

Geneva Lake Guardian



GENEVA LAKE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 412
Lake Geneva, WI 53147
Phone 262/275-9656

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The Association is dedicated to Conservation, Ecological Preservation and Education, and the General Welfare of the Geneva Lake Area.

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF GENEVA LAKE ASSOCIATION, INC. • PROTECTING GENEVA LAKE SINCE 1935

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Lake Geneva, WI 53147
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N2454 Forest Rest Lane
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118 Circle Parkway
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111 Lower Loch Vista Dr.
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HAVE YOU SEEN BEAUTIFUL DOWNTOWN FONTANA?

After many years of development, Downtown Fontana has become a beautiful area on the west end of Geneva Lake. Much credit should go to the Village Board and to **Tom Whowell**, who just stepped down as Village President, and to citizens involved in the creation of the Community Development Authority. **Bill Turner**, long-time local citizen, who has served as Village Trustee, Village President, and currently President of the CDA, deserves great credit for what has transformed downtown Fontana from just a pass-through on Highway 67 to a charming town center. Highway 67 has now become a boulevard with a handsome center strip of trees and flowers. On both sides of the roadway are tall lamp-posts which light the way from St. Benedict's Catholic Church on the south to the Village Hall on the North and to the entry road leading to the Duck Pond Recreation Area. The whole entry road leading to the Duck Pond is currently being rebuilt and will serve as a utilitarian and handsome entry to the many large athletic fields at the top of the plateau.

The central boulevard running north and south now ties into the center boulevard running east and west which was completed several years ago. The boulevard is a thing of beauty with plantings of all types of flowers

and shrubs. It was completed several years ago and is professionally maintained to the credit of the Village Fathers.

At the Fontana Beach, the old dressing room/bathhouse has been replaced by a handsome new building. The design is controversial to some but nevertheless is a striking piece of architecture that serves well the public enjoying the beach. The open grass-covered park contains a baseball diamond, soccer field, a childrens' playground and an extensive picnic area overlooking Geneva Lake. It also has a new restroom building to serve the visiting public. The park is a wonderful place to relax and enjoy the Geneva Lake environment.

Fontana at the lakefront is a major launching point for boats that are trailered to Geneva Lake. There is then a large area for the parking of the trailers and the vehicles that brought them there.

The Abbey, and its large boat harbor, is still a centerpiece in Fontana and a major attraction to the traveling public. The hotel was recently refurbished and continues to be an attractive draw for visitors to the Geneva Lake Area.

To the surprise of many, something very new is happening in Fontana!

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GLA DEVELOPS WEBSITE - www.genevalakeassoc.org

The Geneva Lake Association now has its own website, and we invite you use it. From it, you can also connect to many other organizations and government offices around the lake.



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BLACK POINT MANSION RECEIVES OVER 8,000 VISITORS IN FIRST SEASON

In the first season of Black Point being open to the public, over 8,000 visitors have toured the property. All have arrived by Gage Cruise Line Boats. Carrying a maximum of 45 passengers on each trip and running two trips a day, the attraction has been a continuing sell-out. The guests come from all over the country but especially from Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin. They all expressed how exciting it was to see this magnificent historic home.

In late August, a celebration was held at the Mansion, a Gala, with over 200 guests attending. The guests were able to park their cars at the Majestic Marina, courtesy of **Greg Kunes**, owner. From the Marina, guests were transported by buses of various sizes in small groups to the Mansion, where they were greeted by men and women in costumes of the era when the Mansion was built (1888). Having toured the Mansion, the guests walked to the **Dick and Sue Lamb**

Historic Home adjacent to the Black Point Site. There they enjoyed an elegant buffet.

When all the guests had arrived at the Lamb Residence, **Mr. William Petersen**, the donor of the Black Point Property, was honored for his gift to the citizens of Wisconsin. Everyone present exclaimed what a wonderful evening it was.

Several weeks later, on Wednesday, September 12, the Geneva Lake Area Chamber of Commerce held an Awards & Recognition Ceremony at the Grand Geneva Resort, honoring among others, the Black Point Historic Museum for its contribution to the business life of the Lake Geneva Community. It was a sell-out evening. Mr. William O. Petersen was again honored for his gift to the State of Wisconsin.

The Black Point visitor season started on June 15, and the last tour will be held on October 31.



A NEWS ITEM FROM THE “NEW YORK TIMES” OF OCTOBER 15, 2007

The Breast Cancer Foundation at 60 East 50th Street, New York, NY, ran a full page ad in the Monday, October 15, 2007 issue of the “New York Times” honoring 151 of the world’s leading researchers in the field of breast cancer research.

Listed in the full-page ad of 151 names was **Susan E. Clare**, MD, PhD., of Indiana University, School of Medicine.

Sue is the wife of **Walter Larkin**, and sister-in-law of **Larry and Sue Larkin**, all well-known and long-time residents of Lake Geneva.

Sue has done research on breast cancer for many years at several medical institutions. She is one of the few honorees mentioned who has a doctoral degree as well as a Doctor of Medicine Degree in her field.

She has many friends in the Geneva Lake area, as has Walter. We all wish Sue continued success in this important field of research.

All of your many friends here at the lake want you to know how much we respect you for what you have achieved.

HAVE YOU SEEN BEAUTIFUL DOWNTOWN FONTANA? *continued from page 1*

A long-ago abandoned stone quarry was hidden for years by a high ridge of land encircling the quarry. From Highway 67 going north out of Fontana, the grassy berm to the left was just another overgrown strip of unkempt and unused piece of property. The owner for years and to recent time was a longtime summer resident, **Mr. Audino**. Three years ago, Mr. Audino sold the abandoned quarry property to a large developer and road-builder from the Chicago area. After much negotiating with the Fontana Village Fathers, a development plan for housing located on the base of the quarry was approved. The plan would include 66 residential lots for single-family homes.

Two months ago, the developer and road contractor, Plote Construction Company of Northern Illinois and doing

business as Par Development Company, removed the east wall of the quarry, which for the first time ever exposed the quarry floor and walls to the traveling public on Hwy. 67. Suddenly there were huge Caterpillar tractors (earth movers) that began moving earth from the top edge of the quarry to the floor, with the purpose of crafting a 45 degree angle side wall on the north and west sides of the quarry. This will prevent erosion of the side walls, which extend quite high above the quarry floor where the homes will be located. A very dramatic development indeed! The single entrance to the subdivision named "Cliffs of Fontana" will lead off the rebuilt Highway 67 as it winds up the hill.

It is interesting to watch this new development as the center of Fontana continues to evolve.

ETHANOL PLANT AWAITING FINANCING

In the GLA Summer Newsletter of 2007, it was noted that an Open House was held on July 18, in Sharon, Wisconsin to give the public an opportunity to learn about the plan of a new Ethanol plant to be built just west of Sharon and about 10 miles west of Geneva Lake. The company planning to build the \$236 million plant is to be entitled "Global Renewable LLC" and will be owned by local citizens. At that time, **Mr. Jeffrey Knight**, Executive Director of Global, stated that "The Company still needs to secure senior debt and to select a final contractor before they can break ground."

At the time of this writing, the end of October, the company, which had hoped to start construction by November 1, 2007, is still awaiting financing.

The subject of Ethanol is still an ongoing topic in the news these days, is still somewhat controversial, and has a direct impact on the cost of corn. Corn production in the U.S. is up dramatically this year to meet the demand of the Ethanol Industry. Walworth County and adjacent counties (such as Rock County to the west) are examples of this with hundreds and hundreds of acres of corn now coming to the market.

The following article, which appeared in the Thursday, October 11, 2007 issue of the "New York Times", presents an interesting viewpoint on the current emphasis of Ethanol production and is worthy of being quoted and read.

"Panel Sees Problems in Ethanol Production"

By Cornelia Dean

"Greater cultivation of crops to produce ethanol could harm water quality and leave some regions of the country with water shortages, a panel of experts is reporting. And corn, the most widely grown fuel crop in the United States, might cause more damage per unit

of energy than other plants, especially switch-grass and native grasses, the panel said.

"The panel, convened by the National Research Council, said improved agricultural practices, water recycling and other steps might reduce possible problems. But it added that 'fundamental knowledge gaps' made it difficult to predict what would happen as the nation's embrace of biofuel crops expanded. Meanwhile, it said, it would be 'prudent' to encourage the use of ethanol sources other than corn.

"Production of ethanol from corn kernels is on the rise", the panel said, adding that **President Bush** has called for the annual production of 35 billion gallons of ethanol by 2017, an amount that would account for about 15 percent of liquid transportation fuels in the United States.

"But increased production could greatly increase pressure on water supplies for drinking, industry, hydropower, fish habitat and recreation", the report said. Facilities that turn plants like corn into liquid fuel would add to the pressure on water supplies, though these bio-refineries are relatively modest water consumers compared with agriculture, the panel said.

"The research council, an arm of the National Academy of Sciences, issued the report yesterday. It is available at the academy's Web site, nas.edu. It was financed by the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies and foundations.

"The report noted that additional use of fertilizers and pesticides could pollute water supplies and contribute to the overgrowth of aquatic plant life that produces 'dead zones' like those in the Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, and elsewhere.

THE MIRBEAU-HUMMEL PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The development of the 710 acres of vacant land in the southeast corner of Lake Geneva may be coming to a head soon. As this article is being written, in less than a week on October 30, 2007, the Mirbeau-Hummel Group will be presenting its story before the City of Lake Geneva Plan Commission. The public has been invited to attend and address the Commission with both questions and statements on the proposal. When the question and answer period is over, the Plan Commission can itself discuss the matter and then vote one way or another on a recommendation to the full City Council.

The proposed development has been the subject of numerous meetings and presentations by the developers, numerous letters by groups such as Friends of Geneva Lake, and many newspaper articles. The subject is always "What is the right thing to do about this beautiful piece of vacant land"?

In a newspaper article published in the "Janesville Gazette" on Thursday, September 20, 2007, the Reporter, **Chris Schultz**, gave an excellent time line on what has transpired and it is worthy of being quoted below:

August, 2002: **Bob Hummel** and **Gordon Meling**, of Lake Zurich, Illinois, purpose construction of Geneva Ridge, a gated community for residents 55 and older. It calls for 1,200 to 1,300 units located in and around an 18-hole golf course. They ask to be annexed into the City of Lake Geneva.

September, 2002: Facing opposition, Hummel and Meling withdraw their annexation request.

October, 2003: The City formally rejects Hummel's petition to annex the property. Hummel again asks to be annexed.

January, 2004: The Lake Geneva Plan Commission recommends against annexation. The City Council again denies annexation.

October, 2004: Hummel again applies for annexation., A golf course is eliminated from the construction proposal, and development is reduced to about 1,000 homes.

November, 2004: The Town of Linn takes out full-page ads in a local newspaper arguing against annexation. The Lake Geneva Plan Commission again recommends against annexation. An annexation proposal would need a 6-2 super majority to be approved.

January, 2005: Against the recommendation of the Plan Commission, the Lake Geneva City Council votes 6-2 in favor of annexation.

December, 2005: Hummel brings a proposal for a conservation subdivision with 1,080 units. The Plan Commission is not impressed.

June, 2007: Hummel and Mirbeau of New York, team up for a new proposal combining a boutique Inn with 882 homesites. Several open houses are held in the Geneva Lake area where **John Terrell**, of Lake Forest, Illinois, a project executive for Mirbeau, presents the proposal to the public. One such meeting was held on September 26, 2007 from 10:00am to 2:00pm at the Lake Geneva City Hall, second floor.

October 30, 2007: The Lake Geneva Plan Commission will hold an Open Meeting for the benefit of the public to give their views and ask questions.

The project presents a huge challenge to the members of the Lake Geneva Plan Commission and to the City Council itself where it will probably end up.

There are some good points to the overall proposal, and there are some features of the plan that should be debated. One such feature is the location of the entry road off South Shore Drive leading onto the property. It is located immediately north of the intersection where South Shore Drive merges with Pilgrim Church Road (formerly Hwy. 120) and where the combined roadway goes into a blind curve. With a proposed 100-room hotel, a 300-car parking lot, and some 50 housing units (cottages, they call them), this would be a very dangerous intersection for cars coming from every direction. The entry/exit road for this part of the proposed subdivision should be located further south along Pilgrim Church Road.

The Proposal shows in some detail the street and lot layout for the entire 710 acres even though it will be years and years before the various stages (or phases) are developed into buildable lots. Most of the people involved, one way or the other, won't be around that long, and one can only wonder why the concern arises about the last phases to be developed. It is way too early to predict what the demands of the public will be 15-25 years from now, as suggested in the plan.

Much time and effort has been expended on the above proposal, and credit should be given to all who have involved themselves in the details of the project.

In like manner, credit should be given to the developers for their publications which have been done in a very detailed and sophisticated manner.

PUBLIC HEARING ON OCTOBER 30 WAS A SELLOUT, OVER 200 PEOPLE ATTEND

The Plan Commission agrees to extend the Open Hearing to Nov. 27, Tuesday evening, starting at 6:00 p.m.
Location not yet decided but may be at Badger High School.
(Call City Hall Clerk at 262-248-3673 for location or see local newspaper.)