



WEST LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

November, 2005

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Are you a member of the West Lake Improvement Association?

The question I often wonder is "Why not"? The association is strictly volunteer and very organized and useful. This past year the Portage City Council approved a new five-year assessment for weed control and lake water quality improvements. During the meeting, Councilperson Peter Strazdas stated that he was in favor of the approval. He later publicly said the *West Lake Improvement Association is one organized, strong voice that represents their lake residents very well.* The association has developed a great working relationship with the City and the County's Drain Commissioner.

The WLIA is working on storm drain issues to make sure better water quality is coming into our lake. William French, the Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner, has been very helpful in identifying problems that will need to be addressed. The City Engineer, Chris Barnes, has been very proactive in new storm water drain requirements. The riparians on West Lake are lucky to have the resources and knowledgeable people to help improve our storm drains.

The vast experience on the Association Board has proved to be very advantageous in getting things done. I am proud to be a member of this board. This year the Association applied for some grant money to study the storm water quality coming into the lake. We have never before applied for a grant, and I am curious to see if we will receive the foundation money to conduct such tests. Also, we have a new web site

for the lake association and more information will be available in the near future.

The above items are but a few that the Association has addressed. Why wouldn't someone want to be part of the membership? Our membership numbers need to improve or we may be faced with increasing membership dues. If you haven't joined, please rethink that decision. If you have an issue that prevents you from joining, please call me at 327-4590. If you have joined, "Thank You." We truly appreciate your support! We know that not everyone has time to devote to the board, but nearly everyone can support the Association by joining the membership. Remember the more the merrier!

by Patrick Duggan - WLIA President

WEST LAKE - AQUATIC PLAN UPDATE

In anticipation of a possible treatment with the herbicide Sonar in 2006, the Association retained biologists from Progressive AE to perform a detailed vegetation survey of West Lake. The plant survey was conducted this past August to satisfy new Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) requirements for the use of Sonar. Under the new requirements, a plant survey of the lake must be performed the year prior to a proposed Sonar treatment to determine if enough Eurasian Milfoil is present to warrant a whole-lake Sonar treatment. The survey involved a detailed field evaluation of the entire lake to determine the relative abundance of various plant species. Fortunately, the survey found

Eurasian milfoil in only about 3 to 4 acres of the lake. Thus, the lake will not require a Sonar treatment in 2006.

The survey also indicated that West Lake currently maintains a healthy diversity of native aquatic plants. The native plant species observed in the lake are generally considered to be beneficial in that they produce oxygen during photosynthesis, provide food and habitat for fish and other organisms, and help to stabilize shoreline and bottom sediments. At the time of the August survey, very little nuisance plant growth was observed in the lake indicating this year's treatment program was effective. A similar survey of the lake will be performed late next summer to determine if Sonar use will be permitted in 2007.

by Patrick Duggan - WLIA President

AUSTIN LAKE DAM UPDATE

Fellow West Lakers,

Last April I received a phone call from Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner William French. Mr. French was explaining the failure of Austin Lake dam and what effect it would have on West Lake if the dam does indeed fail. I drove out to the site immediately after work to meet French to have him explain the county's action plan.

Mr. French told me that if there was a total failure of the dam, it would flood downtown Vicksburg and directly reduce the water level in West Lake by 2 feet. This year's water level was greatly reduced by lack of rain and many days of beautiful sunshine.

The county's action plan was to attempt to secure a temporary fix of the dam and have engineers determine if the dam was salvageable. The aging dam is not salvageable and must be replaced. A Board of Determination hearing was held on September 19, 2005. Residents from Long, Austin and West Lakes were present to get information and have their questions answered. There was a 3-part petition presented to the Board of Determination by Mr. French and Engineer Larry Stehouwer.

The petition requested the following:

1. Replace the Austin Lake Dam
2. Clean out the Sugarloaf Drain that empties into West Lake
3. Add two parcels to the Assessment District

All three petitions signed by riparians were unanimously approved by the Board of Determination. The Board stressed that the assessments' value was not determined at that meeting. All riparians on Long, Austin and West Lakes will be notified by mail regarding the date of the Day of Review Meeting. That is when we will find out the cost and dates of the assessments.

This project is vital to protect water quality and property values. The cleaning out of the Sugarloaf drain will improve the quality and the quantity of the water entering our lake. The drain will be cleaned of fallen branches and debris. Also, a drain culvert will be replaced to improve the water flow. At the entrance of the drain, a filtration basin will be constructed to naturally clean the water. (The Association has been working to get some action on this project for several years.)

Work on the dam starts this fall and the Sugarloaf drain project will start this winter. The first project will be clearing the spot where the filtration basin will be located. Mr. French has been trying to keep the project costs down and asked me if there would be volunteers to work on the clearing of trees and branches. Please contact Patrick at 327-4590 to volunteer.

The WLIA Board supports this project in its entirety. The costs of this project will be shared by all lake riparians. A question many have is "Why should we have to pay for the dam"? It is a good question and very easy to answer. All three lakes in the area are connected and directly affect each other. So we are all in this together. The effects of water levels dropping several feet would limit the use of the lake. How many of you had a tough time getting your boats off their lifts this summer? I want us all to enjoy the lake for what it's worth. As I said at the meeting, it has to be repaired and we can either pay now or pay later. It just gets more costly the longer we wait.

by Patrick Duggan - WLIA President

A LITTLE LOCAL HISTORY

Did you know that the construction of the Sugar Loaf Drain, also known as the Austin Lake Extension Drain, put unemployed Kalamazoo County citizens to work during the Great Depression?

The WPA, the federal program responsible for designing and constructing the drain, was created by executive order of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt as the Works Progress Administration in 1935 at a time when unemployment was widespread. In 1939 the WPA was renamed the Works Projects Administration. The WPA was designed to utilize the skills of unemployed contractors, engineers, artists, writers, musicians, actors and architects to improve the infrastructure of the country while providing meaningful work and a small income. The building program constructed, repaired or improved approximately 116,000 buildings, 78,000 bridges, 651,000 miles of road, 8,000 parks, and 800 airport landing fields. Also part of the WPA was the Federal Art Project, the Federal Writers Project, and the Federal Theater Project. The Federal Art Project created close to 10,000 drawings, paintings, and works of sculpture for public buildings. The "Fountain of the Pioneers" on the eastern half of Bronson Park is one of these works of art. Over its 8-year history, the WPA employed over 8,500,000 individuals and spent \$11,000,000,000.

The Sugar Loaf Drain along with the Austin Lake Dam and the Sugar Loaf Dam were constructed to help maintain lake levels in West and Austin Lakes, but more importantly, to maintain the lake level in Sunset Lake in Vicksburg. The paper mill in Vicksburg was dependent on the level of Sunset Lake and had to be shut down if the lake level dropped too low.

By Charles Nelson

LOCAL MERCHANTS SUPPORT OUR ANNUAL PICNIC

The following merchants generously provided door prizes and gift certificates for the West Lake Picnic. Be sure to return their support with

consistent patronage.

- H&B Market
- L&J Hobby Shop
- Nelson's Hardware
- West Lake Drug Store
- Daane's Wine & Liquor
- Erbelli's Pizza & Italian Cuisine
- Right Way Rental /Rwy Bait & Tackle

AND THE WINNER IS.....

The winner of the 2005 West Lake Picnic Annual Culinary Award is Adele Barton. THANK YOU... we really enjoyed your Pineapple Dump Cake!!

Pineapple Dump Cake

- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 2 oz can crushed pineapple, minus 1/4 cup
- 1 tsp. soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp vanilla

Beat eggs slightly, add pineapple and vanilla. Combine sugar, flour and soda. Add to moist ingredients and combine well. Bake at 350 degrees approximately 20 minutes. Use a sprayed large cookie sheet with sides or a sprayed huge pizza pan with sides. The cake should be a medium dark golden brown when done. Check the center for doneness with a toothpick.

Frosting: 1 8 oz. Philadelphia cream cheese, softened
1/2 stick butter, softened
2 cups powdered sugar

Beat butter and cream cheese together. Add powdered sugar and beat. Apply to hot cake gently beginning at the outer edges and spreading it over the cake. It will melt into the cake.

I decorate the cake with chopped walnuts on one side and maraschino cherries cut in half on the other.

Enjoy!!!!

**SECOND ANNUAL PORTAGE CENTRAL
WOMENS SWIMMING & DIVING TEAM
SWIM ACROSS WEST LAKE.**

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to swim across West Lake and back? Me neither! But that's exactly what happened on August 19th this year when the Portage Central Women's Swimming and Diving team swam across the lake. This is the second year that the team has held the swim across the lake, in fact a few alumni swimmers (Kelsey Linn and Katelyn Clancy) joined in on the event. The team of 35 girls started from senior distance swimmer Michelle Clancy's house on Forest drive and swam to the boat launch and back. There were several aid boats spread out over the route in case of emergencies. Swim parents provided the delicious breakfast upon the swimmer's return. The Clancy household has been very involved in swimming at Portage Central. Michelle's father Mike was a charter member and standout for the men's team in the late 70's and her sister Katelyn was a four year swimmer and Greater Kalamazoo standout last year. (Coach Jim Schafer likes the event because it creates team bonding.) There is also another swimmer from West lake on the team who swam in the lake-crossing event. Annaliese McGavin from Southshore Drive is a sophomore swimmer. Annaliese swims in the backstroke and butterfly events. So, if you were interested in knowing what it's like to swim across West Lake, do what I would do. Ask them, rather than swimming it!

This year's team is currently undefeated and holding a 7-0 record. The team is preparing for the Conference meet to be held November 5th and 6th. The Portage Central Women's Swimming and Diving team is going for their 5th straight conference title. Good luck Mustangs!!!

By Patrick Duggan.

STILL... MOVIN' ON UP...

West Lake Real Estate Update! So far this year we have had 2 homes that have sold on the lake. Their prices were \$132,500 & \$235,000. In 2004, we had 9 homes sell on the lake with prices from \$163,000 to

\$371,000. There are currently 3 lakefront homes available for sale with prices ranging from \$117,900 to \$334,900.

Our lake front market usually appreciates at approximately 5% per year. We should be close to that pace this year. The local real estate market is close to last year's record market. So far in 2005, there have averaged approximately 16%-20% more homes listed as compared to 2004. This is a slight sign edging towards more a buyers market. This extra inventory may be partially due to the Pfizer right-sizings.

The mortgage interest rates are still helping sustain our sales pace. The current mortgage rates are 5.0%-5.5% for 15 year fixed rates and 5.5%-5.875% for 30 year fixed rates. If you've been thinking about moving NOW is the right time! Take advantage of these record low rates. I don't think we're going to see them again in our lifetimes!

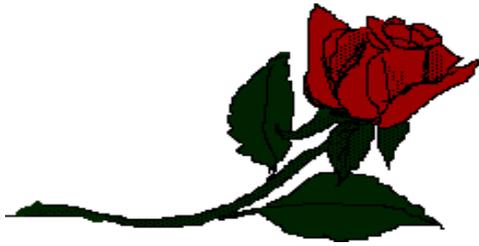
If you have any questions on these mortgage rates, your home's value or would like to be kept up-to-date on new home listings call Bill Witek at 327-3939 or email: billwitek@pprmi.com. Also see www.billwitek.com for additional real estate information.

THE GHOST SHIP OF WEST LAKE

Did your rowboat silently drift away this past August? If it did, and you miss your rowboat enough to want it back, call

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE WLIA WEBSITE (www.wlia.net) and send comments/suggestions to the webmaster.

WLIA NEWSLETTER: We would WELCOME any information that you would like to share with fellow riparians. Stories of interest, coming events or some historical perspectives would be great. Please email anything you would like to contribute to: webmaster@wlia.net



Welcome! Congratulations! New baby? Happy Anniversary! Happy Birthday! I love you! My Sympathy!

So many reasons to send flowers and one great florist to supply those needs to our riparian community... yes, *Polderman Florist*, in our community on Portage Road for the past 42 years! (Maybe someone should send flowers to Paul Polderman for such longevity <g>)

Paul began his career in the bloomin' beauties while in High School for Colters Greenhouse. (Any of you long-time residents remember that name?) When Colters went up for sale, Paul purchased it and incorporated his own name into his new shop. And once his son Linc became his partner, it became a family business as well.

Polderman's does business all over the world, utilizing FTD, Teleflora and 1-800-flowers. He offers a full service line: flowers for weddings, funerals and hospital deliveries, a garden center, and custom made and specialty designed floral arrangements. I have, on several occasions, stopped in asking for a special arrangement and left with a very unique, reasonably priced, arrangement which the recipient just loved!

Polderman's has been one of our West Lake Association merchants for many years as a part of our Welcome Packet to new riparians. So the next time you are in need of flowers, why not stop by or give them a call? Haven't been given flowers in awhile? Call up and order some just for yourself. The delivery is FREE!

Polderman's Florist 8710 Portage Rd 327-3656

Open Monday - Friday from 8-6 and Saturdays from 8-4 (changes with the seasons) and closed Sundays.

By Jane Emanuel

WEST LAKE CLASSIFIEDS

Dell C-600 laptop computer. This is a 750Mhz PIII with 14.1" display, 256MB ram and 10MB HD with onboard Ethernet and modem. Includes charger, floppy drive and CD-ROM, 17" CRT monitor and stand, port replicator, keyboard and mouse with WinXP sp.2. EXCELLENT condition, with very low hours of use. Asking \$450 or make offer. Call Mike

PowerMac G4 desktop computer. Have you "wondered about" or thought of owning a MAC and just couldn't quite part with over \$2000 to "find out." Here is a good way to "check it out" and see if a MAC is for you. This machine has a 400mhz processor with 384MB ram, 20MB HD, includes Mac OS X (Tiger), several software packages and includes a 17" CRT monitor. This is a clean machine, ready to handle most projects as-is, or a great starting unit to "hop it up". Includes keyboard and MS mouse. Asking \$425 or make offer. Call Mike for details.

Hewlett Packard 300mhz Pentium II. Yes, this one escaped from the Smithsonian <g>.... However, thought it might be good for someone with young children that doesn't want their "good" PC messed up. This machine is "almost" literally brand new, never put into "use". I bought it many years ago and just "found it" again stored in a closet. It is a 300mhz PII with 96MB Ram, 4GB HD, CD-ROM and includes a 15" Digital brand CRT monitor, keyboard, mouse and Win98 or Win2000. Asking \$65 or make offer. Call Mike .

If you have any interest in *any* of the above units, please contact me soon as I'm getting ready to put them on eBay. Also, you are welcome to "try" the above units before you buy them, and I can deliver and set them up if you'd like.

Professional Video Service - if you are having an event at home, work or school, we can videotape it so that you can enjoy the festivities for many years. We use professional video equipment and deliver your edited product on DVD. Please call Mike at Videos for Fun for info or a price quote.

By Mike Granchi



WEDDING

West Lake has many different possible uses. They depend on the need of the people. On September 24, 2005, our son got married on the overhang at the nature preserve. The reception was held under the canopy on our front lawn. Both our entire families were there, including our son from Slidell, La. (Thought we would try a picture in this edition and see how it goes.... -Editor)

By Ralph & Pat Colwell

2005 WLIA MEMBERSHIP FORM

I want to be a member of the West Lake Association for 2005 and support our organization for lake improvement. Enclosed is \$25 for membership dues. (*If the \$25 Membership fee is a hardship, please call Patrick at 327-4590. We still want you to join!)

We would like to hear your comments . (If you elect not to join WLIA, PLEASE let us know why. We cannot correct "issues" if we do not know what they are. Thank You!)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please mail this membership form and a signed proxy if applicable to:

Diane Barkholz

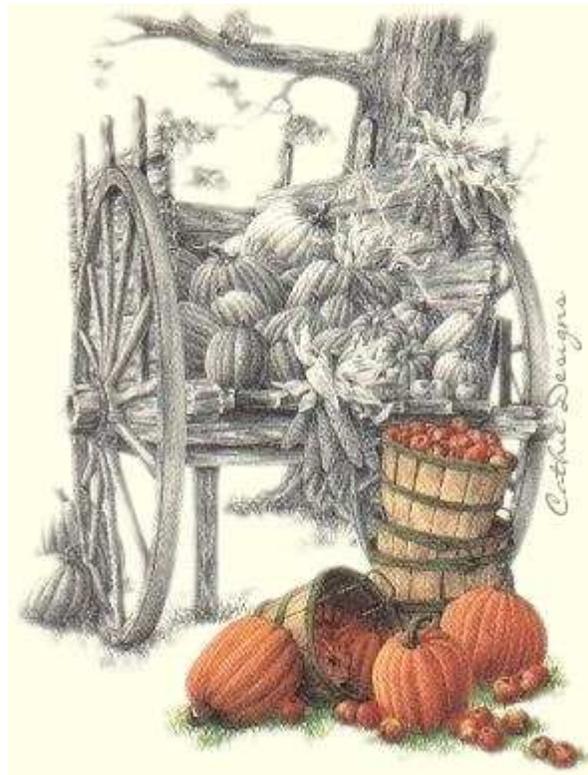
OR: drop it off at any one of your West Lake Director's homes

COMMENTS: _____

2005 WLIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Patrick Duggan		
Vice-President	Ralph Colwell		
Secretary	Phil Guichelaar		
Treasurer	Diane Barkholz		
Directors	Jane Emanuel		
	Mike Granchi		
	Janeene Hobbs		
	Chuck Nelson		
	Thom Phillips		
	Tom Scott		
	Fred Welser		

HAPPY THANKSGIVING from WLIA to You and
your Family



Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season

THANK YOU TO THE 2005 PAID WLIA MEMBERS

Allen Larry & Irma Bowden
Atkin Doug & Carin
Ballinger Beth
Barkholz Chuck & Diane
Barton Michael & Adele
Bauer David & Barbara Sneath
Beer Bruce & Lois
Behm Harley & Mary Ellen
Bennett Tim & Betsy
Beuker Steven & Pamela
Blostein Paul
Bogatschow Helen
Bottenfield Mary
Brenner Boyd & Laura
Brink Kenneth & Jeanne
Brockie William
Burruss Mary
Caley Mark
Camp Bill & Sandy
Campagnano Lawrence
Caporal MaryLouise
Cekola Dolores (Dee)
Clancy Michael & Julie
Clapp Raymond & Ellen
Colwell Ralph & Pat
Coonfer Gene & Debbie
Croden Peter
Cross Thomas & Heddy
Dehaan Jonathan & Christina
Doornbos Ray & Virginia
Dow Donald & Hilda
Duggan Pat & Kelly
Duncan Robert & Joan
Eldred Janet
Emanuel Jane
Ensfield Robert & Kay
Erikson Robert & Sandy
Everett Dick & Juanita
Flynn Thomas
Ford Todd & Stacy
Forrester Alan & Mary
Foss Enos & Teresa
Furgason David & Stacey
Furgason William & Esther
Garber Amy
Granchi Mike & Denise

Grosser Gerald & Nellie
Grubka Debbie
Guichelaar Philip & Alyce
Hall Andrew & Evie
Hanchar Alexander
Harris Judith
Harrison Charles & Richard Jager
Hartgerink Jay & Ruth
Hobbs George & Janeene
Hunt Fred & Charlene
Jackel Jonathan
Jariwala Adelfa
Jones Gerald & Sharon
Kiker Karen
Klinge Jerome & Dorothy
Kropf Rob & Jean
Kucinski Bob & Debbie
Kuiper Jane
Kulpa Mike & Gloria
Lang Beverley
Lapointe Judy
Laporte Larry & Judy
Lemmer Paul & Elaine
Liby Raymond & Jill
Linn David & Karolyn
Lutz Larry & Tricia
Malz Donald & Diane
Marshburn Michael & Janet
Martin Thomas Jr & Karen
McGavin David & Janine
Miller Ken & Nancy
Morrison Constance
Nelson Norman & Carol
Nelson Charles & Jim Weessies
Nelson Mark & Nell
Nuyen Eric
Ohlmann Daniel & Christy
Osborne Charles & Marge
Pelc Ronald & Diane
Phillips Thom & Lane
Pochyla Gerald & Inez
Pratt Christopher & Tracie Allen
Predum BJ & Leah
Robertson Keith & Ardath
Rudge Craig
Scott Tom & Gay

Semenczuk Harry & Arline
Simonton Julia
Slager Douglas & Deb
Smith Orville & Linda
Somers Brian
Stephens Mike
Stickland Timothy
Suess Alan & Norma
Taylor Dan & Beth
Taylor Kyle & Joy
Thompson Brad & Susan
Ufkes Robert & Dorothy
Vanderhorst Tom & Janie
Vandermay Jack & Betty
Vandermay Brian & Tracy
Vandermay Bill & Joyce
Vandyk Marvin & Jelene
Vanness Timm & Jane
Vanwalbeck Craig & Patti
Wahl Bill & Elaine
Warner Carol
Waterhouse Edward & Helen
Watson Barbara
Watson William
Wheatley Tom & Theresa
Willard Louis & Pauline
Williams Chuck & Becky
Woods Thomas & Sharon
Wylie Jackie
Zehner Tom & Pat
Zull John & Arlene