



GENEVA LAKE ASSOCIATION
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Our mission is to enhance the conservation, preservation, environmental integrity and general welfare of Geneva Lake with timely and issue-centered communications and education through a wide membership base of area residents and local businesses.

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GENEVA LAKE ASSC., INC. • PROTECTING GENEVA LAKE SINCE 1935

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DNR mandate adds to lake level problem

Geneva Lake Level Corp. fights back

The water level of Geneva Lake is down—way down. Everyone you talk to has his or her own idea of just how far down it is, and what should be the ‘normal’ level at this time of year. Some will tell you it’s eight or nine inches below normal, some will say its as much as two feet lower than it should be. ‘Normal’ evidently relates to somewhere within the records that have been kept for 117 years.

The drought of 2012 certainly is the largest factor. According to Geneva Lake Environmental Agency Director Ted Peters, modeling has shown that during a normal year, about 1/3 of the water input is from ground water running into the lake, and another third from rain and snow falling directly onto the lake. Both are significantly reduced by the drought. The major loss of water during the summer is through the White river, assuming the lake level is high enough to flow over the spillway. During drought times when lake level drops below the spillway, evaporation becomes the major loss of water, accounting for as much as 85% of the annual water loss from Geneva Lake. Evaporation is highest in mid and late summer.

But according to the Geneva Lake Level Corporation (GLLC), another factor is now the Wisconsin DNR. The GLLC has for over 118 years maintained lake levels via operation of the dams located at the east end of the lake. During times of high water, the spillway allowed water to spill over into the White River. Dam gates were normally kept closed, especially during the late summer when levels receded.

According to a GLLC report dated October 8, the DNR in July directed that the GLLC open the gates and release water at the minimum rate of 1.9 cubic feet per second *at all times* into the White River. A DNR marine biologist found the fish in the White River between Center Street and Burger King to be stressed.

Note the term ‘at all times.’ According to Bill Gage, Jr., a member of GLLC and owner of Gage Marine, the DNR requirement to spill water is not just during this

drought, but forever. The GLLC has hired attorneys and hydrology experts in their opposition to the DNR mandate, which came with the threat of a citation and up to a \$1,000 per day fine for non-compliance.

The DNR and GLLC have met, and with no resolution, more meetings are planned. According to an email from Senator Neal Kedzie to the GLA, he and Representative Tyler August met with GLLC members to view the dam and spillway to get a closer look at the issue. Kedzie writes, “I remain engaged in this matter and hope a more reasonable solution to this problem can be found for both the benefit of Geneva Lake and the White River.”

The lower water level has caused problems for boaters and businesses alike. Charlie Harrett of Gage Marine reports difficulties getting some deep draft keelboats to the company’s hoist for winter haul out. Gage is looking at great expenses to lengthen tracks to accommodate excursion boat storage.

Larry Quist of Pier Docktors warns fall boaters who are more likely to hit the cribs of piers that have been removed, and worries that pier cribs in shallow waters may be destroyed or moved by moving ice next spring.

Many boaters have been dry-docked in the past couple of months, unable to remove their boats from lifts. Race Committee from the Lake Geneva Yacht Club forced their support boat off its lift in early September and tied it between docks for the remainder of the racing season.

Just how much water is being lost because of the DNR mandate is difficult to determine, but Peters thinks it could be about ¼ - ½ inch per month. Gage thinks it could be much more than that.

The only advantage of the low water seems to be that needed concrete repairs can be made to the spillway. Workers are on that job now. Oh, yes, and perhaps the fish in the river are less stressed now.

The GLLC anticipates spending substantial dollars to present their case to the DNR in protection of the historic lake levels, and is welcoming donations to Geneva Lake Level Corporation, PO Box 656, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Geneva Lake at its fall finest



*Photo courtesy of
Jerry's Majestic Marine*

Water Safety Patrol breaks record for rescues

The Geneva Lake Water Safety Patrol reports that it finished up one of its busiest summer seasons ever. Patrol Lifeguards at area beaches rescued 25 swimmers via pull-outs, shattering the old record of 19 in a season. Municipalities around the lake reported record crowds at the beaches mainly due to the hot, dry weather that persisted for most of the summer.

Patrol boat crews responded to a total of 32 rescue calls during the season and hundreds of boater assistance calls. Additionally, the Patrol's Educational Programs, which include swimming lessons and boat safety classes, served over 1000 students.

Patrol Director Ted Pankau said that due to the extremely busy summer, more crews were added to keep up with the demand. He also said that because of this, the organization is seeing a spike in



All occupants of this swamped boat were safely taken aboard the Water Safety Patrol boat during one of the many Boater Assistance calls to which the Patrol responded this summer. The owner/operator of the swamped boat (pictured), reported that waves crashed over the stern of his vessel, causing it to swamp and eventually capsize.

operational expenses, and that the Patrol will need help in meeting those expenses.

The Water Safety Patrol is a private, non-profit organization which gets most of its funding from private donations.

For more information on the Water Safety Patrol, please visit their web site at www.watersafetypatrol.org or call 262-245-6577.

... from The Rauland Agency

Real estate trends

According to Multiple Listing Service (MLS) statistics, from January 1, 2012 through October 13, 2012 there were 10 direct lakefront, single-family properties sold. They ranged from 79' to 159' of private lake front with riparian rights. The average price per front foot of these ten properties was \$18,500, including improvements located thereon. One sale was not used due to the significant improvements located there on which skewed the average price per frontage foot. The sales ranged in value per frontage foot from \$11,728 to a high of \$27,318 with improvements located thereon.

MLS notes 945 sales in 2012 to date compared to 796 in 2011. Single family detached residence inventory is down 12% as of the end of September compared to last year.

It was announced that the Tax Apportionments of TIDOUT Equalized Values for Big Foot UHS District which includes properties in 7 villages and townships, has a loss of \$182,633,266 from 2011-2012 school year to 2012-2013 school year. This speaks volumes as to the decrease in property values.

GLA supports lake-friendly organizations

In accordance with its mission to 'enhance... the welfare of Geneva Lake,' the GLA is proud to have awarded grants to four local, like-minded organizations that have the best interests of Geneva Lake as their *raison d'être*.

The Geneva Lake Water Safety Patrol has a long history of educating users of the lake while standing ready to rescue boaters and swimmers. As the WSP is completely reliant on private funding, and during a time when gas prices are especially high, the GLA is pleased to be able to provide gas for one of its invaluable rescue craft.

While the Geneva Lake Environmental Agency receives some municipal funding, the support from GLA enables the eco-conscious organization to plan for and hire a summer intern, fulfilling our mission of environmental concern with

an emphasis on education.

The Kishwauketoe Nature Conservancy is of great benefit to the Geneva Lake area, and with its recent conservation easement agreement with Williams Bay, should remain a natural gem in the lakes area for years to come. Again, the GLA is happy to provide funding for a summer intern to work on enhancements to the 233 acre preserve.

The GLA is very happy to provide help to the Geneva Lake Museum in its goal to ship, transport, restore and display four of the artistic windows from the Crane home, currently stored in Hawaii. The museum is an enthusiastic custodian of the glorious heritage of the Geneva Lake area, and is well deserving of the Community Betterment Award bestowed on it by the Lake Geneva Chamber of Commerce.



Under normal circumstances the carpeted bumpers on the Lake Geneva Yacht Club sea wall are partially underwater as can be seen by the algae growth indicated by the top line. On Oct. 17 the water level was at the bottom line, which measured 20 inches below what is probably the high water mark from the past several years. See lake level story on page 1.

Hackmatack Refuge approved

by Margaret Lass-Gardiner

August 15, 2012 was a good day for the planet. On that day Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar visited Illinois and announced the approval of the creation of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge, an 11,500 acre designation straddling the border between South East Wisconsin and Northwest Illinois.

Present at this happy event were United States Senator from Illinois, Dick Durbin, many officials from US Fish and Wildlife Service, and members of the Friends of Hackmatack steering committee from Illinois and Wisconsin, including Wisconsin residents Margaret Lass-Gardiner, co-chair, Sarah Schuster, Penny Roehrer and Audrey Denecke. Walworth County Board Chair Nancy Russell was also in attendance, along with many long time business and private supporters of Friends of Hackmatack.

At present the designated area for the Refuge includes a somewhat small amount of land in Wisconsin, with the jewel in our crown being Peterkin Pond, a beautiful wetland and "bird stop" for migratory birds, which is already conserved by the Wisconsin DNR. Our area can grow, however, as US Fish and Wildlife are able to find and purchase more adjacent land from willing sellers around and within the "cores and corridors" already established for the Refuge.

This long-awaited Refuge will help enhance conservation efforts and enhance our precious recreational opportunities and businesses in Southern Wisconsin, helping to move us forward into a future where wildlife and open space can continue to be experienced and appreciated. For more on the Refuge, go to www.hackmatacknwr.org.

Lakeshore path sign revised, available for replacement

The Geneva Lake Association has redesigned its lakeshore path signs to keep up with the times and provide replacements for existing signs that have weathered.

Several years ago the Geneva Lake Association received permission from the four communities around the lake to allow the erection of signs at points where the walking public enters onto private land. By tradition of over 100 years, the public is allowed to walk the lakeshore path completely around the lake, even though it passes over private property.

Most people respect the privilege and are very careful not to violate the trust given them by lakeshore property owners. There are, however, abuses by a few, sometimes because they are not aware of the implied rules. The signs, strategically located around the lake, remind the public of what is allowed and what is not permitted.

In the summer of 2012 a question arose regarding the legal use of bicycles on the path. It was discovered that Linn Township and Williams Bay, representing 75 percent of the shoreline, have specific ordinances prohibiting bikes from the path.

Based on that information, and including additional minor improvements in wording, GLA offers a new sign to home owners or property-owner associations.

The wording of the revised, attractively painted wood signs, to be mounted on steel or wood posts, is shown here.

If your association would like to replace its sign, or if you would like to place a new sign, contact the GLA office.

Posting of GLA signs is subject to the approval of GLA.

Welcome, new members

The GLA welcomes the following new or returning members. We appreciate your support.

Residential

Michael and Benoit Angeline

Jeff and Heather Binkert

Terry and Patty Birch

Bob and Jean Chanson

Bob and Marsha Darre

Vince DeVincenzo

Christie and Sam Eddins

Bob and Carmela Gee

Lynn Grayson and Joe Madonia

Gary and Marlene Hopmayer

Karl Immenhausen

The Kirch Foundation

Tom and Cherie Kolder

Dick and Sharon Leslie

Fifi and Ron Levin

Mark and Eileen McNabola

Michalene and Hans Melges

Christy Muse

Greg and Laura Mutz

Thomas W. Nicholson

Rebecca M. Orth

Mike and Bobbi Ortiz

Magdalena and Christopher Pauly

Patrick G. Ryan

Betty Spanjer

Andrew and Maureen Szafran

Lee Tenzer

Tony and Jo Terlato

Craig Tomera

Peg Williams

Am I a current member?

GLA members are encouraged to renew their memberships on an annual basis to receive the *Directory* and to be listed in the *Directory* as members. See the note on page 4 to determine if your membership is current.



GLA Membership Application/Renewal Form

All persons interested in enhancing the conservation, preservation, environmental integrity and general welfare of Geneva Lake and its surrounding area are welcome as members. The tax deductible contributions requested of members are as follows:

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

- \$ _____ **Regular Membership**
Annual Contribution \$30
- \$ _____ **Sustaining Membership**
All members who so elect,
Annual Contribution \$50
- \$ _____ **Contributing Membership**
All members who so elect,
Annual Contribution \$100
- \$ _____ **Donor Membership**
All members who so elect,
Annual Contribution \$150
- \$ _____ **Benefactor Membership**
All members who so elect,
Annual Contribution \$250 or more
- \$ _____ **Commercial Membership**
Annual Contribution \$75 or more

Name(s) _____

(as you want to be listed in the Directory)

E-Mail Address _____

Mailing Address _____

(for all mailings) _____

Phone _____

Geneva Area Address _____

(if not the same) _____

Pier Number _____ (if none, use LG, F, WB, etc)

Subdivision or Association (If any) _____

Estate Name (ex. "Rock Haven") _____

Phone _____

Send Membership Form and check to
Geneva Lake Association, Inc. (GLA)
PO Box 412
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

All Contributions are Tax Deductible

Am I a current member?

Just check your address on this publication (below). Above your name you should see three pieces of information. The first is the classification of 'current' or 'noncurrent.' The second is your membership category, indicating your past or current level of participation, such as 'regular' or 'sustaining,' etc., the third is your last date of payment. Please renew within twelve months of that date.

Check your label to see if your membership is current!



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