

CLAA Fall newsletter 2017

President's Message

I am fast approaching the end of my term as president of CLAA. Chuck Birringer will assume the president's responsibilities on Oct 1st. Please continue to assist and support him as you have done for me throughout my tenure.

Our organization is financially sound due to both your generous donations and willing volunteers to defray costs. Visit the Member recognition page and say thanks to a volunteer or donor and look for your name on the list next year.

I usually end my notes with a jovial "see you at the lake". I often remark on the joys of Clark Lake and the rejuvenation it provides us. There are other, more somber times, when I need to remark on our losses of family and friends both by a decline in health or eventual passing.

This year, on the 4th of July, there was a sudden death in the water near the East side boat ramp. One of our families lost a dearly beloved son-in-law who left a widow and small children. This tragedy, along with other events around the lake, has sparked an interest in the accessibility of emergency services for not only the Clark Lake community but both Jacksonport and Sevastopol.

CLAA has formed a committee to study this issue and investigate how we can contribute to possible solutions. We will focus on education, prevention, increasing bystander training and preparedness, supporting first responders and advocating for the EMS station in Jacksonport. The intent is to work with all of the community organizations, emergency services and both townships.

This is a departure from our usual focus upon the health of the lake, but is consistent with one of our core stated purposes which is to recognize that we, by virtue of our shared lake experience, are a unified community. Let's make sure we can continue to see you all at the lake.

Board

This spring we lost a board member and dear friend, Mike O'Brien. Three board member, Dick Egan, Steve Schechinger and Paul Schumacher all retired. This means we had four new members elected at the annual meeting in July: Anne Egan, Gwenn Graboyes, Kathy Steinmetz and Marilyn VanLieshout.

Every director is encouraged to have a face to face with each of their members at least twice a summer to review concerns and gather feedback.

The director member assignments were revised this year so many of you may have a new board representative. Check the directory and get to know your director. Contact information for all directors and officers is both in the directory and on the website: www.clarklakewi.com.

Social Events Committee

Our new Social Events Committee Chair is Marilyn Vanlieshout. Marilyn is new to the board and will be assisted by the returning coordinators for the picnic, rummage sale and Fall dinner.

This year saw a successful return of the All Lake Rummage Sale which will again be scheduled for the 2nd weekend in August. Next year we hope to resurrect the Golf Outing and introduce at least one new social event, aimed at our “younger” members. Contact Marilyn if you have ideas or are willing to help at an event.

The Fall dinner was held at Maxwellton Braes Lodge with food provided by the Thyme Catering Company. A record crowd of 85 enjoyed presentations by Jacksonport Chair Randy Halstead, and DNR Clark Lake fish biologist, Nick Legler while relaxing among friends and partaking of food and drink.

Fish and Wildlife Committee

This committee has been busy throughout this season planning for two more installations of fish habitat enhancement. This February, freshly felled trees (fish sticks) will again be anchored to the shore at various locations. We are already seeing an increase in minnows and perch at the trees installed last winter. We currently have only two new locations and need several more to make this an effective program. Please contact Pat Canney if you have more questions or are willing to have our crew install a bundle on your property.

We are also planning to install a second walleye spawning reef along the west shore. Walleye catches have been down but it is hoped with the enhanced environment including more forage fish and the additional reef that they will soon recover.

Nick Legler, DNR fish biologist, at the Fall dinner shared some speculation about the cause of the carp die off that plagued us in late July. There was no definite cause identified but the good news is that there were no other fish involved, there was no known threat to human health and after all . . .it was just carp.

Nick reported that the DNR stocked over 2000 brook trout, averaging 3 inches in length, in Logan Creek as a follow on from our self-funded planting last year of over 200 six inch fish. The DNR will do a survey next year of the creek and anticipate continued stocking to restore the creek as the only class one trout stream in the county.

As noted earlier, there has been ongoing concern for a couple of years about the decrease in fish being caught. Even though the DNR fish survey is not scheduled until 2019, CLAA is continuing to offer the DNR an alternative fish assessment and hopefully speed up the process of evaluation and re-stocking in the lake if indicated.

Water Quality and Vegetation Committee

As reported at the annual meeting, lake water quality and trophic status are stable. Plans are to have projects to maintain and improve shallow and near shore , shoreline, and the vegetative buffer areas through education and support for individual member efforts. Reduction of run-off, encouraging well water testing, reporting and monitoring individual waste disposal systems is also part of the plan.

This year we completed a review of the 2007 UWSP Clark Lake Water Quality report and formulated a 5 year plan including member awareness, education, group and individual projects. Scheduled monitoring and surveys will guide prioritization, extent and funding of each project.

Bulrushes stabilize shorelines, prevent wave erosion and mixing of substrates, and are an important food and habitat for fish, birds, insects and other Clark Lake wildlife. Their distribution and population reflect the lake health. This summer volunteers completed the bulrush density study. Next year we will map the entire lake bulrush population.

“Welcome to Clark Lake”, a newly developed brochure, is available on the website and the local realtor association site to advise potential and new owners of some things they should consider when planning how to use the lake and develop their own property.

Responsible use of the shallows and near shore area is reinforced in the Boating handout provided with each directory this year. Be sure to share it with your family and visitors.

Invasive control of phragmites has continued on the lake. Sevastopol joined Jacksonport in creating a mandatory treatment ordinance; CLAA testified and supported the ordinance at Sevastopol town meetings. A new invasive to area waters, Starry Stonewort, precipitated an increased effort by CLAA to educate and assist boaters at the West side ramp during launch and recovery. Boaters were consistently receptive to volunteers’ efforts and we will evaluate continuation of this program next Spring.

Water levels were high throughout the summer which pleased the boaters. No control boards have been in place at the dam since the winter. As the weather turns from Fall to Winter Sevastopol will be challenged to reduce lake levels to prevent ice damage this year.

Lake Safety and Maintenance

Bob Defaut continues to lead this committee which maintains, deploys and recovers the various buoys around the lake. The buoys are showing their age and this winter we will begin a project to re-stencil and refurbish the buoys—it will take a few years to complete.

The Ridges dock is also maintained by CLAA. This is in the no motor area and offers an opportunity for a quiet paddle, a chance to sample the Ridges trails or relax on the recently installed bench.

We continue to remind people about the water levels at the West side ramp and the difficulty larger boats can have with both launch and recovery. New signage and a gage to reflect the water level should allow boaters to choose this ramp only if appropriate.

Communications

Our means of communication include the annual letter, periodic all member e-mail, annual meeting, the website: www.clarklakewi.com , and director visits.

We determined that only a few members do not have e-mail. Therefore printed flyers are now routinely delivered only to those without e-mail. Please update us of any changes in your e-mail or other contact information.

The website is getting a technical upgrade and a new look. Our new webmaster, Mary Pentler, will then review the site and effect improvements over the next several months.

This year we added the directory sorted by address to the website. The old site will continue to use the prior password and the new site, when activated, will require the new password listed on the directory back cover for access to the two directory files.

An all member survey is scheduled for 2018. We want high participation so the organization is guided by our members' input. We will use an electronic survey but will also have a printed version available. We hope to have at least one special survey each year and repeat the all member survey every 5 years.

We will regain the all member notice function from the website when the upgrade is completed. Unfortunately we do not know if the messages are getting to everyone.

We have found that some of the all-member messages are blocked or being sent to your spam folder. Please check your e-mail folders to see if this is the case for you and take measures to identify us as a safe address and to unblock or mark our messages as "not spam". Also, review the website periodically to make sure you are getting the notices that are always listed and archived there.

Thanks for taking the time to read all of this, now get back out there to enjoy another season.

See you at the lake!