

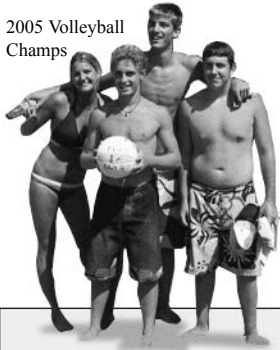
The Gravel Laker

Volume XVIII Number 4

www.gravellake.org

Winter, 2005

2005 Volleyball
Champs



In This Issue:

- President's Corner
- Weed Treatment Update
- Why do we need sewers?
- 4th of July Recap
- An editorial on the Trumpeter Swan
- Loosestrife
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- Plus a new SIBZ comic!



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

There are two issues on which the Gravel Lake Association needs your support.

Issue #1: Weed Treatment

Over the past two years, we have successfully gained control over the invasion of Eurasian Watermilfoil on our lake. Our Special Assessment District (SAD), which was formed to control EWM, ended this year. Acknowledging the need for continued control of EWM, a majority of you have signed a petition in favor of our efforts. Despite this support, we still need more. As was done previously, the Porter Township board will host a series of public hearings as the final part of the approval process for our request to renew the SAD. These meetings are likely to occur this winter. You are strongly encouraged to attend these meetings to show your support. Alternatively, you may write the Porter Township Supervisor expressing your support for the SAD. Make sure to state your full name, that you are a homeowner on Gravel Lake, and that you support continued weed treatment. Mail letters to:

Nate Bitely - Porter Township Supervisor
88040 M-40
Lawton, MI 49065

It is very important that you show your support. Lack of support could cause the township to decide against renewing the SAD.

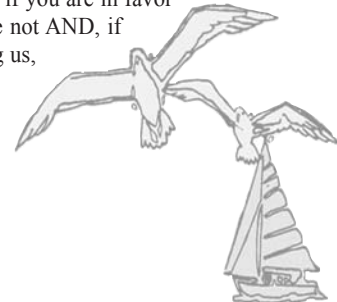
Issue #2: Sewers

A sewer system around Gravel Lake is being pursued by a special committee on the Gravel Lake Association. The chair of this committee, Ray Reed of Sandy Beach, is spearheading the effort to educate everyone on the possibility of sewers. Currently, no decision has been made regarding the implementation of a sewer system, but we are moving forward with a program to educate Gravel Lake homeowners. We are also petitioning to determine support for such a project. Keep in mind, this effort will proceed much like the weed treatment process: a majority of homeowners must sign in favor of this project before the township will even consider furthering the process. Again, this is where we need your support. Specifically, we need you to tell us if you are in favor of sewers. Of equal importance is telling us if you are not AND, if so, why not. Help us answer your questions by mailing us, emailing us, or calling us.

Please help us with these important efforts
for Gravel Lake.

Best wishes and happy 2006!

Craig DeSimone



Weed Treatment Update - More Q & A

At press-time, the township attorney is reviewing weed treatment petitions. Our own calculations show us with a majority in favor of continuing the treatment program. Nonetheless, we strive to continually answer questions:

Q: How and when will we be assessed for future weed treatments?

A: Assuming the Porter Township board adopts our petition request, assessments would be added to our tax bill in the spring or summer of 2006. Similar to last time, owners should have the option to pay all assessments up front.

Q: We paid for two treatments this summer; why haven't we received both?

A: We were scheduled for two Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) treatments this summer on an as-needed basis. This means that we would only receive treatments if there was enough EWM to warrant multiple (if any) treatments. This also means that we only pay for treatments if they occur. Therefore, we are under budget because we have not needed our second treatment for EWM.

Q: Why were there dense clusters of native weed growth despite treatment?

A: Our treatment program is designed to specifically control EWM. Control of native species is not part of this program. All surveys / sampling done by Professional Lake Management (PLM) indicate that EWM has been effectively eradicated from the lake (at least for the time being). Additionally, PLM pointed out that we had some areas of excessive growth of Sago Pondweed.



Eurasian
Watermilfoil
(EWM)

Q: Can we use funds raised from our Special Assessment District to control native species?

A: Yes, our permit with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) allows us to treat other species of weeds. However, this could only be done if we are under budget with our EWM treatment program.

Q: What is the association going to do about controlling overgrown native species?

A: At the last membership meeting, the board decided not to pay for treating overgrown native species as the cost of treatment outweighed the benefits (i.e. effects of treatment would not have been seen until mid/late September). The association will be more watchful of native species overgrowth in 2006. The board will re-discuss treating native species if the issue arises again next summer.

(Weed Treatment Update continued)

Q: Is Sago Pondweed the weed that has that spaghetti-like tentacle that lays on the surface of the water?

A: No, the spaghetti-like weed is a species called Eel grass. At its base, Eel grass is a long thick blade of grass. As it gets longer it gets thinner, and that long, thin part is what you see at the surface. This species is also a nuisance on the lake. The only good news is that it is a late summer plant and usually does not appear until late July. It cannot be killed with herbicides but it can be harvested.

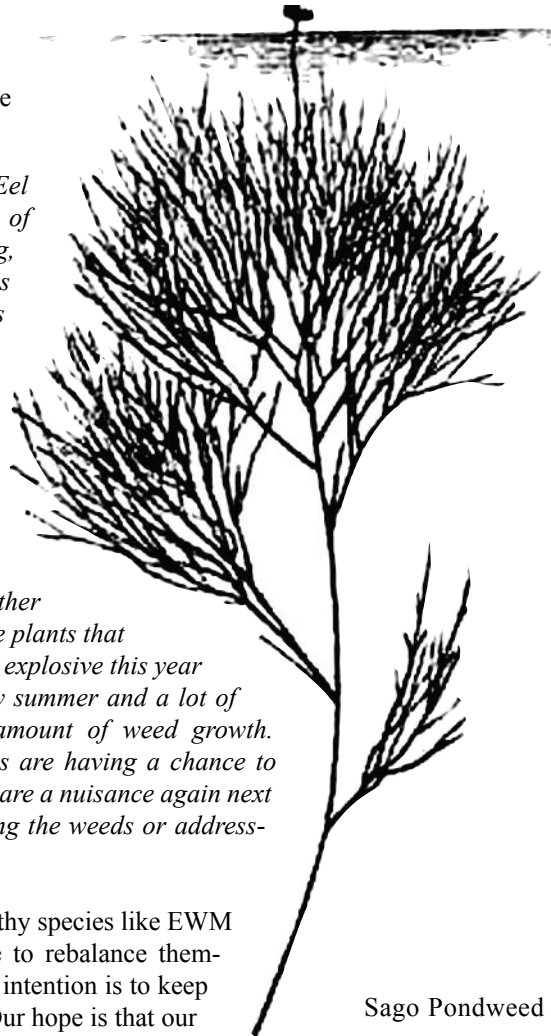
Q: After eradicating EWM, does the lake try to return to its pre-EWM state? Is this why Sago Pondweed is so explosive?

A: Unfortunately, where the EWM was growing other plants will take over. However, these are good native plants that are beneficial to a lake. The native species are more explosive this year for several reasons. First, we had a really hot, dry summer and a lot of Michigan lakes are experiencing a tremendous amount of weed growth. Second, this is the first year that the native species are having a chance to rebound from the dominance of EWM. If the natives are a nuisance again next year the board will consider mechanically harvesting the weeds or addressing them with herbicides.

Removing a highly dominant, unwanted, and unhealthy species like EWM from the lake has given native species the chance to rebalance themselves. This process does not occur overnight. Our intention is to keep the lake free of EWM in 2006 and into the future. Our hope is that our native population will have recalibrated itself by next summer. Please acknowledge that weed control is not an exacting science. We must continually monitor weed growth and respond accordingly.

The unfortunate truth is that we as land owners around Gravel Lake bear the burden of lake management. Although EWM was most likely brought to Gravel Lake by day users of the public access, it's still our problem with which to contend. Therefore, your support is appreciated and your questions are encouraged.

We sincerely appreciate your support in our efforts. Please direct any questions to Craig DeSimone at cucad4@hotmail.com.



Sago Pondweed

Editor's Note:

The following informational article was written by Ray Reed. Reed, of Sandy Beach, is chair of the GLA sub-committee devoted to researching the possibility of sewers at Gravel Lake and educating the homeowners.

Sewer System on Gravel Lake

Why does Gravel Lake need a sewer system?

Gravel Lake residents live in an area that does not have access to a public sanitary sewer. The residents rely on their own private septic system. The most common septic system has two main parts: a septic tank and an absorption field. Sewage flows into the tank where the solids settle to the bottom and are broken down by bacteria and stored as sludge. The nutrient and pathogen rich liquid flows out of the tank and into the absorption field where it is allowed to percolate into- and be naturally treated in- the soil.

The most significant of these nutrients are nitrogen and phosphorus. Only 10% of the nitrogen is removed by the soil. The remaining 90% contaminates ground and surface waters, potentially making them unsuitable for human consumption. Approximately 75-90% of the phosphorus in the wastewater is removed by the soils. The remainder finds its way into the ground or surface water and can cause increased weed growth which lowers the dissolved oxygen causing harm to aquatic animals. Not to mention that the weeds make the lake undesirable for recreational purposes. The pathogens that enter the soil consist of bacteria and viruses. Bacteria are killed in the soil but can make their way to surface and ground water in wet or porous soil. Viruses can stay in the soil indefinitely. When there is a high water table, which is common around Gravel Lake, the soil cannot properly filter the soil contaminants.

What is the Gravel Lake Association Doing About Our Septic Tank Concerns?

Wightman and Associates from Benton Harbor, Michigan, was contacted earlier this year to perform a feasibility study. The study was designed to determine if a Gravel Lake and Fish Lake sewer project was financially feasible. In August 2005, the engineering firm presented the findings to representatives from Gravel and Fish Lakes, along with township supervisors in Porter and Marcellus.

What is the sewer timeline?

The feasibility study was presented to the Gravel Lake Board and Gravel Lake residents on Saturday, August 27th. There was overwhelming support. The Gravel Lake Sewer Committee will continue to pursue the installation of sewers around Gravel Lake. The timeline for the project is outlined below.

Fall 2005: The Gravel Lake Sewer Committee will continue to work with the engineering firm to finalize costs and provide this information to the residents.

Spring 2006: Start the sewer petition process.

Spring 2007: Submit petitions to Porter Township for final approval and initiate the financing and legal paperwork.

Spring 2008: Start breaking ground to install new sewer.

(Sewer System on Gravel Lake continued)

The engineering firm described three treatment alternatives. The conceptual cost of the project was reported to be \$10,000.00 per household with a monthly fee of around ~\$40.00 (Please note: These costs are preliminary and the final total could increase or decrease). The engineering firm is currently working with the Gravel Lake Sewer Committee to research available grant money. The engineering firm has confirmed that low interest loans (government sponsored) will be available. There will also be a deferment program available for low income residents. For more information please visit the Gravel Lake Sewer website at <http://www.gravellake.org/sewer-committee.html>.

What Are The Treatment Alternatives?

Treatment Alternative 1 consists of expanding the existing Village of Lawton Wastewater Treatment Facility by 0.140 MGD to serve the potential collection systems at Gravel and Fish Lakes in Porter Townships and Marcellus. The costs include adding a mechanical screen, expanding the basins, adding sludge storage, expanding the lab, control room and filter room, installing the necessary piping and electrical facilities, replacing the main control panel and installing a sludge waste meter.


Treatment Alternative 2 consists of the Village of Marcellus providing treatment capacity of 0.140 MGD to serve the potential collection systems at Gravel and Fish Lakes through construction of two new lagoon cells and upgrading the collection system to collect wastewater from the proposed service area.

Treatment Alternative 3 consists of construction a 0.140 MGD extended aeration wastewater treatment plant with tertiary treatment to serve the collection systems around Gravel and Fish Lakes. The new treatment plant would be constructed in Marcellus Township near the headwaters of the Rocky River.

Who Should I Contact With Questions?

Visit the Gravel Lake Sewer website at: <http://www.gravellake.org/sewer-committee.html>. OR
Contact Ray Reed, Sewer Committee Chairman, at 269-353-3288 or email at Ray.L.Reed@sbcglobal.net.

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Good Times on the 4th

It's hard to believe, but the Fourth of July was almost six months ago! I think it is safe to say that all participants had a great time. There was something for everyone over the course of the weekend of the Fourth; whether you were a runner in the Gravel Lake Fun Run, a 6 year old participating in the Kids' Games, or a slow passerby in the Boat Parade.

The Gravel Lake Fun Run, organized by Emily Moore, had more participants than last year. Jeremy Davies took first place for the second year in a row. Congrats Jeremy!

At the Kids' Games there was lots of laughter and lots of smiles! Kids of all ages participated in games of Tug-of-War, relay races, and water balloon tosses. The event was organized by Lauren Micheli, and with the help of several volunteers, the Kids' Games was a very successful event. We hope you had as much fun as we did! Special Thanks to Barb Wagar-Curley for her sponsorship of the Kids' Games.

The annual Chris Essling Memorial Volleyball Tournament got heated as a number of foursomes competed for first place under a very hot sun. In the end, it was Ashley Micheli, Kyle Radde, Mitch Kujawski, and Captain Alan (Boo) Reeder who took home the first place title.

On Sunday, July 3rd, the lake settled down, and a parade of wonderfully decorated boats drifted on by. Boats that participated in the Mardi Gras theme were decorated with streamers, beads, masks, and even live musicians! Good job to all the participants! All of the boats looked great.

2005 marked the re-introduction of the Paddle Boat Regatta. What a success! Organized by Michael Micheli, the race was the perfect blend of friends, fun, and paddle boats, mixed with a little bit of chaos. With a couple of malfunctioning vessels, there were boats going every which way. The paddleboat that overcame these obstacles was navigated by Ashley Micheli and Steph Raab, who took first. Ask anyone who was there-it was a site to see! Be sure to join us next year!



Kids Games



Boat Parade



Paddle Boat Regatta

(Good Times on the 4th continued)

The second annual Gravel Lake Social was yet another huge success. We had a great turnout, with about 250 tickets sold. Thanks to Vicki Laski for planning this successful and exciting event, and thanks again to the Peacock Ridge for the use of their banquet room.

The 1st Annual Gravel Lake Golf Scramble was held on August 6th at the Peacock Ridge Golf Course. Nine teams turned out to golf and compete for prizes. First prize was awarded to Carrol Rimes, Dean Rucinski, Jerry Altimus, and Troy Schroeder with ten under par. Second prize was awarded to Paul Winn, Art Earl, Lowell Blocker, and Mike Harris with six under par.

A very special thank you to all of the golfers who played to support the Gravel Lake Association. Thanks to Wheeled Coach, Galassi Cut Stone, Wagoner's Food Store, and the Sign Center for sponsoring holes. And finally, thanks to the Peacock Ridge for hosting the outing.

A sincere THANK YOU to all volunteers, participants, and donations! We couldn't do it without you!

If you have any suggestions for next year's events, please feel free to email your ideas to jamie_paramski@hotmail.com.



Gravel Lake Social

*Please note:
All pictures will also appear
in color at www.gravellake.org.

Trumpeter Swans At Gravel Lake



Trumpeter Swan

As you may have noticed this past summer, a mated pair of trumpeter swans found Gravel Lake and its surrounding wetlands a suitable place to raise their cygnets. The trumpeter swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) is one of Michigan's rarest and most beautiful wildlife specimens.

Pushed to the brink of extinction in the late 1800s by hunting and the draining of marshlands, only 66 trumpeter swans remained living in the United States by 1933. Once highly abundant in the Great Lakes region, the swans could then only be found in remote parts of Alaska and the Rocky Mountains.



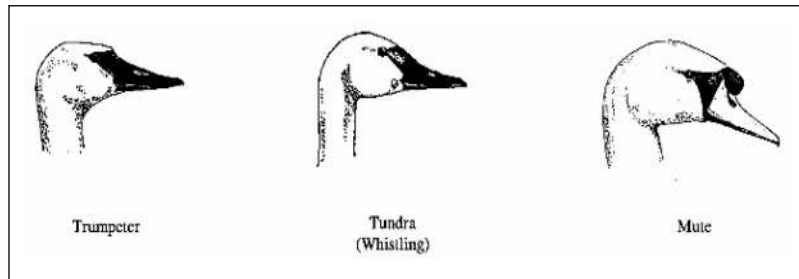
Historic breeding range of Trumpeter Swans in North America

(Trumpeter swans at Gravel Lake continued)

In the 1980s, a program to reintroduce the species to Michigan was started with the goal of having 200 trumpeter swans living in Michigan by the year 2000. The plan was even more successful than expected, resulting in a population of over 400 by that time, and it has been growing steadily ever since.

The trumpeter swan is the largest waterfowl in the world, usually weighing 21 to 30 pounds, though some weigh as much as 35 pounds. On the ground, they stand about 4 feet tall, and have a wingspan of nearly 8 feet. The far more common tundra swan is often confused for the trumpeter swan, though these birds are smaller and only pass through Michigan during migration. Tundra swans have a yellow spot in front of their eye, while most trumpeters do not. The best way to distinguish the two how-

ever, is by their call. The trumpeter makes a deep, resonant, trumpet-like call, while the tundra swan makes a high-pitched, quavering call like that of a Canada goose. The mute swan is similar in size to the trumpeter swan, though it is easily distinguished by its orange bill and fleshy knob on top of the bill. Mute swans are European in origin and are often considered a nuisance species because they can damage native plants' root systems and harass other waterfowl.



In Michigan, the trumpeter swan is considered a threatened species, and is actually more rare than the bald eagle. For those of you who visit Chamberlin and Streeter Beach, make sure that you are careful around the "Swans Crossing" markers, since the swans do cross the road there and are in danger of being hit. If someone is harassing the swans on the lake, do not hesitate to call the DNR or the Sheriff. And the next time that you see our elegant residents, be sure to have some respect, and make sure that others do too.

Marc Mascarello- Willow Beach

Information and Pictures compliments of Michigan DNR and Wisconsin DNR

In Memoriam

I sit here listening to Frank Sinatra on my stereo as my thoughts drift to my dearly departed friend, Ron Micheli. And I realize that there are many Gravel Lakers who were blessed with the privilege of having him as a friend and a companion. Perhaps you were invited into his home as a guest for dinner or for drinks. Perhaps he taught your children to ski on Gravel Lake with the patience of a Saint. Perhaps you saw him jogging past your cottage, always giving a friendly wave, with one or two of his children in tow. Perhaps you played poker with him late into a Saturday night. Perhaps you are one of the guys who regularly golfed with him, and he might have even soundly beaten you in his downward days. Those memories are now in the past as he has entertained at his last party, run his last race, golfed his last game, and is at rest at his final resting place...but his memory lives on...and on ... and on...friend extraordinaire...loving husband...adored father.... Rest in Peace Ron Micheli.

You are in our hearts forever more.... XO

cad



What is Purple Loosestrife?

Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is a wetland plant from Europe and Asia. It was introduced into the east coast of North America in the 1800s. First spreading along roads, canals and drainage ditches, then later distributed as an ornamental piece, this exotic plant is in 40 states and all Canadian border provinces.

The plant can form dense, impenetrable stands that are unsuitable as cover, food or nesting sites for a wide range of native wetland animals, including ducks, geese, rails, bitterns, muskrats, frogs, toads and turtles. Many rare and endangered wetland plants and animals also are at risk.

Purple loosestrife thrives on disturbed, moist soils, often invading after some type of construction activity. Eradicating an established stand is difficult because of an enormous number of seeds in the soil. One adult can disperse 2 million seeds annually. The plant is able to resprout from roots and broken stems that fall to the ground or into the water.

A major reason for purple loosestrife's expansion is a lack of effective predators in North America. Several European insects that only attack purple loosestrife are being tested as a possible long-term biological control in North America.

Likely means of spread: Seeds escape from gardens and nurseries into wetlands, lakes and rivers. Once in aquatic systems, seeds are easily spread by moving water and wetland animals.

(What is Purple Loosestrife continued)

This information and more can be found at:

<http://www.great-lakes.net/envt/flora-fauna/invasive/loosestrife.html>

Photo Credits: Paula McIntyre; and the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network. References: A Field Guide to Aquatic Exotic Plants and Animals, University of Minnesota Sea Grant Program

Checkbook Balance

Some of you have asked why we carry such a large balance in our checking account. The answer is that we are simply planning for the unforeseen. The majority of the board of trustees believes it is prudent to carry a substantial balance as an insurance of financial freedom. In the situation that the association must act quickly, we are prepared with a "nest egg" of approximately \$10,000. By carrying this balance, we can avoid lengthy fundraising efforts or petition processes. Lake management is often expensive and \$10,000 does not go a long way. Just as many of you do not run your checkbook balance down to zero every month, we exercise the same discretion.

Account Financial Summary

Beginning Balance as of 1/1/05	\$12,605.97
Deposits	
Channel Dredging Donations	\$1,345.00
2005 Association Dues	\$465.00
Split the Pot Proceeds from Annual Meeting	\$99.00
2005 Association Dues	\$100.00
Channel Dredging Donations	\$430.00
2005 Association Dues	\$552.00
2005 Association Dues	\$735.00
2005 Association Dues	\$965.00
2005 Association Dues	\$160.00
Gravel Lake Social Tickets	\$510.00
Gravel Lake Social Tickets	\$660.00
Advertising Fee & Paddle Boat Entry Fees	\$34.00
2005 Associations Dues	\$787.00
Gravel Lake Social Tickets	\$1,640.00
2005 Association Dues	\$593.00
2005 Association Dues	\$666.00
Golf Scramble	\$1,798.00
Golf Scramble - Hole Sponsor Donations	\$120.00
2005 Associations Dues	\$214.00
Gravel Lake Social Tickets	\$60.00

(Account Financial Summary continued)

Split the Pot Proceeds from Annual Mtg. 8/27/05	\$79.00
Koozie Cup Sales	\$148.00
2005 Associations Dues	\$435.00
2005 Associations Dues	\$105.00
Total Deposits	\$12,700.00
Expenses	
The Michigan Riparian - 44 Subscriptions	\$308.00
Superior Imaging	
- Printing & Distribution of Newsletter	\$540.00
Michigan Dept. of Commercial Services	\$20.00
Michigan Lake & Stream Assoc. Dues	\$125.00
Brucks Contruction - Channel Dredging	\$1,500.00
South Michigan Insurance Agency	
- Surety Bond Renewal	\$100.00
Michigan Waterfront Alliance	
- Membership Dues	\$25.00
Brucks Contruction - Channel Dredging	\$1,000.00
Postmaster	
- Lock Box Rental & Postage due fees	\$27.33
Superior Imaging - Printing of Newsletter	\$482.00
Vicki Laski - Reimbursement for D.J. deposit	\$50.00
Peacock Ridge - Gravel Lake Social	\$849.30
Jeff Anderson - D.J. Services for Social (balance)	\$250.00
John Swinderman - Cost for Petition Processing	\$40.00
Office Max - Lock Box & Receipts	\$21.00
Chip VanSchoyck - Printing of Social Tickets	\$28.00
Kathy Brooks - Copying Fees	\$29.68
Craig DeSimone	
- Reimbursement for Kinkos's & FedEx	\$17.89
Returned Check & Fee	\$45.00
Peacock Ridge - Gravel Lake Social	\$1,157.70
Newell Agency, Inc.	
- Directors & Officers Insurance	\$896.25
Newell Agency, Inc.	
- General Liability Insurance	\$262.00
Craig DeSimone - Postage	\$3.60
Sign Center -	
Koozie Cups & Golf Outing Signs	\$189.74
Mich. Dept of Labor Bureau of Commerical Services	\$20.00

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Gravel Lake Association

Membership Form: January 2006 - December 2006

Fill out and mail to:

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

This document is also available on the website @ www.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 2005 \$35.00

Optional Riparian magazine \$ 7.00

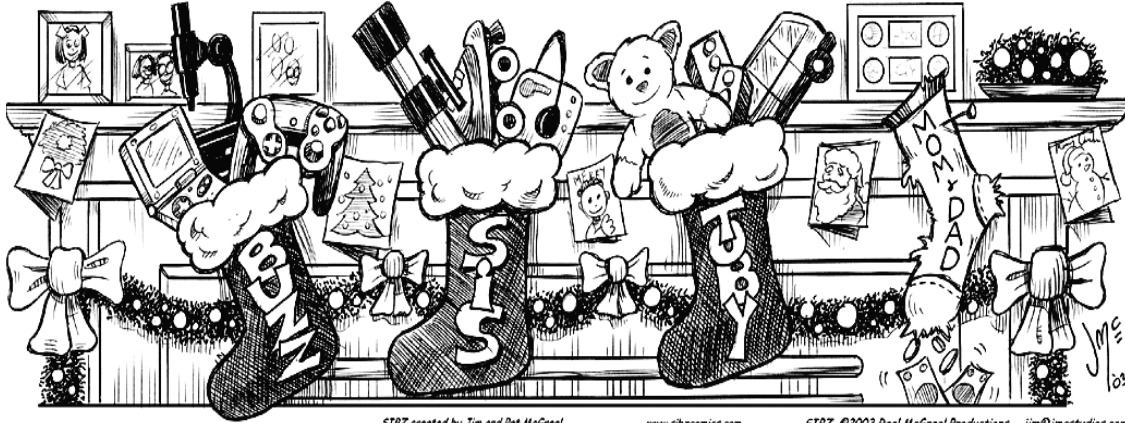
Additional Donation _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please indicate where your Riparian should be sent (circle one): home lake

SIBZ

by Jim McGreal



SIBZ created by Jim and Pat McGreal

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Contact us!

We want to hear from you! Please email your questions or ideas to Jamie Paramski at jamie_paramski@hotmail.com, or to Craig DeSimone at cucad4@hotmail.com. Also, stop by and take a look at our home on the web, at www.gravellake.org. There you will find pictures, past newsletters, minutes from recent Board of Trustee meetings, as well as the current weather at the lake.

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Marian Wagar Koerner

321-3200

Contacts List

GLA OFFICERS:

President - Craig DeSimone
773-750-5922
cucad4@hotmail.com

Vice President - Harry Laski

Secretary - Kathy Brooks

Treasurer - Janice Pinkos

TRUSTEES:

Chamberlin Beach - Bruce Melton

Dugan's Landing - Vicki Laski

Gebhard Beach - Carlie DeSimone

Huff's Landing - Doug Murphy

Idle Ease Beach - Karen Vaickus

Lewis Beach - Chip Van Schoyck

Sandy Beach - Tom Flavin, Suzanne Reed

Streeter Beach - Debbie Dorsey, Donna DeRosa

Willow Beach - Judy Weis

Winkler Beach - Pat Murray and Paul Galassi

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jamie_paramski@hotmail.com

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Channel Committee - Art Earl (chair)

Internet Operations - Jim McGreal
773-881-1160
jim@jmcstudios.com

Our Gravel Lake Heroes

On July 31st, Paul Walter heard a boy calling for help as he was sitting on his deck. The boy was about 30 ft. from Walter's pier. Walter's son, Ed Walter, and his son-in-law, Phil Rinaldi, both raced down to the lake and swam out to the boy in the water. They threw him a life preserver and brought him into shore. The boy was a guest at Gravel Lake, apparently staying at the Willow Beach rental house. All parties are recovered.



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Our newsletter goes out to all of the residents of Gravel Lake about three times a year. For rates and more information, email Jamie Paramski, editor of The Gravel Laker, at jamie_paramski@hotmail.com.

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