

To the Editor;

I sit on a Friday waiting for the weekend and wonder if spring will ever come. I open the sliding glass door to our back deck and look out at the ever so slowly melting snow. In the distance I hear the roar of Limestone Creek. My spirits rise. I know that spring is just around the corner. Just like one of those white noise machines that run with the sound of waves or water tumbling over stones in a brook, water is calming.

I am reminded that spring turns to summer. Summer brings thoughts of sitting by or swimming in the water of one of the local public lakes. I find I am thirsty. I turn the to the faucet to grab a drink and fresh, clear water runs of of the tap. I shower, I wash, and I cook all because of the availability to me of fresh water.

I spoke recently to a friend of mine in California, a place ravaged recently by a lack of water. Conversation turns to the draught. He mentions his water bill. With a similar size house and adjusting for use, he pays five times what my water bill is here. I wonder as I hang up if we take for granted what we have in natural resources here in Central New York.

A couple weeks ago, I read of the anniversary of Dr. Seuss' birthday. My mind turned to the books of my youth; "Cat in the Hat", "One Fish, Two Fish" and the "Lorax". The Lorax spoke for the trees. Who speaks for the water? The latest Onondaga County Water Authority (OCWA) Water Quality and Supply Statement released March 11 shows that almost half of the water for central New York homes comes from our two closest Finger Lakes, Skaneateles and Otisco. Otisco provides 17 million gallons a day to the majority of the city and towns of the region while Skaneateles provides 1 million gallons a day primarily to the towns of Lafayette, Dewitt and Geddes. I was again surprised at how much of the water we use came from our Finger Lakes compared with our Great Lake neighbor, Lake Ontario.

Our Finger Lakes are worthy of our protection. Northeastern United States holds over 20 percent of the available freshwater in the world. Do we compromise this for short-term game? Do we compromise it at all? How do we value it? How can we protect and preserve it?

We can value, protect and preserve the water we have by avoiding waste. Fix the leaky faucet or toilet. Replace the old toilet with a low volume toilet. Take shorter showers. Shave and do dishes without having the water run. Do large loads of laundry. Add insulation, fix cracks and holes in the walls of our homes and shut off lights so the needs of our power industry are less.

As spring folds into summer, we should look at coveting the gift we have in this region. We may not as yet be aware of what it is like to stand under a shower and only have a trickle come from the showerhead or stand in line at a spring to get our ration of water. Let us all protect and preserve that which we have as we enjoy the sound of the spring snow melt rushing down Limestone Creek.

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(Dr. Tim Creamer is a local physician and the President of the Otisco Lake Preservation Association, a watershed preservation not-for-profit group. Look for further info at their website, www.otiscolakepreservation.org.)