

# Geneva Lake Guardian

GENEVA LAKE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 412  
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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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## MERCY HOSPITAL EXPANSION

In 2006 Mercy Walworth Medical Center became Mercy Walworth Hospital and Medical Center in order to reflect its expansion from an outpatient care facility to a hospital with 6-bed inpatient services. It also has a residency program that is approved by the American Medical Association. The Mercy website states, "Future plans call for expansion of the inpatient care area and more hospital beds." The website describes increasing need for medical care in the rapidly expanding Southern Lakes region of the state.

An article written by **Mike Ramczyk** in the December 25th issue of the Lake Geneva Regional News, informs readers that the Village of Williams Bay granted Mercy permission to hook up to connect to the village's sewer system. Previously, Mercy was on a septic system, and offered to pay for expenses incurred. The only shadow cast in the discussion was some concern on the part of some trustees regarding unspecified future expansion plans Mercy might have and how those plans could impact the village and surrounding area. As Ramczyk quotes trustee **Richard Croust**, "Mercy has never said their long-term plans." Trustees agreed that future board members will have to address issues such as water use, and the source for that water. Williams Bay granted Mercy access to village system for its sewer in 1995 when the facility was smaller, but

the new property Mercy acquired since then is in Geneva Township and trustees were concerned about unknown future plans.

The most recent issue of the free newspaper, The Beacon (dated January 2-15, 2009) has front page article describing the recently revealed expansion plans for Mercy, along with a rendering of the site which is printed in color to assist readers' visualization of the proposed hospital. Some of the information this detailed article relates describes the existing facility as 60,000 sq. ft., and proposed increase to 130,000 sq. ft., to allow for a 25-bed critical care hospital, along with 452 parking spaces. Included in the overall representation are tired gardens, kettle ponds and green open space. It is significant to note that the general term "open space" can be parking area, so the inclusion of "green" tells the reader the difference.

Mercy representatives are initiating the process to gain approval from the various agencies and authorities affected by this plan. This informative article concludes with Village of Williams Bay trustees' concerns that are also stated in Mike Ramczyk's article, and adds that the hospital is not immediately adjacent to the village, therefore cannot be annexed. If Williams Bay grants water privileges to Mercy it would set a precedent for future developments when it has denied this access to others in the past.



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## FLOODING IN FONTANA

Fontana Corner Market owner **Don Ketterhagen** has been busier than he ever expected to be, but not with what you might think. **Robert Ireland** writes in the Lake Geneva Regional News on December 11, 2008 that every day Ketterhagen pumps water from under his gas station, and estimates 100,000 gallons of ground water have been removed. This was not a problem when he bought the business, and Market Manager **Mary Chamberlain**, who has worked there for over 2 years, said groundwater was pumped only one time during her time of employment. She also noticed the cement retaining wall collects water and mildew has formed on it, along with water remaining in the backyard.

Ketterhagen fears that the freeze and thaw of local weather conditions could undermine the safety of his gas pumps and he could lose his business if the problem continues.

In a follow-up article by Ireland, we learned that nearby business owners, **Bob Hutchinson** of Fontana Outdoor Sports, and **Eric Hurkman**, owner of Fontana Jeweler have noticed increased groundwater levels. In fact, according to the article, "Hutchinson said his neighboring home has been filled with water on a regular basis." Furthermore, "He said his home has been in the family for the last 62 years, and this is the first time he has faced constant flooding."

Fontana Public Works Director **Craig Workman** said village officials are investigating the problem in

order to seek solutions. Noting that there has been an unusually high amount of precipitation, he also recognizes that it could be related to construction work. Ketterhagen suspects that changes in the topography caused by the Cliffs of Fontana development, construction on Hwy. 67 and Porter Court Plaza, in addition to Alliant Energy's burial of utilities could be contributing factors.

One of the issues involved in the recent groundwater study of the Lake Geneva area are the impacts of future development on the lake and groundwater. Also, the draft of the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for the Town of Linn, WI states on page 22, "Planning urban development away from environmental corridors helps to prevent problems such as water pollution, wet and flooded basements, and building and pavement failures." One of the attributes the Plan includes in its definition of environmental corridors is, "Rugged terrain and high relief topography." This is not to say that there is proof of a connection between what is plaguing Fontana business owners and the construction projects listed above, but rather to raise awareness and call attention to the possible ramifications of development that may be beneficial to towns and villages, but ultimately will cause hardship and problems for residents, and loss of some of the character of the local that attracted original popularity and settlement.

## THE EEF HAS RECORD YEAR IN 2008

The Environmental Education Foundation (EEF) awarded a record \$27,000 in scholarships and grants to Geneva Lake area youth for environmental centered studies and experiences.

During 2008, 18 area students received scholarships ranging from financial support for grade school level nature adventure camps and high school level natural resource center workshops to tuition support at college undergraduate and graduate levels. The Foundation Board increased the graduating high school senior scholarships from \$1,500 to \$2,000 and the Thomas E. Reynolds 4-year endowment scholarship to a graduating senior from \$6,000 to \$8,000. This is the largest annual award given to a high school senior around the lake.

In addition, the EEF provided grant support to area grade schools for their outdoor education programs, and to Yerkes Observatory for their outreach education programs with area grade school and high school students and teachers.

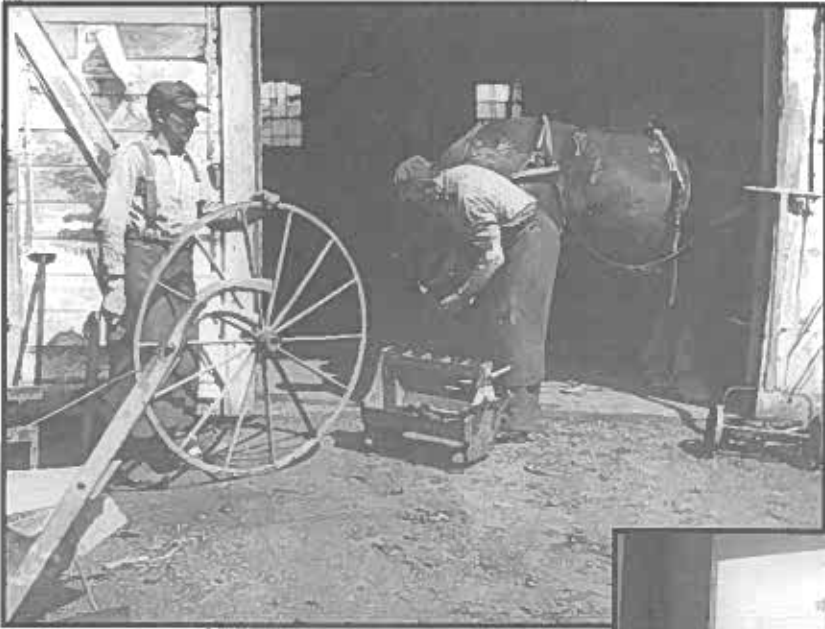
All of this is possible only because of the many

donations received each year from Geneva Lake families and friends. It is important to stress that 100% of each donor's contribution funds these student scholarships since the Foundation's expenses are completely covered by its investment income.

While the EEF is an affiliate of the Geneva Lake Association, and was founded in 1980 by leaders of the GLA, the Foundation has a separate Board, independent By-laws and tax exempt IRS number, as well as separate charitable fund assets and fund raising appeals.

The Foundation current scholarship winners are always introduced to Lake residents at the Geneva Lake Association Annual Meeting in July.

The Mission of the EEF is focused on the "...promotion of environmental awareness to all ages throughout the Geneva Lake Area and the awarding of educational scholarships to area students for environmental centered studies and experiences." To learn more, visit the EEF website at: [www.envedfnd.org](http://www.envedfnd.org)



Vintage photo loaned to Yerkes Observatory from the archives of the Williams Bay UCC Church. This photo taken by Yerkes photographer Blakesly in 1914 to document a “Day in the life of Williams Bay.”

## NEW MEMBERS

Since our last newsletter, we have two new members of the Association

**Vincent & Patricia Colber** Laramoor

**John D. Simms, Jr.** Academy Estates

*Welcome!*

We intend to list all new members of the GLA in the newsletter. Of course, membership automatically includes listing in the annual Directory.



*“One kind word  
can warm  
three winter months.”*