



WEST LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

May, 2006

WLIA ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

May 23rd
Portage Public Library.
6:45pm

*We will be discussing two Storm Drain Projects at the West End of the lake.
You will NOT want to miss this discussion!!*

*We will be electing new Board members.
Hope to see you there!*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wow! The 2005-2006 year for the West Lake Improvement Association is nearly over. My how time flies when you are having fun, and fun is what the current board has experienced. It has been a very busy and productive year with a lot of successes.

Over the last year, WLIA Board of Directors has worked to partner with the city planners and engineers to make some needed improvements to our watershed environment. Through this process, the WLIA has become an organization that is being used by the city as an "example" of cooperative lake associations.

Currently, there are plans being made to construct new storm drains at several locations around the lake.

These improvements will significantly reduce contaminants and nutrients that are entering our lake. Close to 85% of our water enters the lake through these storm drains. It is very important to improve the storm water quality coming into our lake to improve the overall lake water quality.

WLIA wants a healthy clean lake, and that's our number one priority.

The Austin Lake Dam and the Extension Drain into West Lake are on-going projects. A meeting at City Hall will take place soon to hear from lake owners and to determine the assessments.

The Extension Drain will naturally filter incoming water and increase the quantity of water entering the lake to help maintain lake levels during the

summer. The Directors are working with the Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner to help clear the land and increase the size of the planned water-catch basin. This is a win-win situation and the WLIA Board fully supports the project.

The WLIA Board has followed the House Bill preventing "back-lotters" from unlawful use of the road ends and walkways. This has been a common abuse on our lake and will be coming to an end soon.

Non-riparians can access West Lake by using the boat launch at Shady Lane for daily access rather than having an illegal dock and boatlift at road ends and walkways. The House Bill allows for local Law Enforcement to levy fines for violations of the law. The Michigan Lakes and Streams Association has said the fines can be as high as \$500 dollars for each violation.

Lake weed treatment will take place in late May to early June and will be done again by Aquatic Services. They will post water restrictions on each land parcel the day they apply the herbicides.

Lastly, I'd like to thank every current and past Board member of WLIA. Without your dedication and help our lake would be a weed filled, undesirable lake with low property values. I am very happy to be a resident of West Lake and think our lake has made a drastic transformation from "Weed Lake" to the beautiful resource that it is today!

Thank you,
Patrick Duggan

ARE YOU A NEW RESIDENT ON WEST LAKE?

If you are, please contact Jane Emanuel, to get your welcome visit and packet of goodies.

WEST LAKE CLASSIFIEDS:

Do you have something to sell after cleaning out the garage, basement or attic? List it here for FREE!

Send your items to wliamike@charter.net to have them listed in the next newsletter.

A MESSAGE FROM THE WLIA VICE-PRESIDENT:

I wanted to let everyone on the lake know how the Board has changed over the years.

I have been on the Board for a few years now, and I feel the Board is going in a whole new direction.

In the past, we have been focused on making sure all of the people that *should* be on our tax rolls, were actually *on the rolls*.

We were very interested in the people that did not live on the lake that thought they had riparian access. Some of those issues have been resolved, some have not. There is legislation in the State House right now, looking at this issue.

We also were very aware of the weed problem, and have been attacking that problem with chemicals. Some years were more effective than others. We have sufficient funds to treat the lake as we deem necessary.

The current Board has changed direction in the feeling about how to treat the unwanted nutrients. We are going to partner with both the Drain Commissioner and the City to change the way storm sewers drain into the lake. Of the many sewers that contribute to the pollution coming into the lake, we are going to help both entities make better use of those sewers.

I am asking all riparians to come to the Annual Meeting to see what we are accomplishing.

See you there, Portage Library, May 23.

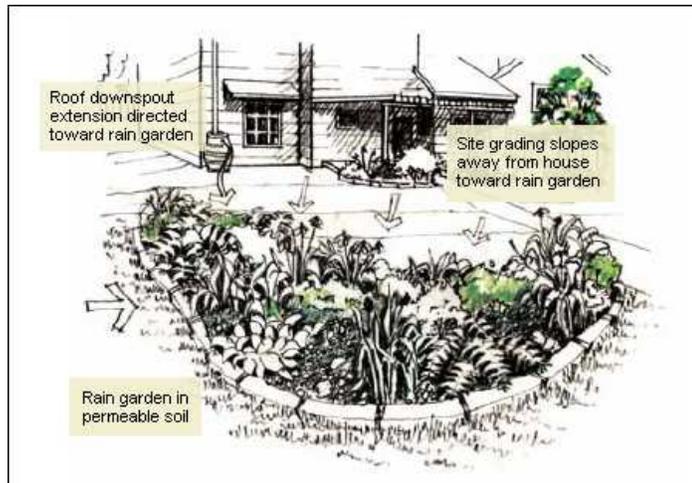
By Ralph Colwell-Vice President

WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN AND WHY DO WE CARE??

(Come to the Annual Meeting to find out!!)

Rain gardens are a way for homeowners as well as businesses to participate in the reduction of polluted runoff, simply by planting a specialized garden. Rain

Gardens are an infiltration technique - water is captured in a garden that features native plantings, and the water has a chance to slowly filter into the ground rather than run off into the storm sewer. It is a popular way to reduce non-point source pollution and has been popular along the East Coast for a number of years.



WHAT EVERY LAKEFRONT OWNER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT LAWN CARE

Last fall the Michigan State University Extension office taught a class on Lakescaping to protect and improve lake quality. During the class, Emelee Rajzer the Consumer Horticulture Educator made several recommendations for lawn care and fertilizer that I thought would benefit all riparians.

How you landscape and how you care for your landscape can affect your lake quality. Never burn yard waste or feed wildlife near shore as these activities can add nutrients to the lake to promote vegetation growth.

Phosphorus from lawns and landscapes can and will promote algae growth. One pound of phosphorus equals 700 pounds of algae. This is definitely a battle that we don't want to fight. Soil tests show high levels of phosphorus in the Kalamazoo County area. What can you do to protect water quality? Emelee says smart lawn care practices for cleaner water are called for. Avoid applying fertilizer to roads and driveways.

Use fertilizer that contains zero phosphorus. (The middle number should be zero. Example 30-0-30.)

When fertilizing stay 15 feet away from water's edge.

Here is the ideal lawn fertilization calendar according to MSU Extension (listed by date order followed by order of importance in (parens).)

- April 15 thru May 15 (third)
- June 10 thru July 5 (fourth)
- August 15 thru September 15 (most important time period)
- October 30 thru November 15 (second)

Additional Suggestions:

Crabgrass prevention applied April 15 through May 15

Broadleaf control: May 15 through June 15 and a second time September 5 through November 5

There are two optimal times for seeding lawns, they are April 15 through May 25 and August 15 to September 30

Grub control needs to be done July 1 to July 25

For a thick, deep rooted and weed-free lawn, keep your mowing height above three inches.

Have a great summer enjoying your nice lawn on your clean, healthy lake!

By Patrick Duggan

West Lake Water Quality Study

Ralph Colwell, Vice President of the West Lake Improvement Association, told the Board at their April 18 meeting that the Sustainable Community Watershed Endowment Fund of The Kalamazoo Community Foundation has awarded WLIA a \$1,000 grant to assess the water quality in our lake. The funds, augmented with \$500 from the assessment fund balance, will be used to sample the water in

West Lake to find the locations of unwanted nutrients.

At regular intervals over the course of this summer, water samples will be analyzed for oil, grease, suspended solids, phosphorus, nitrogen, potassium, E-coli, and total organic carbon. Additional water samples will be taken during and after heavy rain storms to determine phosphorus input to the lake from the several storm sewers that flow into the lake carrying lawn fertilizer. Phosphorus is the most important contributor to lake bottom plant growth, especially invasive plants such as Eurasian Water Milfoil and Curly Leaf Pondweed.

We will report the data in upcoming issues of the newsletter. We are also joining over 200 lakes across Michigan in the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program to measure the lake transparency each week by Secchi Disc and to analyze the phosphorus content in early spring and mid-August. The data from all of the lakes will be published in early 2007.

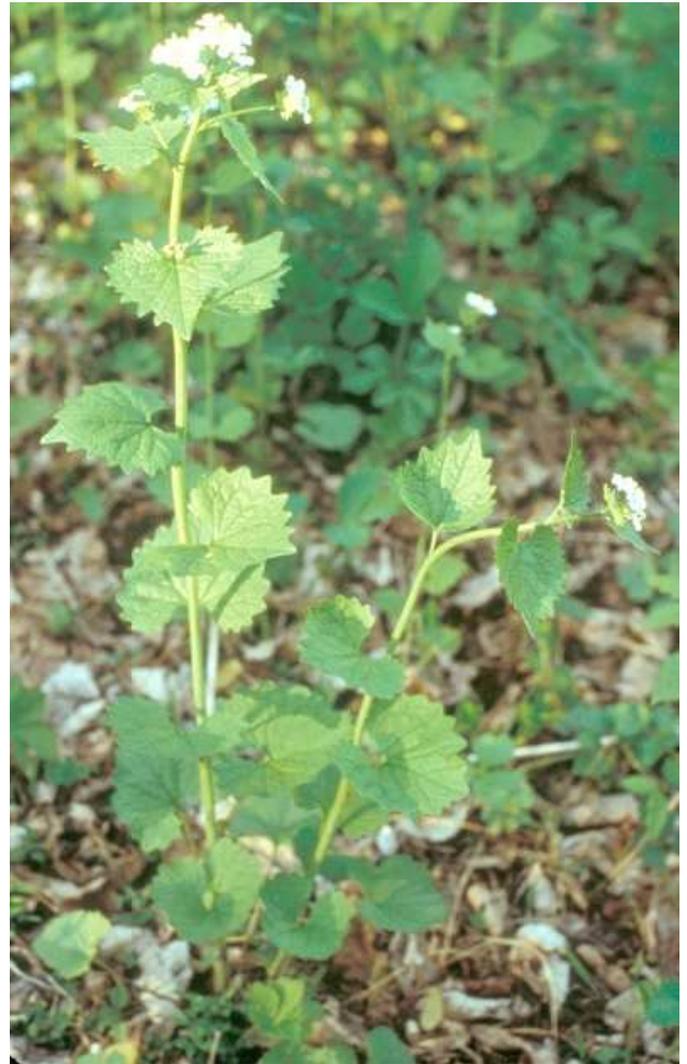
By Phil Guichelaar

INVASIVE PLANT ALERT

Destroy the garlic mustard plants on your property now! You can identify garlic mustard plants by their pretty white flowers that are at the top of 12 to 24 inch stems. Their light green, serrated leaves smell like garlic when rubbed between your fingers.

Robert Heyd of the Michigan DNR Forest Monitoring Unit reported at the recent Michigan Lakes & Streams Association Conference that newly published studies show that this plant produces enzymes that kill the soil fungi necessary for continued growth of hardwood trees. Scientists have known for many years that garlic mustard will crowd out all other herbaceous plants, including wildflowers, in a few years. Deer won't eat the plants but butterfly larva do and promptly die.

So, search and destroy! Pull the plants and roots out of the ground and bag them for your weekly lawn refuse collection, cut the stems off at ground level, or apply vegetation killer such as Roundup. For pictures that will help you identify the plant, go to: <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/allipeti.html>



By Phil Guichelaar

LAZER LAND

Now is the time to find out what thousands of area residents have already discovered**LAZER LAND!!!!** And it's right here in our own West Lake neighborhood!

Lazer Land, a long time supporter of the West Lake Welcome packets, and part of the local Portage Street merchants' Magnificent Mile, caters to all who enjoy this Christian operated family entertainment center.

Lazer Land was created seven years ago by **Rick Jean and Mike DeRyder** who wanted to provide wholesome entertainment to families, specializing in birthday parties and group outings, or to those just

wanting to try out their unique 18 hole miniature golf course.

Indoors awaits a game room complete with air hockey, pinball, video games and a prize counter redemption center. Oh yes, when hunger pains strike, simply stroll over to the snack bar for refreshments.

No need to fight the traffic on Westnedge to find your fun and entertainment! **Lazer Land** is just a few minutes away from home, open seven days a week. So get the kids away from the TV and come on over to see what fun awaits, right in your own neighborhood. For the newcomers on the lake, this is the time to use your coupon so generously donated by Rick and Mike.

Lazer Land: 8302 Portage Rd
324-8129

Hours: Monday - Thursday	Noon - 10 pm
Friday	noon - 11 pm
Saturday	10 am - midnight.
Sunday	1 - 10 pm

By Jane Emanuel

THANK YOU TO OUR LOCAL MERCHANTS

The following merchants make contributions to our West Lake Welcome Packet that we pass out to new residents. Please be sure to show your support for their businesses!!

Daane's Party Store
Educational Community Credit Union
Erbelli's Pizza
5th 3rd Bank
H & B Market
Lazer Land
L & J Hobbies
Movie Stars
Polderman's Florist and Garden Center
West Lake Drug

West Lake Productions - Complete Corporate and Event Videography. Call Mike for more info.

HERO ON WEST LAKE

Hero is a term used far too frequently and often improperly.

Who is a hero? What is a hero? Where is the hero? These questions must be answered to meet most requirements for a good newspaper article. Thank goodness that this isn't the newspaper and I don't make a career writing newspaper articles.

Webster's dictionary states that a hero is a courageous valorous man. Sometimes even they can't get it right. Our hero is a 10 year- old boy who heard the cry for help last summer and sprang into action quickly to rescue two teenagers from the lake. I heard this awesome story during our last West Lake Picnic and just knew that this story had to be shared with all our lake residents.

Brian Vandermay heard 2 girls screaming on the lake last summer and grabbed his mom and headed for the fishing boat. Brian is the oldest son of Brian and Tracy Vandermay of Lakeview Drive. Our hero Brian fired up his 6 horse powered motor with mother in tow and headed to the rescue. This rescue needed Brian, as his mother Tracy didn't know how to operate the fishing boat motor. Evidently, the girls were stranded in their boat in the middle of the lake and couldn't get anyone's attention. The girls jumped into the lake without their life jackets on and began swimming to shore. One was struggling to swim and the other appeared strong enough of a swimmer to make shore. Handling the boat was a piece of cake as Brian had learned boater safety and honed his skills with Grandpa Vandermay and his dad Brian. In a short time, Brian and his mother had rescued the weaker swimmer and provided aid to the other swimmer who was determined to swim to shore. Brian's parents stated that "they are very proud of their son for rescuing the swimmers and for being such a responsible driver."

I guess that Webster's dictionary did have it mostly right. A hero is a courageous, valorous boy. Thank goodness that West Lake has a hero on duty. Brian was rewarded with a chocolate cake, which is his favorite. When asked who his hero was, Brian quickly said "his grandpa." So, we have 2 heroes on the lake as Grandpa Bill Vandermay lives on Barberry. Hero Brian also said he hopes not to have to rescue any more people.

Several lessons can be learned here. As we come upon the boating season, please remember to follow all boating safety rules. The West Lake Improvement Association is equally proud of Brian and wishes to congratulate him for his heroic deed. Thank you very much and we're proud to have you on the lake.

By Patrick Duggan

IT'S THE LAW: ON THE WATER WITH YOUR VESSEL

Here are some Michigan regulations that apply when vessel operators are on the water.

Unlawful and Dangerous Operation

Michigan law designates these dangerous operating practices as illegal:

Reckless Operation of a vessel or reckless manipulation of water skis, a surfboard, or similar device is defined as that which disregards the safety or rights of others or endangers the person or property of others. Some examples are:

- Weaving your vessel through congested waterway traffic or swerving at the last possible moment in order to avoid collision
- Jumping the wake of another vessel unnecessarily close to the other vessel or when visibility around the other vessel is restricted
- Chasing, harassing or disturbing wildlife with your vessel
- Causing damage from the wake of your vessel

Failure to Regulate Speed is operating a vessel at speeds that may cause danger to life or property of any other person or speeds that will not permit you to bring your vessel to a safe stop. It is illegal to operate a vessel:

- In excess of 55 mph except if at least one mile offshore of the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair

- At greater than slow-no wake speed if any person is in the bow of a vessel without proper seating
- Faster than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions (weather, vessel traffic, etc.)

Improper Distance is operating at greater than slow-no wake speed (except in channels which are not posted) and such that the vessel or persons being towed are within 100 feet of:

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

In addition, if operating at greater than slow-no wake speed, PWCs must:

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

"Slow-No Wake Speed" - The slowest speed at which it is still possible to maintain steering and does not create a wake.

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

Boating in Restricted Areas is defined as operating within a restricted area clearly marked by buoys, beacons, diver down flags, etc.

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.

**HAVE A GREAT MEMORIAL
DAY AND BE SAFE**

2006 WLIA MEMBERSHIP FORM

I want to be a member of the West Lake Association for 2006 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		

Plan now to attend the Annual West Lake Picnic at the beginning of the Barberrry Channel. The date is Aug 12 and we'll start around 3pm. Hot dogs will be served at 5pm

This is a great way to meet your neighbors and establish some long lasting friendships!!
Bring your favorite dish to pass - you could win the West Lake Culinary Award!!