

Crystal Lake Association Newsletter

June 2008

Board Members Term Expires

President	Peter "Chris" Mason Jr.	2008
Vice President	Theron Guild	2008
Secretary	Rena Ray	2010
Treasurer	Larry Fate	2009
Director	Steve Meinhardt	2010
Director	Dennis Woodworth	2008
Director	Jerry Stone	2010
Director	Mike Dyer	2008
Director	Jon Jenkins	2009
Director	Bill Tomlin	2009

Summer Events

- July 4th:** **Parade at 10:00 AM**
 Fireworks at 10:30 PM
- July 12th:** **Crystal Lake Association**
 Annual Meeting held at
 Crystal Sailing Club
 at 10:00 AM
- Aug 9th:** **Crystal Art Fest/Car Show**
 at the Park

STATE OF THE LAKE

This year, two events have arisen which I find personally disturbing. First, the placement of large green signs by the road commission at road ends ending at the lake prohibiting a large number of activities which have taken place at these locations for generations. Second, a lawsuit has been filed to close a road end.

Over the years the Association has endeavored to represent the rights of those with direct riparian rights and those with lake access. As an organization, with Board Members from both groups, we have felt that with mutual respect and cooperation, differences can be worked out without the necessity of bringing in governmental bodies or the judicial system. The costly and lengthy litigation which has occurred elsewhere (e.g. Houghton and Higgins Lakes) has been for the most part avoided.

As to the first matter, at our Memorial Day weekend meeting, the Board voted unanimously to write to the Montcalm County Road Commission urging it to have its employees to take down the signs placed at two of the road ends at our lake.

As to the lawsuit, it is the hope of the Board that the matter can be settled quickly and in a manner satisfactory to the parties involved.

On another matter, we have again tested the water quality of Crystal Lake and the preliminary results are good. We will report back to you detailed results at the Annual Meeting (July 12th) and in our next newsletter. We will again be checking it later this summer.

Again this summer the Montcalm County Sheriff's patrol will be on Crystal Lake every weekend. This is made possible in large part due to your dues which covers the County's part of the cost for this service.

Have a great Summer !

**Chris Mason, President
Crystal Lake Association**

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10 Steps to Protect Our Lake

1. Don't use lawn fertilizer that contains phosphorus. 2. Use the minimum amount of fertilizer recommended on the label – more is not necessarily better. 3. Water the lawn sparingly to avoid washing nutrients and sediments into the lake. 4. Don't feed ducks or geese near the lake. Waterfowl droppings are high in nutrients and may cause swimmers itch. 5. Don't burn leaves and grass clippings near the shoreline. Nutrients concentrate in the ash and can easily wash into the lake. 6. Do not mow to the water's edge. Instead allow a strip of natural vegetation (i.e. a greenbelt) to become established along your waterfront. A greenbelt will trap pollutants, provide wildlife habitat and discourage nuisance geese from frequenting your property. 7. Where possible, promote infiltration of stormwater into the ground. Build a rain garden to capture runoff from driveways and downspouts. For more information on rain gardens, visit www.raingardens.org. 8. Don't dump anything in area wetlands. Wetlands are natural purifiers. 9. If you have a septic system, have your septic tank pumped every 2 or 3 years. 10. Don't be complacent – our collective actions will make or break the lake!

Boating Basics: Specifically for Personal Watercraft (PWC)

A person under the age of 14 shall not operate a personal watercraft in Michigan. If born after December 31, 1978, you must obtain a boating safety certificate. Remember that everyone on board a PWC must wear a life jacket (PFD). Excessive noise from PWCs often makes them unwelcome with other vessel operators and people on shore. Be a courteous PWC operator. Vary your operating area, and do not keep repeating the same maneuver. Avoid congregating with other PWC operators near shore, which increases annoying noise levels. Avoid making excessive noise near residential areas, particularly early in the morning. Avoid maneuvers that cause the engine exhaust to lift out of the water because that increases noise levels. Do not modify your engine exhaust system if it increases the noise. Improperly modified exhausts will not make your PWC faster and may raise the noise to an illegal level. Do not chase or harass any wildlife.

All watercraft must go in a counter-clockwise direction and stay 100 feet from the shoreline, dock or raft, marked swimming area or any moored or anchored vessel.

For more boating regulations and safety information, contact the Michigan Department of Natural Resources at www.michigan.gov/dnr.

Purple Loosestrife

Purple loosestrife is a beautiful, but aggressive invasive plant. It is a very hardy perennial which can rapidly degrade wetlands, diminishing their value for wildlife habitat. When they get a foothold, they quickly choke the other diverse plants that birds, reptiles, insects and fish rely on for a healthy habitat. For information to identify the plant, go to www.miseagrant.umich.edu/pp/index.html. Controlling the spread of purple loosestrife is crucial to protecting vital fish, wildlife and plant populations. In areas where the density is low, the plants can be dug out and pulled by hand. Remove as much of the root as possible because broken roots can sprout new plants. The flowering spikes can be cut to prevent the seeds from producing more plants in future years. Also, removing last year's dry seeds can help. In areas of severe infestation, biological controls in the form of insects have been proven successful. Chemical controls have also been successful, in upland areas and on private property where hand spraying can be used.

Mute Swans

In Michigan, there are approximately 7,000 mute swans. Although non-migratory birds, they may travel short distances in the winter depending upon the weather. As the swan population continues to grow, potential conflicts with humans also increase. When the swans feel threatened by humans, they can show aggressive tendencies. Adult swans are 50 to 60 inches tall, weigh 20 to 30 pounds and have wingspans of 6 to 7 feet. They are entirely white with black legs and black webbed feet. Males tend to be larger than females. Mute swans pair up when they are approximately two years old and begin breeding between three and five years. They nest in large nests, often in the same area from year to year. They lay an average of six eggs, but can lay up to ten eggs. The incubation period is approximately 35 days and the eggs hatch from mid-May to mid-June. They stay close to the nesting area for at least two months after hatching. Mute swans can become very protective of their territory and family. They can be very aggressive if they feel threatened. They can attack humans, other birds and animals. They have been known to jump on top of a potential threat and even hold them down under water. They can also become aggressive if they are threatened by watercraft. This aggressive behavior has been known to continue from year to year and they appear to recognize the watercraft responsible. The best advice is to avoid any contact with swans. It is best to keep a safe distance from their nesting areas and from the swan families while they are swimming. If you are having continuing problems with an aggressive swan, please contact your local DNR office for assistance. Aggressive swans may need to be removed, but the DNR urges boaters to use caution during nesting season and to keep a safe distance from swans.

4th of July Fireworks and Annual Meeting

Many thanks for your contributions over the years for fireworks. This year we will again set off the fireworks on the "barge" in the middle of the lake. Over the years questions have repeatedly arisen as to when the fireworks would start. The terms "dusk" and "dark" are not exact terms and are interpreted differently by almost everyone. To avoid this confusion we are setting a specific time. The program will begin at 10:30 p.m. We are asking everyone to set their flares at 10:00 p.m. This will give anyone who wants to watch the show from their boat time to set off their flares and get to where they want to see the show.

Many thanks for your contributions over the years for fireworks. This year's fireworks show will cost \$8,500.00. Your contributions for this event are the primary source of funding. Due to many factors, among them the declining value of the dollar, Federal "Terrorist" Statutes and BATF regulations the expense will continue to increase markedly. Your additional support for this program is needed

Traditionally our annual meeting has been on the first Saturday following the 4th of July. This year, due to nearly unanimous demand, the Annual Meeting will be held on the second Saturday, July 12th at 10:00 a.m. at the Crystal Sailing Club. We have again invited local elected officials and law enforcement officers to attend and answer questions concerning the community and the lake. Please attend this meeting. It is a chance to share your concerns and to ask questions.

We would like to have your input for future Newsletters. If there is something you would like to have covered, or if you would like to submit an article, please contact Chris Mason at chris11903@aol.com