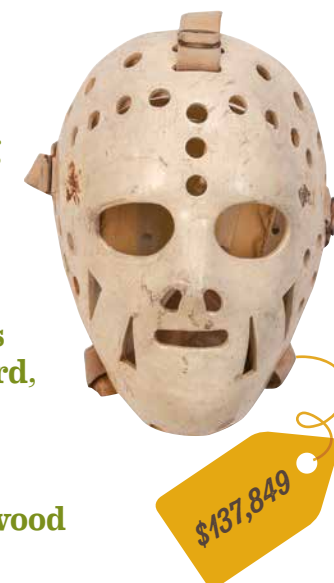
## Price Check

JIM CRAIG, goalie for the United States hockey team during the 1980 Olympics, sold memorabilia from his team's "Miracle on Ice" win against the Soviets. Neither his gold medal nor his jersey found a buyer at the June auction on [Lelands.com](http://Lelands.com), but his mask fetched \$137,849. Here's what other Adirondack items the same amount of coin will get you:

**68,924**  
hours of parking  
on Lake Placid's  
Main Street

**9,189**  
apple crumb pies  
from Rulf's Orchard,  
in Peru

**5,105**  
full cords of split firewood



**569**  
nights at the  
Sagamore Resort,  
in Bolton  
Landing

**7**  
lakeview acres  
in Schroon Lake

**1**  
Zamboni

IVA BITTOVÁ PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF IVA BITTOVÁ. HOCKEY MASK PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LELANDS.COM

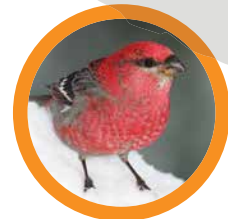
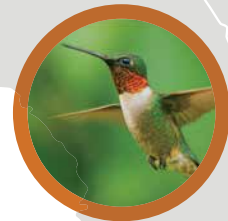
*"Longstanding, systemic failures ... enabled two convicted murderers to meticulously orchestrate their escape from a maximum security facility."*

—**Catherine Leahy Scott**, state inspector general, in her report on the yearlong investigation into the escape of two inmates from Clinton Correctional Facility, in Dannemora. The full report is available at [www.ig.ny.gov](http://www.ig.ny.gov).

# Good Migrations

BIRDS DON'T GIVE A HOOT about borders, making their conservation an international concern. A hundred years ago, the United States and Canada signed the Migratory Bird Treaty, preventing countless species from meeting the fate of the once-ubiquitous passenger pigeon, which was hunted to extinction.

Like their human counterparts, many of the North Country's avian residents head for warmer climes after Labor Day—though, in the case of the pine grosbeak, which summers to our north, it's the Adirondacks that beckons in the harshest winters. This map shows the general winter destinations of a handful of our feathered friends.



- Ruby-throated hummingbird
- Pine grosbeak
- Common loon
- Broad-winged hawk
- Blackpoll warbler
- Bicknell's thrush

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD FROM ISTOCK. ALL OTHER BIRD PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF NADLER (5)