**First Annual July 4th Boat Parade**

Last summer Patty Sawyer had an inspiration: to organize the first annual July 4th Boat Parade on Hancock Pond. Word went out through emails, with a colorful poster illustrating the route. Rain or shine, boats were asked to gather at 4 pm in Loon Cove and circumnavigate the pond. Decorations were encouraged.

Well, it did rain, but that did not deter Patty and family, including granddaughter Abbey and grandson Owen, and a half-dozen others from launching off to inaugurate what Patty hopes will become an annual tradition. Here is her account:

  We had hats, horns, flags and super soakers - which shot water approx. 35 ft., mostly in a showdown with our neighbor's boat behind us. Since it was raining and we were already wet, it didn't matter and just added to the fun.The racket of horns tooting brought many neighbors from around the lake to come out of their homes and cottages to wave, some with flags, some with their pets, and some cheering and clapping.

There were 7 boats in all, no canoes or kayaks.

I remember my first boat parade many years ago, over on McWain Pond. We had just moved in that summer and didn't know about their parade ahead of time. When we saw the boats gathering, we wanted to tag along. The only appropriate decoration we could quickly find was a little old ragged flag (no stick attached) that we found pinned to a wall in the house. We attached this sorry flag to a spatula and joined the parade. My family (mostly teenagers at the time) were reluctant, as teenagers so often are, to be seen participating with such a pathetic decoration. But, every year thereafter, we were ready for the parade. The oldest gentleman on the lake (I think he was in his late 90's) led that parade. When you heard his distinctive cowbell, you knew it was time for the parade to start: 4 pm on the 4th! It was a fun tradition which I have missed since moving to Hancock Pond.That's what prompted this year's first parade. I hope it grows and continues for years to come. Rain or shine, 4 pm on the 4th!  Be ready!  I'll be there waiting for the boats to gather, so this tradition can live on in our new community around Hancock Pond.