

Founders of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust

Arthur Howe Jr.

By George Moore

Art said he was a country boy, working in New York, looking for some land for weekend enjoyment. In 1968 he and his wife Peggy bought a small parcel on Old Hamburg Rd and before building, they would picnic there.

One day, Harvey Stevenson, a Land Trust supporter and future director, stopped by to chat. They learned they had in common, The Century Association, a venerable old New York club favored by artists and writers. They became good friends.

Shirley Howard (then Shirley Moore) a founder, invited Art to become a Land Trust member. In 1974 he joined the board and then became the third Land Trust president, serving from 1976 until 1984.

Like his predecessors, Art continued to exercise patience, working to earn the respect of long term land owners. He spent many hours talking with them and (with their permission) walking their land.

Art frequently walked the 235 acre Fehrer property and courted sisters Catharine and Elizabeth in the hopes they might donate it to the Trust. He helped them by removing junked cars and debris from their land. (He also discovered a hippie camp with a crop of marijuana under cultivation).

Eventually, in 1992 the sisters donated their land to The Nature Conservancy. Named the Pleasant Valley Preserve, it is managed by the Lyme Land Trust and is one of the most popular preserves in Lyme.

With the assistance of Louise Ames, wife of the then president of Connecticut College, the Land Trust organized a summer program for about 12 Lyme youngsters for three or four weeks to walk and map the Fehrer property. The largest white oak they discovered, 16 feet in circumference, was named "Arthur's oak." Another initiative under Art's leadership was the organized spring cleanups on town roads.

Art Howe was a true volunteer. He served the Land Trust for ten years, was on Planning & Zoning and was an officer of the Lyme Fire Company.

A review of the names of those who served on the Board with Art reveals a

gradual change in its make-up. The strategy of patience had worked; some of the family names that appear on the roster of past directors during his presidency are: Thach, Jewett, Czikowsky, Harding, and Tiffany.

Clearly, the success in protecting Lyme's open space through the late 80's and 90's was helped by the relationships cultivated by the earlier Boards.

Art is a charming man with a quick smile and a sparkle in his eye. He is modest and quick to talk about Lyme. He speaks only sparingly of himself, except when the subject is his childhood in New Hampshire.

He defines himself as an ardent fisherman and outdoorsman. Professionally, he said he had a mixed background: ½ education, ¼ business and ¼ environmental non-profits.

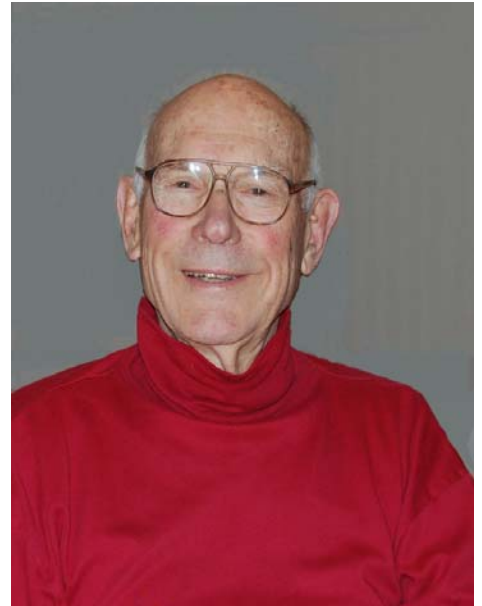
As a youngster, he spent a lot of time at his grandmother's on Squam Lake, NH. His grandmother wanted to protect the area from development and bought as much land as she could around the lake.

It is obvious that time spent with her greatly influenced Art. He still speaks of her dedication to conservation, environmental issues and her deep - rooted social consciousness.

These same values ran in the family. His brother, Sydney, was president of the Conservation Foundation and was an organizer of the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. His brother, Harold Howe II, served as Commissioner of Education in the Johnson administration and fought against segregated schools. Art's son has made a career in New Hampshire protecting the environment and is a Senior Director of Land Protection at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

After our talk, I "googled" Art and gained even more insight into the extraordinary man who made Lyme his home for many years.

Born in 1921 in Watertown CT., Art graduated from Hotchkiss. In 1941 he



Art Howe

volunteered as an ambulance driver attached to the British Eighth Army in North Africa and rose to the rank of Major. In 1944, in recognition of his service, he was awarded the OBE (Order of the British Empire) by the Crown.

That experience resulted in a lifelong association with the American Field Service, an organization of volunteer ambulance drivers founded in 1915 that later became an international student exchange organization. He is a Life Trustee and served as its President from 1964-1972.

Howe graduated from Yale in 1947, taught Latin, History and Mathematics at Hotchkiss, became Director of Admissions at Yale in 1953 and in 1956 became Dean of Admissions and Student Appointments. Art played a pivotal role in helping to change Yale's admissions criteria to attract a more diverse student body.

After digesting all this, I recalled Tom Brokaw's book, *The Greatest Generation*, and thought, Tom, too bad you didn't meet Arthur Howe Jr., educator, environmentalist, fisherman, outdoorsman and the third president of the Lyme Land Trust.

I am glad I did.