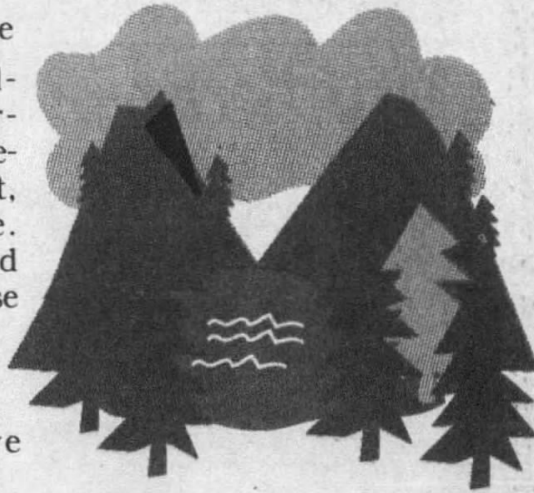


Exhibit CK-9

Vermont's mystical Lake Willoughby springs back

By Christina Tree
Special to the Globe

Lake Willoughby is Vermont's most mysterious, magnificent, magical lake. Mounts Hor and Pisgah, which rise abruptly from opposite shores, create a fiord-like effect above narrow waters.



Anthony Schultz illustration

It's the kind of "romantic" landscape beloved by 19th-century tourists. By the 1890s, two substantial hotels hugged its shore and another perched high on Mount Pisgah's south shoulder. There were a number of Gothic-style cottages, two lake boats and a lively dance hall. Lake Willoughby was known as "The Lucerne of America."

But just a few years ago, Lake Willoughby offered no place to eat, and lodging was limited to seasonal, by-the-week cabins. So its revival has been sudden and dramatic.

In little more than a year, an upscale inn with an outstanding restaurant has opened on one side of the lake, and a former estate has become a bed-and-breakfast inn on the other. A former general store has begun selling Christmas decorations, crafted gifts and T-

LAKE WILLOUGHBY, Page A10

LAKE WILLOUGHBY SPRINGS BACK

Lake Willoughby springs back

LAKE WILLOUGHBY

Continued from Page A1

The new Willoughby Inn replicates the old farmhouse that it replaces. That's how much the present owners, longtime summer residents of nearby Burke Hollow, cared about preserving the exterior of the old local eatery. But inside, the decor is downright elegant, and the new dining room's windows maximize the spectacular view. The food is haute cuisine at dinner prices.

Michael LaCroix, one of Northern Vermont's best-known chefs, is in the kitchen, and the \$150 cheese soup is smooth and tangy. The \$12.95 braised shoulder of Vermont veal melts in your mouth; and the herbed zucchini is firm. What you remember is the combination of a superb meal and view. Upstairs, the nine rooms overlooking the lake — are nearer resort-area prices: \$80 for standard rooms, \$95 for the one with a four-poster bed and two-person whirlpool, \$110 for the efficiency suite. The four lakeside cottages go for \$400 to \$500 per week, they are also available on a daily basis. Fox Hall, the B & B across the lake, also commands a magnificent view of the water-filled notch, but the feel is homier. The expensive, twin-towered mansion has been painstakingly restored — from its rich paneling and third-floor skylight to its foundations — by the same cheerful family members who make your bed and morning muffins. Michigan natives Sherry and Ken Peyden, with the help of their four children and Ken's mother Catherine, have brought warmth as well as spit and polish to this airy ark.

Fox Hall was built as a summer home for the mayor of Yonkers, N.Y., and served as administrative and parents' quarters for Songadewin, a prestigious girls'

camp from 1921 until 1976, but it was just another of the lake's old wooden ghosts when the Peydens arrived, and there are still some surviving camp cabins and outbuildings on its 76 acres — which include a broad lawn that rolls off the porch and down, down, almost to the lakeside canoe and paddle boats.

A view to remember

The porch itself is my idea of the place in New England to sit out foliage season. Any time of day or night (with the moon silencing the lake and the walls of Pisgah and Her black against the stars). It's a difficult spot to walk away from. Bed and breakfast at Fox Hall costs \$85 with private bath, \$65 with shared. Less if you're alone or a senior citizen.

Lake Willoughby is in the town of Westmore, year-round population 270 people, a lot of them farmers. It's generally agreed to be the very heart — you might say the watery navel — of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

The Northeast Kingdom — a name for the three northeastern counties of Vermont — encompasses nearly 2,000 square miles of lake-spotted country. There are two high mountains, namely Jay Peak on its northwestern fringe, and Burke Mountain, not far from Willoughby. There are some tourist pockets (both Jay Peak and Burke are ski areas with condominiums and off-hill inns), but generally this is an open, glacially carved land of humped hills and high, rolling farmland.

The Northeast Kingdom is still a place of discovery," observes David Smith, innkeeper at Highland Lodge, a rambling old lakeside inn that his family has owned since 1953. "It's not over-run with tourists, and so people who come here find that they've discovered an old way of life."

Family-gear resort

Highland Lodge itself retains the easy grace of a well-established, family-gear resort. The

several common rooms include an inviting library and a parlor with ample sitting and game-playing space, and a grand piano. Guest rooms are comfortably furnished; those in the cottages have their own porches and living rooms. Rates run \$125 to \$165 per couple, breakfast, dinner and the 15 percent service charge included.

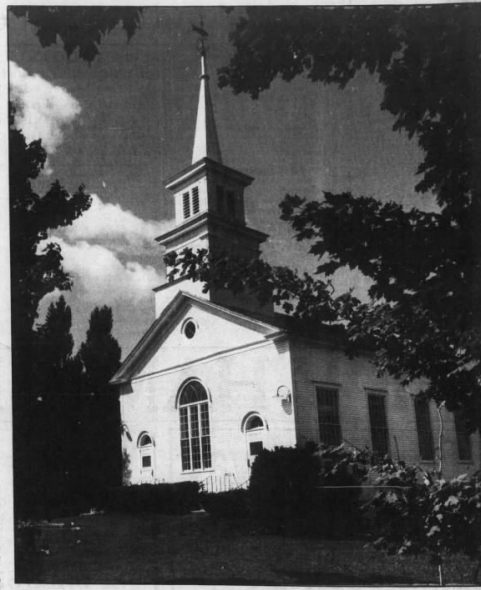
"People who come here discover that there's nothing to do, and after a while they discover that that's what they like," says Smith. After pointing the way to the tennis court and down to the beach house and boats on Caspian Lake, he usually hands guests a trail guide to the nearby Barr Hill Nature Preserve and explains that the inn's own 120 acres are webbed with hiking paths. Guests soon discover the need to walk off the meals served at Highland Lodge, whose dining room is open to the public.

Local discoveries range from Craftsbury Common, a vast village common that's unusually high and handsome, to the Bread and Puppet Theater Museum in Glover, an extensive display of the haunting, puppet-dwarf, giants, devils and other fantastic figures for which the troupe is internationally known.

Gifts and ice cream

Sugarmill Farm is as pure an expression of the Northeast Kingdom as its syrup. The red barn down on Route 16, just south of Barton Village, is now a combination maple museum and ice cream parlor with a Model-T Ford parked in the corner and a covered bridge behind. Brothers Michael and Norman Angers will tell you that they are just trying to preserve the family farm. Proceeds from the ice cream go to a local school, and the Park, which still runs, has been in the family since 1926. Our visit to the gift store, stocked with local maple syrup and crafted items, ended in the kitchen of the attached house (it happened to be lunch time and drove away

Continued on next page



A church symbolizes the tranquility of northern Vermont.

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