

# Geneva Lake Guardian



GENEVA LAKE ASSOCIATION

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

Summer 2008

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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## TRAGIC BOATING ACCIDENT ON GENEVA LAKE

On Saturday, June 28, 2008, just after 2:00 pm, the Geneva Lake Law Enforcement Agency responded to a report of a woman being struck by a boat near Black Point on the South Shore of Geneva Lake. The woman, **Christina Ann Tully**, age 28, of Winter Gardens, FL, but currently residing in Chicago, had been wakeboarding and fell into the water. While she was waiting for the boat pulling her to return, she was struck by another boat. The prop from the boat struck Ms. Tully. Despite efforts by several people and the Water Safety Patrol to assist her after she was pulled to a pier, she was later pronounced dead at Lakeland Medical Center. According to the Police Boat, at the time of the accident on Saturday, a storm was approaching and waves were between 2-3 feet high. The driver who struck Ms. Tully couldn't see her in the water.

The Water Safety Patrol Director, **Ted Pankau**, who had crews on the scene, said he wouldn't consider the lake extremely busy that afternoon. There were plenty of boats out there, but compared to a typical Saturday afternoon, it was below average. Pankau noted, however, the conditions on the lake made it difficult to see people in the water. The pier to which they brought Ms. Tully was below a steep bluff, but it was too wavy to move to another pier. The Rescue Squad from Linn Township was called and asked to come to the pier. They were able to quickly identify the pier location by land by referring to a cross reference book that was published by the Geneva Lake Association that listed all the piers around the lake in numeric order and their city and street address when coming by land.

The Rescue Squad took her to the Lakeland Hospital in Elkhorn, where she was pronounced dead from severe cuts on her body. The Flight for Life had been called

to respond, but the helicopters were grounded because of the incoming storm.

**Bob Flannery**, the President of the Water Safety Patrol, reported to **Jim Hanny**, President of the Geneva Lake Association, later that afternoon, that the cross-reference book that the Geneva Lake Association had recently prepared and published was extremely helpful in guiding the Linn Rescue Squad to move directly to the street address of the property on the lake. Bob Flannery noted in his message to Jim Hanny the following: "I would like for you to know that there was a very severe accident off of Black Point this afternoon. All we had as we were responding was a pier number the parties had gone to. Had it not been for the new Cross Reference Book that the GLA took the time to publish, we would not have been able to give Linn Rescue an address that they needed to find this obscure location. If there was ever a doubt in anyone's mind as to whether putting this kind of information out was the appropriate thing to do, there should no longer be. This saved precious time in an extremely critical situation where every second counted."

Jim Hanny, having received this e-mail from Bob Flannery, replied as follows: "Please accept the gratitude of the Geneva Lake Association for your timely comments and perceptions. The critical response of the Water Safety Patrol and their heroic efforts to save a life make all of the citizens in the Geneva Lake Area thankful for the Water Safety Patrol in their continued effort to keep the lake safe. Your continued service as a Director of our Association and President of the Water Safety Patrol is deeply appreciated."

(Parts of the above story were written by **Lisa Seiser**, of the "Lake Geneva Regional News.")



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# GENEVA LAKE AREA LOSES TWO DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS

## CHARLOTTE BEST PETERSON

The Geneva Lake Community lost one of its leading citizens when she passed away on June 22, 2008, after a long illness. Charlotte was 80 years old and had lived her entire life in this area. She was loved by many. The Lake Geneva Regional News printed an extensive obituary on July 3, 2008, and the following comments are from that obituary.

“Charlotte devoted most of her adult life to being a local school teacher and private tutor, a civic and social worker, and a public official in both elected and appointed offices in Lake Geneva and Geneva Township. She was the daughter of **Lloyd and Marion Best**. Her father, a leading realtor, was a Mayor of the City of Lake Geneva when he died in 1949. Her mother was a school teacher. Charlotte’s ancestors - the **Harkness Family** - were among Geneva’s earliest settlers, having come here in 1837.

“Charlotte graduated from Lawrence University in 1950. She married **Clarence Peterson** in 1953.

Charlotte’s teaching career included elementary and high school levels and tutoring home-bound students with disabilities. Among the home-tutored were Japanese arriving in this area with the coming of the Kikkoman Corporation in Walworth.

“Over the years, she served on many public boards, plan commissions, womens’ clubs and museums. She was a long-time member of Pilgrim Church. Her many achievements led to her being named to Badger High School’s “Wall of Success.”

“She is survived by her husband, Clarence, their three sons, **Eric, Spencer and Jason**, and a grandson **Adam**.” Clarence was well known and well liked as the long-time Manager of the Lake Geneva Country Club.

A memorial service, held on July 9, 2008, at Linn Presbyterian Church, was attended by their many, many friends.

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## RAYMOND I. GERALDSON

Raymond Geraldson was known locally for many years as a Director and then President of the Geneva Lake Association. He was a distinguished lawyer in Chicago and a founding partner of Seyfarth, Shaw, Fairweather and Geraldson. The firm was started in 1945 by these four men and grew to embrace over 500 lawyers, with branches in principal U.S. cities and overseas. During his career, he served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of American University in Washington DC, was Vice Chairman of the American Red Cross and other major roles in the Federal Government, all the while maintaining his partnership in his law firm.

He was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and UW Law School, having received his degrees with

high honors. He was also a graduate of the Columbia University Law School in New York City. He had many opportunities to join distinguished law firms in New York City but chose to stay in the Midwest. He was a native of Racine, WI, raised his family in Park Ridge, IL, and many years ago bought their beautiful home on the South Shore of Geneva Lake, which they enjoy to this day.

Ray died at the age of 96 and is survived by his wife, **Evelyn**, his three children, his eight grandchildren and his seven great grandchildren. A memorial service was held at Linn Presbyterian Church on April 3, 2008, and was attended by hundreds of his friends and family.

The Geneva Lake Association was honored to have had Ray serve as Director and President.

## THE MIRBEAU GROUP AND HUMMEL GROUP END THEIR CONTRACT TO DEVELOP THE 711 ACRES

**Lisa Seiser**, Editor of the “Lake Geneva Regional News,” reported in the Thursday, July 17 Issue that the contract has ended between Hummel and the Mirbeau Group to develop the now famous 711 acres of land on the southeast side of the city next to Big Foot Beach State Park. She also noted that “More than two months after the City Council voted unanimously to deny the Mirbeau-Hummel general development plan proposal for Hummel’s property, there is talk that a new plan could be on the horizon.

“Alderman **Gary Dunham** mentioned at the July 7 Committee of the Whole Meeting that Hummel may be coming back with a plan in the next couple of

months. Hummel Attorney, **Mark Sansonetti**, said “There is nothing concrete or official put together at this time.” It was noted that the Hummel Group will be discussing a plan for a land division of the current eight parcels that make up the 711-acre property. The division would create 18 rural holding lots ranging in size from 35 to 58 acres.

At the time of writing this GLA Newsletter, there is no confirmed land development plan. An attempt will be made to include whatever is known in this newsletter just prior to sending this material to the printer.

## CITIZENS OF THE CITY OF LAKE GENEVA – MEET YOUR MAYOR WILLIAM “BILL” CHESEN

Recently this writer had a short, but charming, visit with the newly-elected Mayor of the City of Lake Geneva. I told him I would like to include a biographical sketch of him in our next “Geneva Lake Association Newsletter,” and asked him if he would send such a sketch. He agreed, and on June 25 sent me a letter, much of which is quoted below. It is most interesting reading.

“I am 54 years of age and was raised in the area. I spent the majority of my childhood summers at my Grandfather’s home in Wooddale Subdivision on the South Shore of Lake Geneva. My Grandparents first built a cottage there around 1920, and my father, **Frank Chesen**, remembers driving the family model “T” Ford from Chicago to Lake Geneva many times as a young man. My parents built a house in Pell Lake in the late ’40s, and I grew up in that home. I graduated from Badger High School in 1942 and went into college at UW College Platteville. I eventually completed my BS in Criminal Justice at Alameda University. During the summer of 1973, 1974, and 1975, I worked for the Dept. of Natural Resources as a Park Patrolman and Special Warden. My main duty stations were Big Foot Beach State Park and the Kettle Moraine southern unit.

In April, 1976, I took a job as a Police Officer with the City of Racine Police Department. I worked for them until this past May, when I retired after more than 32 years. I spent the majority of these years as a Narcotics Investigator working with the Racine County Drug Unit, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

While my family has continued to live in the area since the 1920’s, I did not move back to Lake Geneva to live full time until 2000. My wife and I have two sons, two daughters and two grandsons. My wife works for Trinity Lutheran Church in Pell Lake, as the Administrative Director. We are avid boaters and spend as much time as we can on the lake.

Having served as an Alderman since 2004, I was elected City Council President for two years and at the recent election, was elected Mayor. I look forward to future contacts with you and the Geneva Lake Association.

Sincerely,  
Bill Chesen, Mayor

## WISCONSIN'S NEW PIER REGULATIONS

In 2004, the State of Wisconsin updated their pier regulations by setting size requirements under which owners could be considered exempt from obtaining permits. Since that time, much discussion and some confusion has existed regarding the manner in which the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will enforce these regulations as well as what new restrictions will be applied to current piers. Wisconsin Act 204, enacted April 1, 2008, and published April 15, 2008, expands the configuration options for piers to be exempt from requiring a permit. According to the DNR, more existing piers that were placed in service before February 6, 2004, will meet the exemption criteria as outlined below.

A 2005 DNR study showed more than 85% of all existing piers on Wisconsin rivers and lakes already meet these requirements. It found an additional 10% of piers that did not meet the size requirements for exempt piers already meet the “grandfather” requirements. This leaves 5% of the piers studied in 2005 in the oversized category.

### SIZES FOR EXEMPT PIERS

**Width:** Maximum pier width of 6 feet. If it is not located in an “Area of Special Natural Resource Interest” a loading platform 8 feet long x 8 feet wide is allowed at the end of a pier.

**Length:** The length needed to moor your boat or use a boat lift, or 3-foot water depth, whichever is greater.

**Location:** The pier should not interfere with rights of other riparian owners.

**Number of Boats:** 2 are allowed for the first 50 feet of frontage, and 1 for every additional 50 feet.

According to the DNR, most piers that do not meet

the criteria above can be “grandfathered” through a one-time free registration process if they:

- were in their current configuration before February 6, 2004;
- have a main “stem” of a maximum 8 feet wide;
- have a loading platform of a maximum 200 square feet or 300 square feet if said platform is 10 feet wide or less;
- do not interfere with rights of other riparian owners.

Owners of piers that meet the criteria as described have until April 1, 2011, to register with the DNR.

Wisconsin Senator **Neal Kedzie**, who co-sponsored the legislation, spoke on this topic at the July 12th GLA annual meeting. Senator Kedzie said that one of the main targets of the act is oversized loading platforms on both lakes and rivers. It appears that the length of piers is not a DNR priority at this time. Kedzie also stated that, due to budget and manpower constraints, DNR enforcement will continue to be on the basis of citizens’ complaints, rather than overt action by the department.

In conclusion, until the DNR can implement the new regulations, pier owners should review their piers on the basis of the new regulations, with the main emphasis on the size of their loading platform. Owners with piers exceeding the guidelines have until April 2011 to register or downsize their pier - they certainly should not expand it. The DNR has a brochure titled “Pier Planner” publication #FH-017 available at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Paul G. Hull, Sr.**

## PIER NUMBERS NEEDED ON YOUR PIER!

It is important to have the number of your pier attached to the framework of your pier, either with metal letters or with the letters painted on.

If there is a boating accident, it is very important that the Water Safety Patrol or the Lake Police be able to identify the scene of an accident. Using the Cross Reference Book provided by the GLA, and referred to in this Newsletter, the Patrol or Police can

quickly identify to an ambulance or helicopter on shore what street address the accident victim is located at.

These pier numbers should be located facing out so the pier is easily identified from passing patrol boats. It would also be wise to have the pier’s number facing the shore and lake path, again, for ease in identifying the site of an accident.

# THE MARKET CONTINUES TO CHANGE

by: Robert M. Rauland

Home sellers for the third straight year are seeing less profit. The sold volume in Walworth County is down (41.3%) from two years ago<sup>1</sup>. The time a single family, lakefront home is on the market was 166 days in 2007 based on the 18 properties sold; the number of days has now risen to 260 days in 2008 based on the 5 properties sold thus far this year. In 2007, four vacant single family lakefront properties were sold at an average price of \$18,207 per frontage foot with 392 days on the market. Zero vacant lakefront properties have been sold this year<sup>2</sup>. The supply of listings is continuing to grow.

“Nervous investors spark disastrous end to trading day”<sup>3</sup>. The bailout of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae may cost tax payers billions. Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae have about 5 trillion dollars in loans. The U.S. government seizure of IndyMac, on Friday, July 11th, 2008, raised concerns for many consumers about the banking system. “The Senate is expected to pass a sweeping plan to rescue hundreds of thousands of homeowners from foreclosure this week, a necessary and proper response to the collapse of the mortgage market bubble that has threatened the entire [real estate market] and the nation’s economy generally.”<sup>4</sup>

There are 21 active, single family, lakefront listings currently; with an average list price of \$2,930,000 with an average of 97.3 frontage feet. The 99 active, single family, lake access properties have an average list price

of \$963,734.<sup>5</sup> The supply continues to rise. **Perhaps the real estate market is a lot like water finding its own level.**

M&I Bank of Milwaukee is writing off almost 400 million in loans attributed primarily to their Florida and Arizona markets. Fortunately in Walworth County our locally owned and operated banks have not been involved in the sub-prime lending market. The Realtors® of Walworth County are fortunate to not have received the full impact of the national market due to the close proximity of Lake Geneva to Chicago. Our advantage is people can still drive from Chicago and back on one tank of gas.

<sup>1</sup>Based on a Monthly Activity Status Report Per County from Milwaukee Metro Listing Service

<sup>2</sup>Based on data recorded in Milwaukee Metro Listing Service.

<sup>3</sup>From the article titled **Nervous investors spark disastrous end to trading day** by Michael M. Grynbaum in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, dated July 10, 2008

<sup>4</sup>Editorial: **Creating a safe harbor**, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, dated July 8, 2008

<sup>5</sup>Statistics as recorded in Milwaukee Metro Listing Service as of July 11, 2008

**Bob Rauland**, owner of The Rauland Agency in Walworth, made this presentation at our GLA Annual Meeting on July 12, 2008. He was then asked to submit it in writing for publication in this GLA Newsletter.

## WATER SAFETY TIPS BY WATER SAFETY PATROL

Water Safety Patrol Director **Ted Pankau** has tips to help avoid injury while enjoying a day out on the lake.

1. Be more visible by wearing a brightly-colored life vest. Many of the life vests being used today are black or blue, the worst colors, according to Pankau. Wear life vests that are bright orange, green or red.
2. When someone falls while wakeboarding or skiing, they should hold up their ski or the wakeboard out of the water so people can see them.

3. Make sure the observer in the boat, which is required, relays information to the driver that the person tubing, wakeboarding or skiing has fallen and to turn the boat around immediately to pick the person up so the person is not vulnerable in the water for long.
4. Other boaters must always be observant to what is happening around them. If they see a boat towing a tuber, watch closely for people who fall and stay clear.

## GLA DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS ELECTED AT JULY 12 ANNUAL MEETING

Of the 27 Directors that comprise the Board of the Geneva Lake Association, nine are elected or re-elected each year. This year, the nine Directors whose terms expire on July 31, 2008, agreed to be re-elected for another three-year term. They are:

Joy P. Rasin	Martha Craven
James Voss	Howard A. Vaughan, Jr.
Terry Quinn	James P. Hanny
Margaret Farwell Goes	Stephen H. Sills
John P. Goggin	

The present Officers were re-elected for a new one-year term beginning July 1, 2008, with one exception. Tom Reynolds, Jr. decided not to run again as Second Vice President. In his place, Joy P. Rasin was elected.

The Officers for the coming year will be:

President	James P. Hanny
First Vice President	James W. Gee
Second Vice President	Joy P. Rasin
Treasurer	James. M Voss
Secretary	Alice J. Morava
Director of Field Operations	Russell J. Hovde
Assoc. Director of Field Operations	Paul G. Hull, Sr.
Field Treasurer	Adelle Abrahams

Our thanks go to all the members of the Board and Officers for their work and support of this now 73-year-old Organization.

### THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION, INC.

Our affiliate, The Environmental Education Foundation, Inc., also had elections at the GLA Annual Meeting for four of its Directors, with terms expiring in 2011: **Jim Gebhardt, Ted Peters, Terry Quinn, and Tom Reynolds, Jr. John Schwenn** was elected for the one-year term replacing **Rich Austin**. At the Board Meeting of EEF, the following Officers were elected:

<b>Ted Peters</b>	President
<b>Tom Reynolds, Jr.</b>	Vice President
<b>Cindy Rademaker</b>	Secretary
<b>Gwen Clausius</b>	Treasurer

The Foundation, which raises its own funds, grants thousands of dollars in scholarships to college-bound students whose interests are in environmental studies. A special fund within the EEF, the Thomas E. Reynolds Endowment, grants a four-year scholarship to a student involved in environmental studies. The winner this year is **James Oldeschulte** of Williams Bay High School.

*Our congratulations to James.*

### GLA WEBSITE

[www.genevalakeassoc.org](http://www.genevalakeassoc.org)

**The Geneva Lake Association now has its own website, and we invite you to use it.**

**From it, you can also connect to many other organizations and government offices around the lake.**