

Lake of The Woods NEWSLETTER

September 2003

Volume 2 Issue 2

A message from your New President

Hi! My name is Bill Kiss and I'm over on Fritz Drive, right next to Doug and Marion Smith. I don't know how many of you know me, or if you weren't at the picnic and annual meeting whether you even know that I was elected President of your Association. Billy Satterfield stepped down due to personal considerations.

At a recent board meeting it was decided to support the Fire Department in their efforts to install dry hydrants on all sides of the lake. They only asked for our support not our financial help. Chief Barney Ives said our insurance fire rating should be knocked down several notches thereby lowering our rates. I'm sure you're all for that. The first hydrant will probably go in where we got the first okay, in the big channel, somewhere between Jr. & Helen Kooy's and Bob and Connie Johnson's, at the end of Lakeview Drive. The next hydrant will likely go in at the access at the end of 47th Street. In case you're wondering what a dry hydrant is, it's a pipe that goes into the water and will be under the ice in the winter. If there's a fire in the dead of winter in that area, when the lake is frozen, a hose can be stretched from the pumper to the hydrant and be filled without the time consuming chopping of a hole through the ice that the firemen now go through to get to the water. The fire department figured that 5 hydrants would be sufficient and we already have two locations, so we need 3 more. Something over in the Gaertig Subdivision and possibly West Drive. The Public Access is also being considered. If you think the area on your lakefront is a possibility give myself or one of our Officers a phone call and we'll pass it on to the Chief. All board members will be listed on page 3 of this newsletter.

We're also working on the weed problem. Chemicals were considered, but many of the members are against using that to control the weeds in the lake, plus it takes a heap of money. That's one of the reasons we decided to run a help wanted ad. We need more people able to run the cutter so more hours can be spent out there cutting. There isn't any 'good way' to rid the lake of weeds but we're doing the best we can. We really need a different weed cutter, ours is old, tired, wearing out and way past retirement age, but it's hard enough getting dues, much less getting enough dues to even pay for a used cutter. We're lucky we have Jr and Bob maintaining it. If everyone on our mailing list paid \$40.00 it would bring in \$10,000 plus dollars. If you added in the extra that some residents and all of the businesses pay it would swell to \$12,000 or more. What can I say, do the math!!!!

From The Vice President

The Association is again pleased to sponsor the annual Safe Boating Course in cooperation with the Van Buren County Sheriffs Department. **This is an advance notice, so you can mark your calendar for JUNE 19, 2004, AT THE WEBSTER LIBRARY IN DECATUR; FROM 8:00 AM TO 3:30 PM.** Details will be forthcoming in a future letter and in the paper. We encourage your participation at that time.

The course is open to everyone, and all persons between the ages of 14 and 25 years who expect to operate watercraft on Michigan waters are REQUIRED to have a valid Safe Boating Certificate. (Safe Boating Certificates are not only required for Michigan residents but also for anyone out of state born after December 31, 1978, using a JetSki on Michigan waters, .) This one day course will meet that requirement. Applicants must be a minimum of 12 years of age to participate.

I encourage all boat owners, who have never taken a safe boating course, to attend and learn the simple rules of the waterways and courteous boating procedures. This Association believes that educated boaters are safer boaters and that makes the boating experience more pleasurable for everyone.

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This year 30 enrolled, 29 actually attended and passed. I'd like to thank Roger Matten for taking over for me the day of the class. It was kind of a last minute thing and he did an excellent job with almost no time for preparation. Deputy Devon Krueger a member of the Sheriffs Department Marine Patrol conducted the class

From The Secretary/Treasurer

This year we've had a drop in our paid membership, from approximately 143 last year to 138 this year. While it's understood by every one that the good times have rolled on by, it's only good sense that says if you can afford to eat out just **once** in a years time, buy a new boat or jet ski, you should be able to support the lake that makes your property worth the price that some homes have sold for around Lake of the Woods. One can't dispute the fact that those of us fortunate enough to own and live in year around, or use on week ends and vacations, are indeed lucky people.

The weeds have been unbelievable this year. Our weed cutter took out over 37 loads and it seemed that as fast as they were cut new ones took their place.

Speaking of the weed cutter.....at our last board meeting it was decided as a last resort to place an ad in the local paper for two people, college age or retired, that would like a summer job. Our requests for paid volunteers didn't start a stampede and Jr and Bob need some help. It might look easy riding around the lake, but just ask them and they'll tell you it's not the hardest job in the world but it's not a piece of cake either. What are the benefits you ask??? well, you get to know a lot of your neighbors, you get a nice sun tan, lots of fresh air AND you get paid for having all that fun. If you're really lucky someone brings out a lunch or a cold beer or pop.

Besides annual dues, Michigan Lake & Streams (MLSA) is asking all Lake Associations to contribute at least \$1.00 per member, or more if it can be afforded. They are also asking individuals to consider joining, with memberships starting with Individual at \$35.00 (tax deduction) up to President's Club at \$1000.00. The \$35.00 membership receives the Riparian Magazine four time a year (it's a really interesting magazine), a Membership Newsletter plus Insurance Benefits. If you're interested in the future of Michigan lakes and streams or you just need a tax write off, we have the information for you. Your board members decided the Association would donate the \$1.00 per member rather than raise dues by a dollar. If you've never gone to the MLSA website give it a try, click on Region 3 and you'll find that lakes in Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren are represented, plus the minutes from the last Region 3 meeting are posted. Many of these lakes have their own websites you can click on. To get there use www.mlswa.org

We want to get a site up and running and member Craig Morey has offered his expertise, if we can ever all get together.

From The Membership Chairperson:

This year we had 138 paid memberships out of a possible 253 memberships. Granted, out of the 253 people on my list some are not living on the lake, and feel that they are not part of the association. The truth of the matter is that anyone using the lake should be aware of the fact that the function of the association is not a social one. The one social event planned during the year is also an annual meeting to give members an opportunity to discuss lake issues and concerns of people using the lake. The main focus of the association is to have a place where people can work together for the betterment of the lake,

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or if need be more voices to get an issue taken care of. Our main concern is the preservation of the lake. It is agreed that with all the extra usage of the lake in the recent years this is a vital concern.

The majority of the dues collected go towards keeping the weed cutter in operation. It has been in operation for many years now and it needs a lot of maintaining to keep it operating. If we didn't have this, some of the channels would not be accessible. We also have a dump truck and trailer to keep running, along with a small salary for the people that do keep things operational and run the weed cutter. Your board has been looking into ways we can afford buying a second hand cutter that is in good condition.

It has been discussed at meetings how we can identify up to date association members so that they will be the first ones that benefit from the weed cutters operation. It would not be something that we want to do, but with the cost of operation, and insurance rising every year, we need to determine who should benefit from it. It would certainly not be an action that we wish to take but to be truthful, although our responsibility is to the lake it also is to the people that support the work that we do on the lake. Saying that one pays taxes (and we are highly taxed) and that should be enough, is not an argument because none of the tax money helps maintain the lake.

Dues for the year 2004 are due in January, when a notice will be sent out. Please consider paying your fair share for the welfare of the lake. The dues requested are \$40, some pay more because of the amount of footage on the lake. We would be happy if everyone paid. We took a ride around the lake just to see if the property owners that don't pay have speed boats, pontoons or jet skis that they use on the lake. What we found out was really surprising, YOU DO!!!! That may seem a little underhanded but we're trying not to go the assessment route, where everybody pays, it would be on your tax bill if we go that way. So I guess what you have to ask yourself is, "what would I rather do, pay \$40.00 a year or an as yet unknown amount every year on my tax bill?" The weeds don't stop and the more contamination that goes into the lake to feed them, the more they grow. Think about it, and then if you'd like to keep things on a voluntary basis, send in your dues.

Thanks, Jan Roeder

2003-2004 Board Members	Bill Kiss, President 423-6592		
Larry Ralston, Vice President 423-8810		Char Martin, Sec/Treas	423-8692
Gary Douglas 423-7311		Jan Roeder	423-9222
Roger Mattens 344-5224		Joe Hillyer	423-8873
Andy Broekhuizen 423-7698		Billy Satterfield	423-8116

As with previous newsletters a list of active members is included on the last page.