

The Gravel Laker

Volume XXX Number 1

www.gravellake.org

Winter, 2020

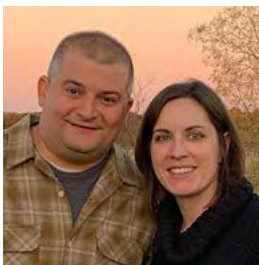


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President's Corner



Although I haven't quite had my fill of playing in the snow, spring will be here before you know it!

Despite the season, the Gravel Lake Association has not been idle. Here are a few updates:

Shaw Road pedestrian safety

We've made some progress with both the township and the county road commission thanks to Phil Rinaldi and several other trustees attending several meetings and making our case this fall and winter. We hope to influence a study on Shaw Road that will determine what kind of safety measures are necessary for the growing pedestrian traffic. (Continued on page 2)

Boat wash for Public Access

We are seriously researching this preventive measure to reduce the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Eurasian watermilfoil, starry stonewort, and zebra mussels are all good examples, but we aim to prevent problems that Gravel Lake does not already have. The Board of Trustees has compiled an extensive list of questions including financing, effectiveness, and maintenance as we seek to understand the viability of this control option. Keep in mind that we're looking at external sources of funding, too. Expect more information at upcoming membership meetings. If you have questions or suggestions, contact me or your beach trustee.

Lake friendly projects

Are you looking for ways to make your next project a bit more lake-friendly? Whether it's landscaping, shore-line protection, or even construction, there is a wealth of information on how to do things a bit differently to keep our lake healthy AND maybe save some money! I've had many conversations this past year on natural shorelines, rain gardens, and permeable pavers, to name a few. I've been so pleased to find out how much interest and receptivity there is to these topics. As such, I'm compiling helpful materials, on a range of topics, that are relevant to Gravel Lake. I will share them on Facebook and gravellake.org. Finally, I am pleased to continue to help with your individual questions/situations; just let me know!

As always, any questions, concerns, or feedback is welcome. Feel free to reach out to me or your beach rep.

Craig DeSimone
GLA President
cucad4@hotmail.com





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2020 Calendar

Date

Sunday, April 12
Saturday, April 18
Saturday, May 2
Saturday, May 9
Sunday, May 10
Saturday, May 16
Monday, May 25
Saturday, June 6
Sunday, June 21
Friday, July 3
Saturday, July 4
Saturday, July 4
Saturday, July 18
Saturday, August 8
Saturday, August 22
Monday, September 7
Saturday, September 12
Saturday, September 19
Monday, October 12
Saturday, October 17
Saturday, October 17

Event

Easter

BOT meeting @ Porter Township Hall

MLSA Annual @ Crystal Mountain

BOT meeting @ Porter Township Hall

Mother's Day

MLSA Region 3 @ Porter Township Hall

Memorial Day

GLA Membership meeting and Picnic @ 32313 Chamberlin Dr.

Father's Day

GLA Fourth of July events

GLA Fourth of July events

Fourth of July

BOT meeting @ Porter Township Hall

Poker Run (tentative)

GLA Membership meeting @ Rinaldi's pole barn

Labor Day

BOT meeting @ Porter Township Hall

MLSA Region 3 @ Porter Township Hall

Columbus Day

BOT meeting @ Porter Township Hall

GLA Halloween

Place An Ad In The Gravel Laker!

To place an ad in our next issue contact Bob Vick

Text or Email 269.744.2136 djbob365@gmail.com



Crayfish

Chances are, if you or your kiddos have spent any time building sandcastles along the shores of the GL or playing in the shallows, you've come across a crayfish or two. These small crustaceans have an exterior skeleton that gives them the appearance similar to their saltwater cousin, the lobster. Their body is composed of 19 segments and they sport a pointy nose, beady eyes, and large pinchers. In addition to their long pinchers, these little guys have four pairs of walking legs attached to their abdomen. The crayfish we find around North America usually grow to be about three inches long. But—fun fact—the largest freshwater crayfish in the world can be found in Tasmania. Named *Astacopsis gouldi*, they grow to over 2 feet long and weigh up to 13lbs!



Crayfish mate in early spring and the female carries the eggs inside her body for about six weeks. Then the female moves the eggs to the outside of her body, essentially “gluing” them to her tail. The female is resourceful, using her body's own production of “gliair” as an adhesive for her eggs to stick safely to her body until they hatch in late spring. During the first year of life a crayfish spends most of its time eating and growing. As it matures the crayfish's exoskeleton becomes too small for its growing body and the little crustacean will shed, or molt, its shell up to 10 times in that first year of life. Each time growing a newer, larger exoskeleton to protect it from predators. Crayfish have specialized gills that allow them to live for long periods of time out of water, so long as these gills stay moist, the crayfish can survive.

Nighttime is when we can observe the most activity from this freshwater scavenger, when they crawl out from beneath their homey rock or log and go on the hunt for food. They consume plants, small fish, amphibian eggs, and almost anything they can find near their watery habitat. Crayfish are opportunist foragers who may even be found munching on dead rodents or birds. Crayfish are an important part of our lake ecosystem. Not only do they forage on dead and living plants and animals, but the simple act of a crayfish chewing their food creates smaller bits of organic material for other, tinier aquatic creatures. While the craftiest and luckiest crayfish may live to be 3 years old, some find their lives cut short when they become a food source to larger birds, fish, land mammals, or even as a tasty treat for our local Bald Eagle.

Crayfish are very sensitive to toxins and pollutants and claim only the freshest waters as their home. Next time you spy a bug-eyed crayfish, remember these harmless little crustaceans are not only a part of the larger circle of life, but they are also a positive sign of a healthy ecosystem.

Gravel Lake has one or two native crayfish; likely the Calico Crayfish and the Virile Crayfish, both of which are light brown with a bluish hue in places. However, we should all be on the lookout for the Rusty Crayfish, a known invader, and the Red Swamp Crayfish which has limited distribution, but is a high concern. Either should be removed and reported (take a picture!) if found and identified. The Red Swamp Crayfish is easily identified by its dark red color with bright red spots. The Rusty Crayfish has bigger claws and dark rusty spots on either side of its carapace and is otherwise brown. Check out the GLA Facebook Group or gravellake.org for color images.

Tricia Brucks
Contributing writer

Sources:

<https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/420/420-524/420-524.html>

<https://www.psu.edu/dept/nkbiology/naturetrail/speciespages/crayfish.htm>

<https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/crayfishes>

Poker Run 2020

Poker Run planning is officially underway! Please note that this year's Poker Run is tentatively scheduled for August 8, one week later than last year. We have two dock hosts secured for this year and are in need of five more. Much thanks to the Forecashes and the Beebes for volunteering to host, as well as Vitkauskas family for volunteering to collect cards again this year. This event relies on gracious volunteers in order to happen!

As always, we are in need of dock hosts, raffle prizes, and sponsors! All seven docks must be secured by May 15, 2020 for the event to take place. For volunteers, donations, and questions please contact Alyssa (Alyssa.pinkos@gmail.com) or Janice Pinkos (fampinkos@aol.com).



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Gravel Lake Association Trustee Elections

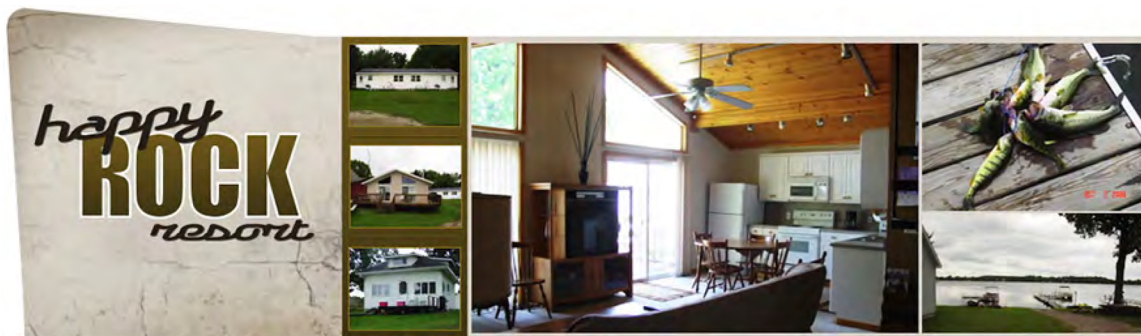
Gravel Lake Association trustee elections will occur at our membership meeting on Saturday, August 22 at the Rinaldi's pole barn on Gebhard Drive. ALL trustees are up for reelection.

A Gravel Lake Association trustee is expected to do the following:

- Attend most meetings (they occur monthly between April and October on Saturdays)
- Speak their mind and represent the best interests of Gravel Lake and their beach/subdivision
- Deliver newsletters and collect dues (once or twice per year)
- Keep up with correspondence via email and text (monthly or less)
- Volunteer, at times, to help with events or projects

If you are interested in becoming more involved, please contact me directly. In the case of a runoff (more than one individual interested in a single position) a secret ballot will be conducted.

Thanks,
Craig DeSimone
President, Gravel Lake Association
cucad4@hotmail.com



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THE ROCK AT BIG FISH LAKE

14625 Loveridge
Marcellus, MI 49067
269.646.7625

therockatbigfishlake.com

Newsletter Staff

Jamie Paramski, Editor
jparamski@gmail.com

Jim McGreal, Design
jim@jmcstudios.com

Spencer McGreal, Production/Graphics
spencer@jmcstudios.com

Bob Vick - Ads
djbob365@gmail.com

Chip vanSchoyck, Printer

Melissa DeSimone, Contributing writer

Tricia Barker, Contributing writer

Emily Garrett, Contributing writer

Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance as of 9/15/19 \$50,829.71

Deposits

Membership Dues -1	\$40.00
Apparel Sales	\$607.00
Advertising - Gravel Laker	\$425.00
Membership Dues for 2020 -6	\$395.00
Laggis Fish Farm voided check #1671	\$1,425.00
Voided Check # 1662	\$150.00
Total Deposits	\$3,042.00

Expenses

Phil Rinaldi - Halloween Fest	\$255.19
Laggis Fish Farm - Balance for Perch	\$1,425.00
Laggis Fish Farm - Balance for Perch	\$1,425.00
Print Mill - Fall Gravel Laker	\$909.10
Total Expenses	\$4,014.29

Checkbook Balance as of 12/31/19 \$49,857.42

Copper Ridge Inn & Farm Market



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Gravel Lake Association

Membership Form: January 2020 - December 2020

Fill out and mail to:

Gravel Lake Association, P.O. Box 531, Lawton, MI 49065

You can also pay dues online at gravellake.org.

Please print clearly.

Member name(s): _____

Beach: _____ Lake Phone: _____

Gravel Lake Address: _____ Lawton, MI 49065

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please print clearly. Mail Check or Money Order payable to Gravel Lake Association

Membership dues for 2020 \$50.00

I would like to receive 4 free issues of the Riparian magazine for 2020.

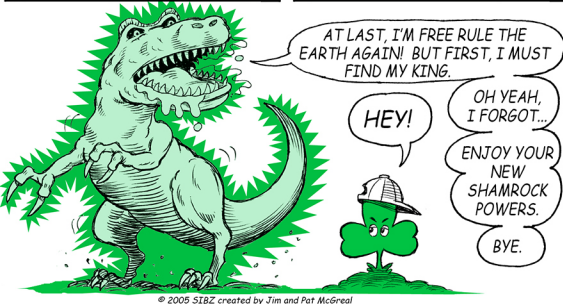
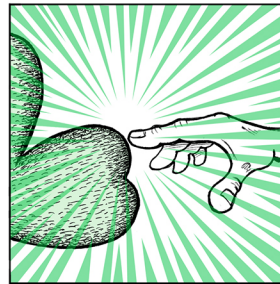
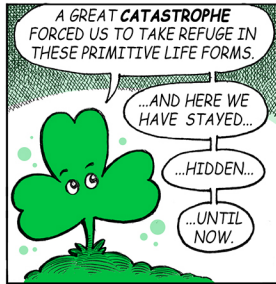
Yes No (circle one)

Address where your Riparian should be sent.

Home Lake (circle one)

Fish Stocking Donation \$10.00 \$15.00 \$25.00 or Other _____

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Vice President	Suzanne Reed
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OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

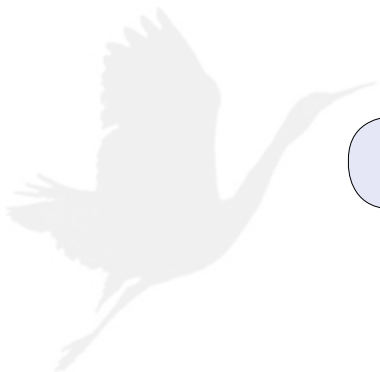
Editor, Gravel Laker	Jamie Paramski - jparamski@gmail.com
Newsletter Advertising / Printing	Bob Vick/Chip Van Schoyck
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Gravel Lake Association

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