



**WEST LAKE IMPROVEMENT
ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER**

August, 2005

**Everyone is Invited to the
West Lake Picnic
Saturday, August 13
3:00 to 7:00 PM**

On the shore of the channel at the northwest corner of the lake.

Meet your neighbors from around the lake, play bocce ball, and win the West Lake 2005 Culinary Award with your special dish. Kids can swing on West Lake's longest swing. Adults can win a gift certificate from one of the West Lake stores in the prize drawing!

Hot dogs, popsicles, lemonade and basic table service will be provided. (Hot dogs will be served at 5:00.)

Bring lawn chairs, a dish to share (chips and dip, salsa, mac & cheese, shrimp, brownies, whatever) and your own beverages - pop, beer.

If you come by water you can beach your boat at one of first three houses (Guichelaar, VanderMay, Behm). If you come by land, park on Barberry and walk through at 706, 716 or 734 Barberry. Handicapped parking - up the driveway at 734 Barberry.

Food, porta-potty and miscellaneous expenses will be paid by the
West Lake Improvement Association.

For more information, call
Harley & Mary Ellen Behm
Bill & Joyce VanderMay
Phil & Alyce Guichelaar

Rain date - None

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I am sure everyone is enjoying the lake. I know that I am. Last Friday night some friends came to the dock in their pontoon to take my wife and I for a night cruise around the lake. What a beautiful sunset and great times with friends. I believe these are reasons why most of us live on the lake.

Earlier this week all of us were greeted by our weed assessments from the city. The twenty-five dollars is a small cost for managing our lake environment. Just last year the assessment was over sixty dollars. I wasn't living on the lake in the late 1970's, when the weeds were winning the war. But I can tell you that the lake residents are now winning; winning by having a nice lake that is desirable and winning by having property values that are skyrocketing up. This change didn't happen by accident.

West Lake residents are very fortunate to have a strong, organized lake association (WLIA) represent them. The lake association is the voice of the lake residents that is heard by the City.

Our lake association needs your help now. Over the next couple weeks our board members will walk door-to-door seeking more families to become paid members of the lake association. I was asked what the lake association does? The WLIA welcomes new residents to the lake with a Welcome Packet and manages the lake treatment program by purchasing lake quality surveys; getting permits, working the herbicide applicator, and arranging contracts with the city.

Currently the WLIA is reviewing the city's plan for the Storm Water drains that empty into our lake. They also generate 4 newsletters annually to keep lake residents informed and sponsors the Annual Picnic for the lake residents. The WLIA also is working with local and state government to protect our lake.

Membership "dues" are a great investment into your lake property.

Our lake association is very frugal with the money generated from membership. This past year we have cut costs significantly on postage and printing by having one of our Directors print the newsletters and other Directors hand-delivering them. Not only do we benefit with lower costs, but this method allows better interaction between residents and board members.

So I am asking you to **support** the WLIA.

For those of you who have already renewed your membership... **Thank you.**

by Patrick Duggan – WLIA President

IMPORTANT BOATING LAWS:

(Loosely interpreted.... Refer to the Boating Safety Handbook for the *actual* language!!)

NOTE: There have been MANY complaints about boaters IGNORING (or being UNAWARE of...) some VERY BASIC safety and courtesy rules. If you are *new* to boating or have "forgotten" the rules, PLEASE read and heed the Boating Safety Handbook (link at end of this article.)

I would like to ask that we ALL follow the laws and operate safely to prevent someone getting injured. Also, please be considerate of others around you by watching your distances and wake!

Riding on Bow is illegal if the vessel is not equipped with bow seating and the vessel is operating at greater than slow-no wake speed. Persons are also not allowed to ride on the gunwale. While underway, persons on a vessel cannot sit, stand, or walk on any portion of a vessel not designed for that purpose. It is not only illegal, but dangerous.

Improper Direction is defined as the failure to operate in a counter-clockwise direction except in areas marked by well-defined channels or rivers.

Improper Distance: You are **NOT** to operate above slow-no wake speed **within 100 feet of:**

- A dock or raft
- Any moored or anchored vessel
- A shoreline (if operating in water less than 3 feet deep)
- Any marked swimming area or person(s) in the water.

In addition, if operating at greater than slow-no wake speed, PWCs (personal water craft) must:

- Stay at least 200 feet from any Great Lakes' shoreline
- Not cross within 150 feet behind another vessel other than another PWC

Times of use for PWCs: It is illegal to operate a PWC between one hour before sunset and 8:00 AM

The West Lake Association hereby disclaims any responsibility or claims relative to your application or

interpretation of the regulations. You are ultimately responsible for knowing the rules as they exist under the Marine Safety Act.

See www.boat-ed.com/mi/handbook/ for additional information.

by Mike Granchi

SWIMMERS ITCH

Please be aware that Goose droppings are a large contributor to Swimmers Itch in the lake. If you take the time and effort to pick up Goose droppings, PLEASE **DO NOT** dump them in the lake. This action will increase the odds of Swimmers Itch. THANKS!

STILL...MOVIN' ON UP...

So far this year there have been 2 homes sold and/or sales pending on West Lake. They ranged in price from \$132,500-\$249,900. Last year a total of 8 homes sold. Currently there are 4 homes "For Sale" on West Lake with asking prices ranging from \$119,900-\$337,000.

Our local Kalamazoo Real Estate Market is extremely close to last years' historical record pace. There were 2,262 homes sold so far this year as compared to last years' record breaker of 2,306. There has been a noticeable shift in the number of homes listed so far this year as compared to last year. This year the number of homes listed since 1/01/05 is 5,536 as compared to 2004's number of 5,099. That's an increase of 8.5%.

I'm not quite sure of the rhyme or reason other than we've had 2 record breaking years in a row which may have satisfied some of the supply and demand. The mortgage interest rates are still helping to sustain our sales pace. The current mortgage rates are: 5.0%-5.5% for 15 year fixed rates; and 5.25%-5.75% for 30 year fixed rates. If you've been thinking of making a move or refinancing NOW is the right time! Take advantage of these low rates while there still here.

If any of you have any newsworthy items pertaining to West Lake please send an email to Bill Witek, Prudential Preferred Realtors: billwitek@pprmi.com or call Bill at 327-3939. Also, if there are any other real estate items you'd like Bill to include in future newsletters please let him know. He is one of our lakefront neighbors and has specialized in lakefront properties for over 21 years. If any of you or someone you know are thinking of selling now or in the near future and would like to get a FREE

Home Valuation with no obligation call Bill NOW at 327-3939. Bill can also answer any of your real estate questions.

ANNUAL FERTILIZER REMINDER:

FERTILIZING YOUR LAWN

When you want your lawn or garden to grow faster and greener, you usually put fertilizer on it to increase the nutrients available to the plants. As a West Lake property owner, you may be providing fertilizer to the nearby water and not just to your lawn.

Almost anything you put on the ground on your lakefront property will reach our lake. When nutrient levels increase in a body of water, the plants in that lake react just like the plants in your garden--they grow faster.

You can have an attractive lawn and garden on a lakefront property without harming the lake. The trick is to keep the fertilizer where you want it--on your grass. Instead of having your lawn slope down all the way to the waters edge, provide a buffer strip a couple of feet wide along the water where you leave natural vegetation or plant deeply rooted plants that will remove the nutrients from the soil. This buffer strip will also help stabilize the shoreline and prevent runoff.

When planting a new lawn, choose a variety of grass that needs less nitrogen, thereby requiring less fertilizer to keep your lawn healthy. Fescue, for example, requires only 1/2 to 1/3 as much nitrogen as a lawn of bluegrass. Additionally, the experts say it is better to use small amounts of fertilizer several times than to use a large amount once. That way most of the fertilizer is used by the plants and won't run off into the lake; you'll save money and you'll protect the lake.

A fertilizer recommended and claimed "safe" for lakefront usage is available at Romence Garden Center. Also, all-natural fertilizers are available throughout the area. They contain 30% water-soluble nitrogen, no phosphorous (that's the real culprit in aquatic weed growth) and 20% potassium. A spot-aerosol is recommended for weeds rather than a "weed-n-feed" application.

REMEMBER: The value of your waterfront property depends largely on the quality of the water in the lake. By planning how you will manage your lawn and garden, you and your neighbors can protect your investment for yourselves and the future.

IT'S WORTH IT!

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

WEST LAKE CLASSIFIEDS

1987 Sea Nymph CC191, 19 foot Aluminum Boat with 140 hp Evenrude. Includes E-Z Loader Trailer. \$4000 or best offer. Call Mike

UPCOMING "LAKESCAPING" TRENDS

Editors Note: (... is repeated from previous newsletter)

There is a new "trend" in landscaping lake frontage that appears to be finally taking hold among riparians across the country. I first heard about it several years ago at a Michigan Lakes and Streams Conference and dismissed it with a "not in my lifetime" However, as time has passed and I've developed a better understanding of watershed management and lake ecology, I've come to the realization that this way of managing lakefront

property "makes sense" and is something that I am very interested in pursuing on our own property.

I don't expect everyone to "agree" with this way of managing lake frontage, but it is worthy of some consideration. In particular, those of you considering installing a metal or plastic "hard" seawall may want to spend a little time checking this out. It is considerably less expensive, requires less maintenance (lawn cutting and sand replacement) and is much better for the lake ecosystem than the man-made systems.

If you are interested in seeing what is being described here, the Kellogg Biological Station, 3700 E. Gull Lake Drive, Hickory Corners, MI 49060. has 400 feet of frontage on Gull Lake divided into four areas to simulate four different lake lots. Each lot demonstrates a different alternative shoreline landscape, or lakescape. A variety of more natural erosion control methods are also demonstrated. Interpretive signage will help visitors better understand each lakescape design and its ecological benefits.

I would encourage you to take a look and see if it is something that you would be interested in doing on your own property. (You can contact Jane Herbert at KBS at (269) 671-2412 x 222 or Barb Ledesma, Gull Lake Quality Organization at (269) 629-5411.)

WHY LAKESCAPE?

" Creating a more natural shoreline area can greatly enhance the enjoyment and beauty of your lakeshore, while improving and protecting one of the home owner's most valuable assets - the lake itself.

A more natural shoreline area - wildflowers, native trees and shrubs - require less watering, maintenance and chemical inputs than traditional turf lawns. It provides habitat for fish, frogs, birds and other interesting shoreline animals year round. The deep roots of native plants stabilize shoreline areas and reduce erosion from waves and ice.

Lakescaping can also protect the lake itself. Fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides can turn clear water murky and weedy, contaminate or kill fish and cover the water's surface with smelly algae. Creative

alternative landscaping can keep these elements out of ground and lake water.

Like a garden, one should note that patience is important in establishing a more natural shoreline. It will take a few years to reach it's full potential of beauty and effectiveness, but the rewards will be worth the wait" (quote from KBS Project Lakescaping update, Fall, 2004)

There are several contractors and suppliers that are ramping up to meet the growing demand. You can get information from the KBS while you are there.

I have copied the information below from a publication of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Wisconsin Lakes Partnership, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Association of Lakes, and The River Alliance of Wisconsin website, and I will have more info in future newsletters.

THANKS!!

The Shoreland Tour

(Cont'd from last newsletter):

Aquatic Habitat

Shorelands protect aquatic habitat by improving the quality of adjacent waters through shading, filtering, and moderating water flow. For cold-water fisheries such as trout streams, trees or tall grasses shade the stream channel. Shade maintains cooler, more constant temperatures, especially on small streams. Cooler water holds more oxygen, and reduces stress on fish and other aquatic creatures. A few degrees difference in temperature can have a major effect on their survival. Warm-water fisheries do not require as much shade, but the fish and aquatic insects still benefit from the cleaner water filtered through natural shorelands. In fact, most game fish in Wisconsin are sight feeders and do best in clean water. Leaves, twigs, and other organic matter from shoreland vegetation are both lunch and breeding grounds for aquatic insects. These insects in turn feed many others up the food chain. Besides providing insects with the food and cover they need, trees supply woody cover in lakes and streams, such as fallen logs and branches that fish use for places to rest and hide from predators. Birds and turtles also use the woody cover along the shore as resting places

and basking spots. The rich diversity of emergent, floating and submergent plants found just offshore provide important habitat for aquatic animals. Some fish, like bluegills, graze directly on the leaves and stems of these aquatic plants, while other fish feed off the bugs and other delicacies found The Shoreland living on or beneath the plants. These shallow plant beds are also important spawning areas for a number of fish including bass, bluegills, and northern pike. Aquatic plants also offer food, shelter and nesting materials for waterfowl, shorebirds and aquatic mammals such as mink and muskrats. Beds of aquatic plants hide young ducklings from predators and provide protection from wave action. Common loons also depend on these plants to build their mounded nests.

Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat

Shorelands are a place of transition where all manner of creatures from land, air and water live together. This area has the unique ability to support species from both adjacent uplands and waterways. As roads and houses creep into shoreland areas, the behavior, reproduction, and survival of animals can be affected as human activities and structures degrade the surrounding wildlife habitat. Although researchers have estimated that animal habitat can be affected up to 1,500 feet away from human activities and structures, it may not be realistic to provide such a wide berth. But preserving and restoring shoreland vegetation can help limit the impact of these disturbances, which might include subtle changes in vegetation and animal travel patterns. In other words, how you manage your shoreline will determine how attractive it is to birds, frogs, turtles and other wildlife. Recommendations on shoreland habitat widths vary, depending on the animal and its needs. General recommendations to preserve wildlife habitat vary from 30 feet to over 300 feet, with some recommendations exceeding 1,500 feet. If you look at needs of specific animals, 30 feet will suffice for muskrats feeding and denning, while at least 100 feet to more than 300 feet will satisfy most of the needs of frogs and turtles. For wood ducks, 250 to 600 feet will provide nesting area. Wood duck nests, on average, are located about 250 feet from water. Size is not the only factor limiting the use of shorelands by wildlife. The quality of the shoreland—the vegetation structure and composition—is also important. Wood ducks, for example, use trees with a

minimum diameter of 14 inches (at breast height) for nesting, but prefer trees between 24 and 30 inches in diameter, while kingfishers use shrub cover along the water to conceal their broods. If these vital shoreland habitats are not protected, many shoreland-dependent species, including birds, frogs, mammals and reptiles, will disappear and can eventually be lost from entire lake and river systems. Recreation and Aesthetics Shoreland vegetation can be especially valuable in providing a "green screen" along waterways, blocking views of nearby development, and allowing privacy for waterfront property owners. Shoreland buffers can enhance such recreational activities as bird watching, hiking and camping. They can also provide the time to enjoy these hobbies because natural shorelands require less maintenance than traditional lawns and gardens. They can also act as a noise buffer to a certain degree.

Property Values

Restored shorelands increase property values. One study found that home values near stream restoration projects were 3% to 13% higher than similar homes on unrestored streams. The perceived value of the restored streams included the enhanced shoreland buffer, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities resulting from the restoration. Another study found that good water quality, which natural shorelands help to protect, added as much as \$200 per frontage foot to the value of shoreland properties.

LOCAL MERCHANT SPOTLIGHT:

MOVIE STARS - Movies and Games

Watched a good movie lately? Tired of paying the high prices at the theaters? Stop in and pick up a rental at one of our supporting merchants - Movie Stars, located just a couple of blocks North of West Lake.

Owner, Chuck Minor, invites to you stop by and browse over his selection of the most recent releases, as well as those you've just got to see again, but haven't thought of in years.

For only \$3.50, you and your family can escape the heat of the summer or cold of the winter with your favorite flicks. And if you rent a movie on Mondays or Wednesdays, you can rent one and get one free! The Tuesday special is one free game with the rental of one game.

Don't see what you want? You can always place a special order on those hard to find movies. And don't forget about the children's section. Disney is a sure fire way to keep the kids happy and occupied for hours!

A favorite activity of mine is to stop by and purchase a movie at a reasonable price. I've built quite a library of my favorite movies I can watch over and over.

Chuck has been servicing our area for eight years. He's open seven days a week, and has generously offered a coupon for a free movie to all new residents on West Lake.

Thank You Chuck for helping support the West Lake Improvement Association.

- By Jane Emanuel

**HAVE A
HAPPY
AND
SAFE
SUMMER!**

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

There has been a SIGNIFICANT breakthrough in the funneling/keyholing challenge regarding road-end usage for lake access. The Higgins Lake Property Owners Association has prevailed in court (once again) and there is now a clear precedent regarding the usage of road ends. The next step in this process is to pass legislation so riparians do not have to *sue* to have their rights "enforced".

Currently, the legislation (HB 4576) has been referred out of committee, but the Speaker of the House seems to be reluctant to bring it to the floor of the House for a vote. The Michigan Waterfront Alliance and the WLIA are asking that you contact our State House Representative (Jack Hoogendyk - jackhoogendyk@house.mi.gov) and the Speaker of the House (Craig DeRoche craigderoche@house.mi.gov) to ask Mr. DeRoche to bring the bill to the floor for a vote and Mr. Hoogendyk to vote "yes" to pass the bill.

Here is a copy of the letter from the Michigan Waterfront Alliance regarding this issue:

May 23, 2005

Dear Michigan Waterfront Alliance, Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, and Michigan Lake & Stream Associations Individual Members.

In recent months one of our partner Lake Associations, the Higgins Lake Property Owners Association, has been successful in court, prevailing in several cases involving funneling to the lake and the enforcement of public road end court rulings. Most recently, Judge Baumgartner in Roscommon Circuit Court ruled that Lyon Township violated the Michigan Court of Appeals ruling on public road ends by enacting their Lateral Road Ordinance (#53), which permitted boats/hoists at public road ends. Not only did the Judge strike down the ordinance, he held Lyon Township in contempt and he ordered Lyon Township to pay legal fees.

This is a great victory for all the Lakes and Streams throughout Michigan!

The road end battle at Higgins Lake has set precedent for all of Michigan's lakes and streams. Currently the only way for you and/or your lake association to fight road end abuse at your lake or stream is to take abusive individual or local government to court.

That is why the next step is to enact legislation to codify what the courts have ruled. By passing House Bill 4576 as the Michigan Public Lake Access Assurance Act, Michigan's lakes and streams associations and Michigan waterfront owners will prevent militant people who own off-lake lots from attempting to seize public road ends at certain lakes for their own private marinas to the exclusion of the public. By junking up these public access properties with private docks, shorestations, permanent boat moorings, and other private structures, they are preventing members of the general public from utilizing the public road ends for what they were intended to be used for – walking to and from the lake, fishing, swimming, and similar activities.

I ask that each and every Michigan lake and stream association encourage their individual members to contact their local House Representative in support of HB 4576, sponsored by Representative John Stakoe. I also ask for each individual past and present Michigan Waterfront Alliance member and each individual Michigan Lake and Stream Associations member do the same. If you do not know the phone number or email address of your legislator, call your MWA lobbyist, Kindsvatter & Associates at 517-485-7711 and they will give you the information you need.

Tell your legislator what has been going on at road ends at Higgins Lake and other lakes in Michigan and why individuals should not be permitted to take over public road ends for their own personal use and convenience. This legislation keeps the road ends public and ensures equal access for all to Michigan's lakes and streams.

We also need financial support for this upcoming full court legislative press! Please be generous and send a check to MWA. If you need a speaker for your Board or your membership meetings on this (we

have the Higgins Lake Powerpoint Road End presentation available) or other MWA legislative issues, please contact MWA office at Kindsvatter & Associates, Phone 517-596-7711.

Make checks payable to Michigan Waterfront Alliance and send to” Michigan Waterfront Alliance, P.O.Box 204, Long Lake, MI 48743.

Thank You,

Bob Frye,
President, Michigan Waterfront Alliance

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		
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