

The Gravel Laker

Volume XXXI Number 1

www.gravellake.org

Spring, 2021

In This Issue

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| - 2021 Calendar of Events | - All About Mink |
| - GLA 2021 Calendar | - Take The Pot Crossword Puzzle |
| - Fish Kills | - Light Pollution |
| - Algal Blooms | - Gravel Lake Bingo |
| - Letter to the Editor | - SIBZ Comic |
| - Get to know a Gravel Laker | - Membership Form |



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2021 Calendar Of Events

Date	Event
Monday, May 31	Memorial Day
Saturday, June 12	GLA Membership meeting
Saturday, June 19	Garage Sale/GL Marketplace
Saturday, June 20	Father's Day
Saturday, July 3	GL Fun Run and Boat Parade
Sunday, July 4	Fourth of July
Saturday, July 10	BOT meeting
Saturday, August 21	GLA Membership meeting
Monday, September 6	Labor Day
Saturday, September 11	BOT meeting
Saturday, September 25	MLSA Region 3 Meeting
Saturday, October 9	BOT meeting, GL Halloween festivities
Monday, October 11	Columbus Day
Saturday, October 31	Halloween



Gravel Lake Association 2021 Calendar

As things change daily with regards to COVID restrictions, please keep an eye on the Gravel Lake website and the GLA Community Facebook page for changes, info, or cancellations.

BOARD/MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS:

- **Saturday, June 12 at 10:00am – Membership meeting**
 - o Location: via Zoom
 - o Details will be posted on the GLA website and the GLA Community Facebook Group.
- **Saturday, July 10 at 10am—Board of Trustees meeting**
 - o Location: TBD (Porter Township Hall or via Zoom)
- **Saturday, August 21 at 10:00am – Membership meeting**
 - o Location: TBD (in-person or via Zoom)
 - o Details will be posted on the GLA website and the GLA Community Facebook Group.
- **Saturday, September 11 at 10am—Board of Trustees meeting**
 - o Location: TBD (Porter Township Hall or via Zoom)
- **Saturday, October 9 at 10am—Board of Trustees meeting**
 - o Location: TBD (Porter Township Hall or via Zoom)

FOURTH OF JULY ACTIVITIES: Saturday, 7/3

The Fourth of July is right around the corner! Keep in mind that these events are **tentatively scheduled** due to COVID restrictions. Visit the GLA Community Facebook page for updates on all events.

Fun Run – Saturday, July 3 at 9:00am

- o Back by popular demand! The Fun Run will look like it did last year. Both the starting line and the finish line are your own back door.
- o Go as fast or slow as you want. Be on the lookout for rogue water balloons, as well as mimosa stations!
- o Participate as a runner/walker/biker or as a spectator/water balloon launcher/mimosa stand operator.
- o Any mode of transportation is welcome.

Gravel Lake Association 2021 Calendar

- o No registration.
- o FREE for all participants.
- o All ages welcome. Leashed dogs welcome.

Boat Parade – Saturday, July 3, immediately after Taps (sunset)

- o Theme: Venetian Nights
- o Channel your inner Clark Griswold, and rig your boat with as many lights as you can!
- o Parade begins from the Taps location immediately following Taps.
- o Not a contest this year (no registering, judging, voting, or prizes).

OTHER ACTIVITIES

• Gravel Lake Garage Sale & Market Day–Saturday, June 19 from 9am-3pm

- o **Garage Sale:** Time to clean out your house and make some cash! Place your items in your garage or yard, price them, and put a sign out front. Email Linda Vitkauskas (vitkauskas3@comcast.net) or call (269-624-7455), as she is providing a list for shoppers so that they don't miss your house.
- o **Market Day:** Get crafting and bring your goods to Market Day! Contact Linda Vitkauskas (contact info above) if you plan on setting up a table.

PAY YOUR DUES ONLINE AT...

GRAVELLAKE.ORG!

Fish Kills

If you've ever noticed a seemingly abnormal number of dead fish washing up on your beach, there is no cause for alarm. This is a naturally-occurring response to water that is changing in temperature. These events, called fish kills, can occur at various times during the year, but typically there is a winter kill, a spring kill, and a summer kill. It is important to note that fish kills are typically due to natural causes, such as the weather. Fish kills do not have a negative impact on water quality.

Winter Kill

In cold winters with a lot of snowfall, winter fish kills are very common. Plants are not able to photosynthesize as much, leading to less dissolved oxygen in the water, which causes the fish to suffocate. The cold water preserves their bodies, but when the water warms, their bodies bloat and rise to the top, eventually making their way to our shores. Thus, the winter kill occurs in the winter, but it may not be seen until early spring.

Spring Kill

Spring kill occurs in late May to early June. For an inland lake as small as Gravel Lake, it doesn't take much (relatively speaking) to warm the water. When the fish population is already stressed from low energy reserves (due to less food consumption in the cold months), the fish are less able to handle low oxygen levels and rising water temperatures. Additionally, much of their energy is used in strenuous spawning activities. According to Gary Whelan, DNR Fisheries Division research manager, "As the season changes, [fish kills] can be particularly common in shallow lakes, ponds, streams, and canals. These kills are localized and typically do not affect the overall health of the fish populations or fishing quality". Rapidly warming water affects fish in a variety of ways, from stress to mortality. Since this happens in the spring, we tend to see quite a few fish wash up on the beach.

Summer Kill

A summer kill is also a possibility. According to the Michigan DNR, "Summer kill occasionally occurs in lakes and streams during extremely hot summer weather. High temperature and low dissolved oxygen combine to stress the fish. Most prone to summer kills are pike, perch, suckers, bass, and bluegill living in shallow, productive lakes or bays with excessive amounts of algae or rooted aquatic vegetation". Summer kill occurs on the hottest days of mid-summer.

So the next time you see some fish wash up on your shore, fear not. It's just nature and a response to changes in the environment

SOURCES:

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79137_79770_79780-552865--,00.html#:~:text=That's%20because%20the%20dead%20fish,stress%20and%2C%20sometimes%2C%20mortality.

<https://www.mlive.com/news/2021/02/fish-kills-may-be-common-during-michigans-spring-thaw-dnr-says.html>

<https://www.minnehahacreek.org/explore/winter-and-spring-fish-kills>

<https://upnorthlive.com/news/local/dnr-finding-dead-fish-may-be-common-during-spring-thaw>

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79136_79236_80246-119822--,00.html



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Algal Blooms

What causes an algal bloom?

A bloom can occur when the water temperature is warm, conditions are calm, and the water has a high level of nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrogen. Excess nutrients can come from pollution such as lawn and farm fertilizers, storm water runoff, and malfunctioning septic tanks. Invasive zebra and quagga mussels help make water conditions right for algal blooms.

What are harmful algal blooms (HABs)?

Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, are a natural part of lakes, rivers, and ponds. Unfortunately, some species can produce toxins, called cyanotoxins, that can make humans and animals sick. When conditions are right, these organisms can rapidly increase to form cyanobacteria blooms, or HABs. These blooms can last a few days, weeks, or longer, and are considered harmful because they may contain toxins. A bloom can start small and become very large in size, and it can also give off a foul odor.

What does a harmful algal bloom look like?

Not all algal blooms contain toxins, but it is difficult to tell by looking at a bloom if it is harmful. Also, the amount of toxins in a bloom can change over time. HABs can be a variety of colors such as blue, green, blue-green, brown, white, purple, or red. HABs can look like scums in the water that may have small flecks, foams, or globs and mats floating in it. The water can also look like it has spilled paint or a green sheen on the surface. When in doubt, keep yourself and pets out of the water.

How do we know if algal blooms on Gravel Lake are harmful?

Periodically and when possible, our aquatic invasive species (AIS) contractor, Professional Lake Management, collects and tests for cyanobacteria. So far, we have not observed a HAB on the channel. If homeowners see something concerning, they should collect samples in a water bottle, refrigerate them, and contact the Gravel Lake Association.



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Algal Blooms

How do we control algal blooms?

Currently, a variety of copper products (copper sulfate, chelated copper, and copper sulfate+lanthanum) are used primarily in the channel. Following DNR guidelines, the GLA avoids fish spawning periods as some algaecides (above) may disrupt this sensitive time for fish.

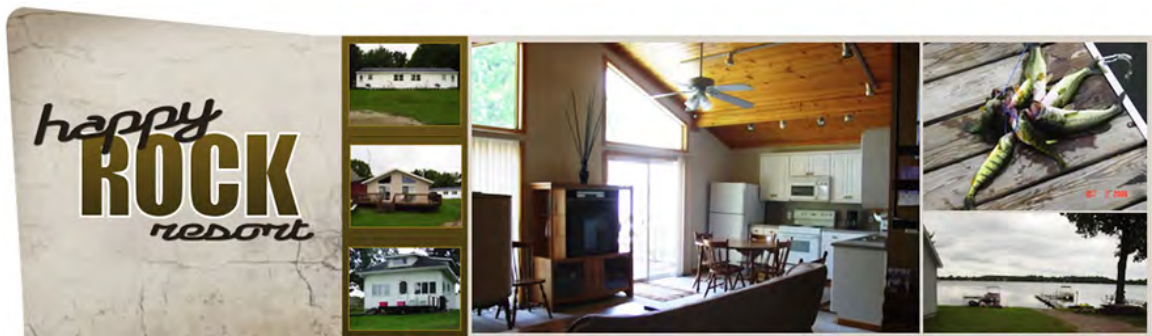
How are algal blooms prevented or mitigated?

Algaecides (e.g. copper products) can stop an existing bloom, but they cannot prevent future ones from occurring. In fact, the sediment caused by algaecides will add further nutrients to the water which can bolster the next algal bloom. Reducing nutrients going into the lake is the best way to prevent algal blooms. Reducing or ceasing use of fertilizer, reducing impervious surfaces (which aid water flow to the lake, such as asphalt, concrete, roofs, etc.), and creating rain gardens and natural shorelines can filter runoff before it gets to the lake.

SOURCES:

https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3313_3681_3686_3728-383630--,00.html

<https://www.epa.gov/cyanohabs/preventative-measures-cyanobacterial-habs-surface-water>



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Pontoon Boat Bow Riding

Fellow Gravel Lakers – PLEASE RIDE INSIDE!!

Accidents from pontoon bow riding are one of the most common of all boating fatalities. Bow riding is not only unsafe, it is also illegal.

Few people would consider allowing a family member or friend to ride on the hood of their moving car. Yet every summer, boat operators permit their passengers to sit on the front deck of their pontoon dangling their legs in the water when the boat is underway.

Did you know that a typical boat propeller could cause 160 cuts in one second? It could cause cuts from head to toe in less than a tenth of a second.

Children and adults have been falling off the bow of pontoon boats and getting stuck by the propeller for decades. A typical scenario involves children sitting on the bow, outside the fence, with their feet dangling in the water as the boat moves forward. They hit a larger wake or wave and are pulled overboard by their feet, or the boat operator suddenly slows the boat and they rotate over the bow. Either way, they hit the water while the boat is still advancing. The operator quickly pulls the boat to neutral but it is too late. They hear a thud from the child's body hitting the propeller and the water quickly turns blood red behind the boat.

I've observed the unsafe practice of bow riding way too often watching pontoons edge their way around Gravel Lake. Please do not allow this on your pontoon and don't be afraid to kindly educate others if you see it being practiced. Let them know how dangerous this practice is, and how significant the consequences can be. We all want our fellow boaters to have fun and enjoy the lake, but we also want them to come home safe at the end of the day. To guarantee this, be sure to RIDE INSIDE!

Jim Rockwell
Chamberlin Beach

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Meet a Gravel Laker

Name: Perri Gordon

Where are you from and what do you do?

I'm originally from a tiny town in Michigan called Middleton, which is halfway between Lansing and Mount Pleasant, but now I reside in Chicago. I work in marketing and have worked at companies like Kellogg, Hillshire/Tyson, and Fairlife. I just took a new job with Glanbia Performance Nutrition, which makes sports nutrition and wellness products.

Tell us about your family.

My husband Mark and I have two kids: Lark (7) and Heath (4). We also have an old bulldog, Daisy, who you may see shamefully wearing a life vest on our pontoon. We also recruited Mark's parents, Frank and Jane Gordon, to the lake, too. They live full-time on Streeter Beach.

Describe your home and its location on the lake.

Our cottage is a small cement block three-season (er...maybe two-season) cottage on Gebhard Beach about six houses from the end of Gebhard where the forest heads to Huff's Landing. From the lake, it's probably easiest to identify by the white staircase and fence.

What is something unique or interesting about it?

The house was painted bright blue when we bought it in 2010, so we nicknamed it "the Smurf house". Even though we've since painted it a more subdued shade of blue/green, the nickname has stuck. It also has a shower with the plumbing built into cement blocks. This has caused a plumber or two to decline to help us with it - ha!

What year was it built, and have there been any improvements?

It was built sometime in the 1950s. We know the original owner built it himself and added a sun porch. Since we bought it, we've added a furnace, and put in new doors, windows, and floors. Then we added a fence around the patio to keep kids and chubby bulldogs from falling down the hill.



Meet a Gravel Laker



When and why did you first come to Gravel Lake?

I met our esteemed president, Craig DeSimone, when we both worked at Kellogg in Battle Creek. We discovered we both had a mutual love of volleyball, so he invited Mark and I out to the lake to play. We were sold based on volleyball alone and started looking for a house. We had no idea what else the lake had to offer at that point... so that worked out quite well for us!

What is your favorite memory at the lake?

Wow, it's tough to pick, so I'm going to cheat and say a few...

1. Lounging on an inflatable raft with friends during a complete downpour mid-Yard Games.
2. One Labor Day spent tubing and swimming in the channel with the Michellis.
3. Every vodka party for the excuse to make a costume, though my favorite was probably when my whole family dressed as a bunch of phones that Kerry Moore lost in the lake.

What is your favorite lake activity?

Simply hanging out on our dock...watching our kids swim, fishing, or chatting with friends who stop by.

Why is Gravel Lake special to you?

It genuinely feels like all of our neighbors are extended family. When you are friends with someone, you're friends with their whole family. A wise person told me early in my Gravel Lake days that "you don't get to pick your friends here, you just get who you get". That idea of unconditional, neighborly love really stuck with me.

Would you like to be featured?

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All About Mink

The first thing you may think of when you hear the word mink, is a mink stole, or fur coat. Though there is a commercial mink farming industry that breeds these little mammals for the sole purpose of using their hides, it is still legal to trap mink in the wild.

Mink are a member of the Mustelidae family, which includes many small carnivorous mammals like badgers, otters, skunks, and weasels. Female mink only grow to about two to three pounds, while males can get up to twice the size of a female. They have dark brown or black thick, dense fur, and have a white or light-colored chin, and lightly colored speckled bellies. It may be hard to distinguish a mink from a weasel, but if you see one of these animals near water, it is most likely a mink. Mink prefer to make their dens near water in hollowed logs, under damp tree roots, and in river banks, and they will even move into an abandoned muskrat den. Living an amphibious lifestyle, mink will chow down on cray fish, frogs, or water birds. But even though mink are quite small, they still prey on animals that are close to, or even bigger than their size. These slinky, quick mammals use their sharp retractable claws to grab their prey. Mink will eat both land and water animals such as rabbits, chickens, ducks, and muskrats. Though they are typically nocturnal creatures, mink will hunt for their prey day or night.



All About Mink

Breeding between February and April, the female mink will give birth to four or five young per year, usually in late spring. After about a month of close mothering, the mink are weaned and the families will go their separate ways when fall arrives. A mink can live to be 8 years old in the wild.

Some interesting mink facts:

- *They can dive up to 16 feet to catch aquatic prey.
- *Their fur is covered with an oily guard, making them waterproof and quicker swimmers.
- *When triggered by a predator, a mink will hiss and secrete a foul-smelling musky liquid (but they can't aim it like their cousin the skunk).
- *You know a mink is happy and content when it purrs.

SOURCES:

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79147_81457---,00.html

<https://michpics.wordpress.com/2017/01/19/michigan-mink-mustela-vison/>

<https://www.frontenacnews.ca/regular-columns/outdoors-in-the-land-o-lakes/item/10736-mink-weasel-or-marten>

Photo: <https://khn.org/news/thousands-of-minks-dead-as-covid-outbreak-escalates-on-utah-farms/>



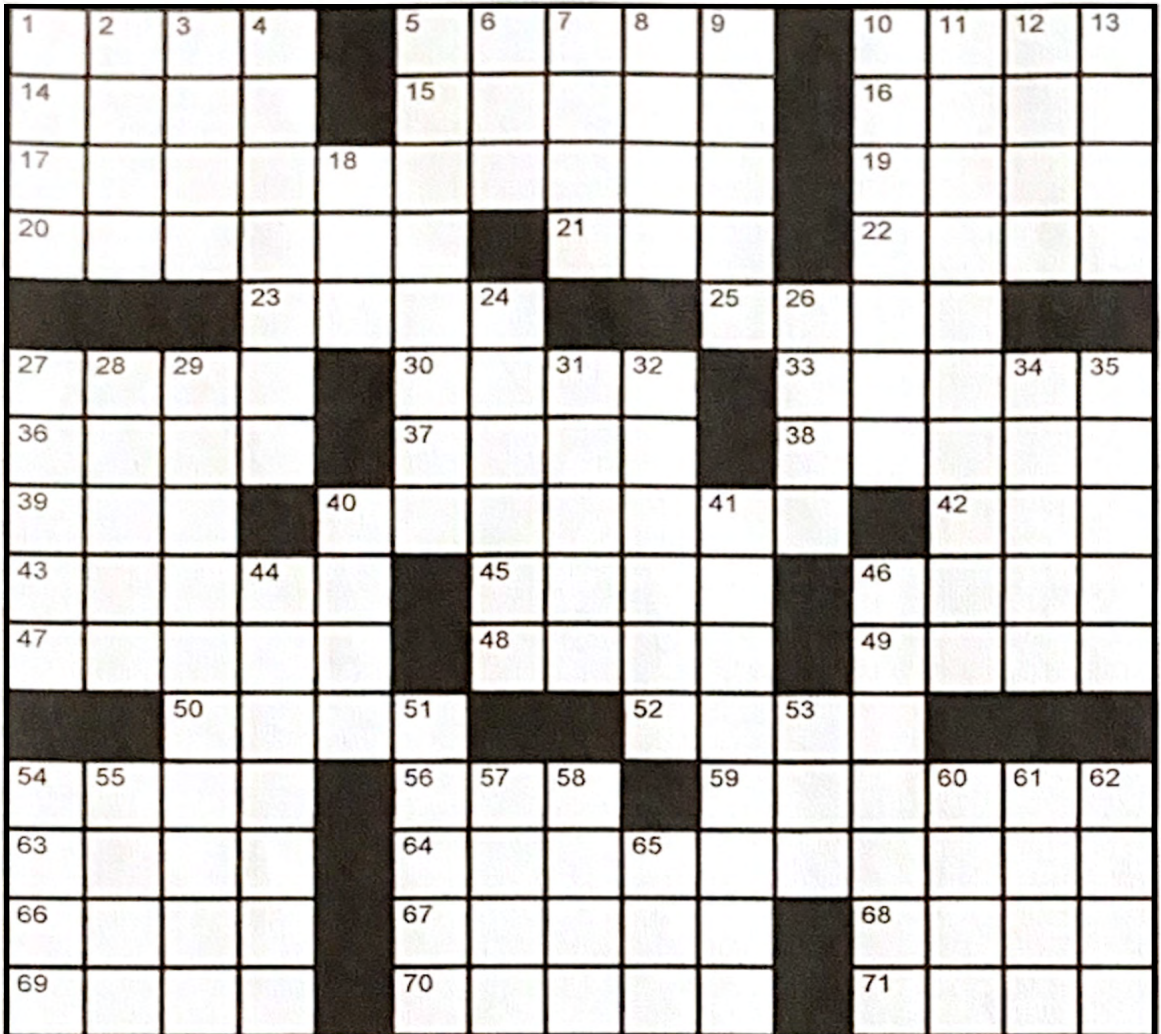
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Take The Pot Crossword Puzzle

Chris Sablich of Idle Ease beach developed a new unique hobby over the past year. He creates crossword puzzles and submits them to the L.A. Times and Universal Crosswords (which sends the puzzles to various newspapers for publication). Although it is very challenging to get published, he has two accepted puzzles by the L.A. Times. Way to go, Chris! Here is one of Chris's crosswords. Give it a go!



Answers on page 20.

Take The Pot Crossword Puzzle

Across

- 1 Actor Lugosi
- 5 Odd, strange
- 10 Big party
- 14 Press
- 15 Utility bill item
- 16 Numerical prefix
- 17 Monarch during the American Revolution
- 19 Attention getting utterances
- 20 V-6 or V-8
- 21 Acid
- 22 12/24 and 12/31
- 23 Sisters
- 25 Not all
- 27 Indian prince
- 30 Lobster eaters' protection
- 33 Wash machine cycle
- 36 Tel Aviv airline
- 37 Fencer's weapon
- 38 Provide food for
- 39 [not my error]
- 40 Takes off
- 42 Coffee dispenser
- 43 In tune
- 45 Hamburg river
- 46 "Motley" group
- 47 Dive (into)
- 48 Horse controller
- 49 moters
- 50 Rowboat necessity
- 52 Diva's song
- 54 Make smooth

Down

- 1 Cycle
- 2 Emerald Island
- 3 Yearn for
- 4 Kind of chest pain
- 5 Royalty of the hive
- 6 G.I. entertainment org.
- 7 British noble
- 8 Omelet ingredients
- 9 Clarinet and oboe, for example
- 10 Part of Czech Republic
- 11 Pet detective
- 12 Eye sore
- 13 Big brother of Little Joe
- 18 Bearded antelope
- 24 One taking a small taste
- 26 Tolkien monsters
- 27 Fix the lawn
- 28 Dress style
- 29 "Call of the Wild" author
- 31 Memphis music street
- 32 Country formerly a part of Yugoslavia
- 34 Blood bank fluid
- 35 Sea birds
- 40 Beautician, at times
- 41 Jefferson's "decatalogue of canons" for life
- 44 Dodging
- 46 Jewish bread
- 51 Kind of wrap
- 53 Global economic org.
- 54 Went into second feet first

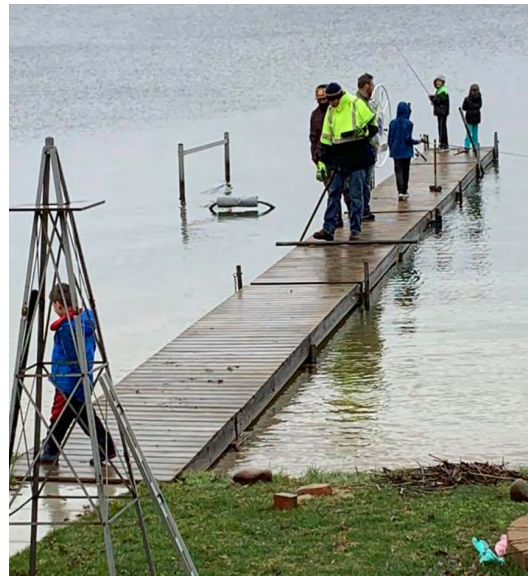
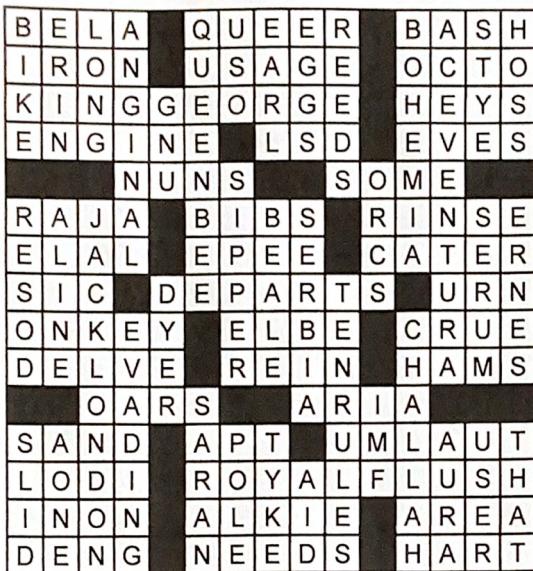
Take The Pot Crossword Puzzle

Across

- 56 Fitting
 59 German vowel marks
 63 California city
 64 Highest poker hand, and a clue to items included in the answers to 17-Across and 5-, 11-, 29-, and 41- Down
 66 Privy to
 67 Sot
 68 Two-dimensional measurement
 69 Post-Mao Chinese leader
 70 Requirements
 71 Male deer

Down

- 55 Top of the line
 57 Warsaw native
 58 Youngster
 60 Atmosphere
 61 Addict
 62 The one over there
 65 Financial ____



Light Pollution

Have you ever looked up at the night sky and seen...not a whole lot? That might be due to light pollution. Light pollution is defined as “excessive, misdirected, or obtrusive artificial outdoor light”. Light pollution does not have as severe of consequences as say, air or water pollution. However, one of the things I love most about GL nights is looking up at the sky and seeing all of the stars. Excessive light makes this more difficult to do.

On a larger scale, light pollution can also play a part in disrupting ecosystems, confusing nocturnal wildlife, and confusing migratory animals. It is also a waste of energy and contributes to extra cost and our carbon footprint.

Some ways that we can combat light pollution (and regain our view of the beautiful night sky) is to shield lights properly, only use light when and where it is needed, use motion detectors that turn lights on for a short period of time when they sense motion, and by using energy efficient light bulbs.

SOURCES:

<https://www.globeatnight.org/light-pollution.php>



Gravel Lake Bingo

Initial your lake experiences as the summer goes on. First one with five in a row in any direction (vertical, horizontal, or diagonal) wins!

Forgot to put on sunscreen	Spent time boating with friends	Picked up a piece of trash	Biked around the lake	Ate a hot dog or hamburger
Caught a fish	Had friends or family visit	Got a bug bite	Stayed up way too late	Ran, walked, or biked around the lake
Borrowed something from a neighbor	Built a sand castle (or other sand structure)	Flipped a canoe or kayak	Watched fireworks	Played King of the Raft
Enjoyed a cold beverage on a hot day	Spotted a turtle	Got Swimmers Itch	Lost something in the lake	Witnessed or experienced a kind neighbor
Waved hello to a fellow laker	Took a nap outside	Caught fireflies	Tried a new watersport	Saw the eagle



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Gravel Lake Association

Membership Form: January 2021 - December 2021

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 2021 \$50.00

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Yes No (circle one)

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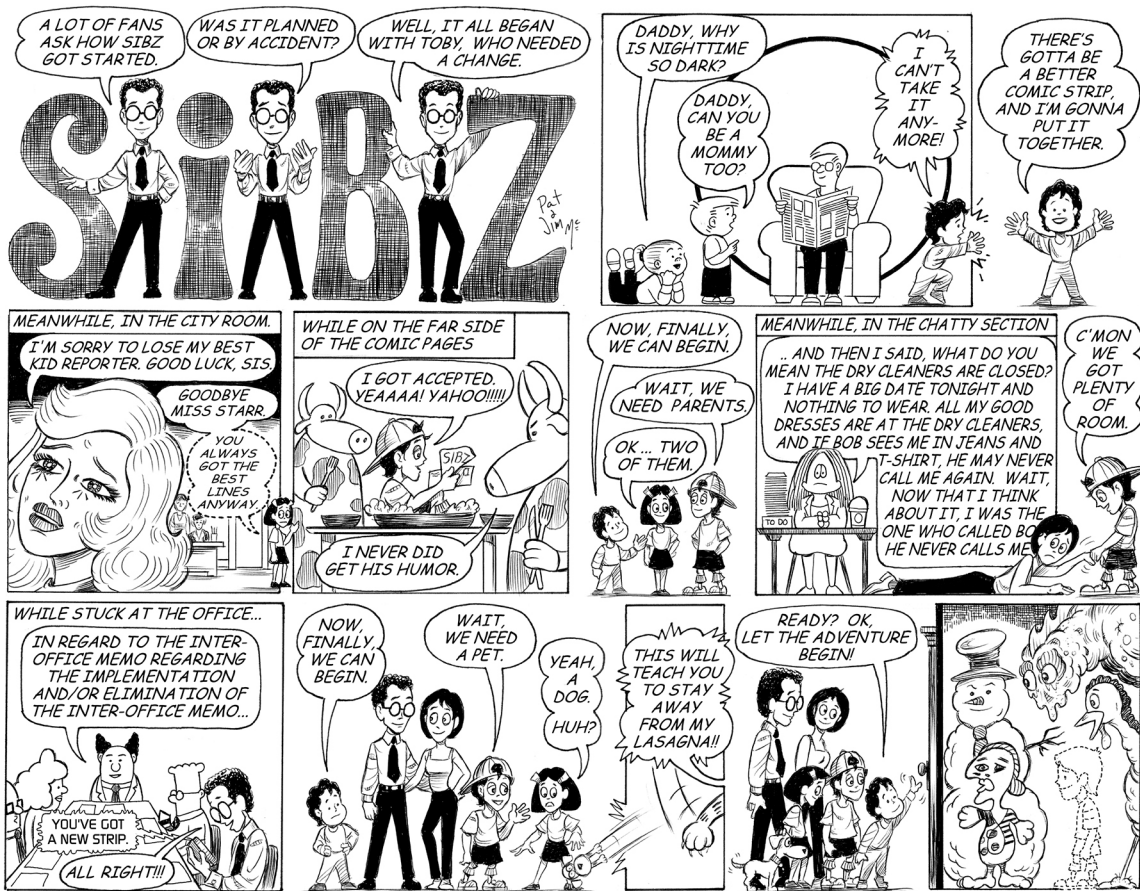
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Apologies to Bill Keane, Dale Messick, Gary Larson, Cathy Guisewite and Scott Adams

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Join the Gravel Lake Association Community Facebook group!

The Gravel Lake Association Community Facebook page is an excellent way to connect with our fellow lakere. Important lake-related information is posted there frequently, including weed treatment dates, when the newsletter is available, event info, lost-and-found info, announcements, recommendations, and surveys where you can voice your opinion. People also post pictures from around the lake, even in the winter!

Board of Trustees Contact List

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Sandy Beach	Suzanne Reed Jennifer Micheli Chris Toso
Streeter Beach	Kristy & Linda Vitkauskas
Willow Beach	Carole Roeder
Winkler Beach	Dave Brown Ann LaForge

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