

January 2001

Smoke Signals

Hello, it has been way too long since you have received your Smoke Signals. Actually it has been since last summer. For some quick updates, no one submitted any resumes within the timelines so the old board was required to serve again. Since that date, Brian Vincent, our President regretfully resigned although he is still helping us with legal guidance. Also, Lee Butler too resigned. It took quite a while but we begged Don Postma and John Brooks to step up since they have both been on the board before and we have some very controversial topics coming up that we must deal with.

Please consider running for next year's board. Resumes are due in May!

As for the issues let's start with the most important first:

WEEDS

First of all we would like to thank Tim Slavens for coordinating the weed kill for the past several years.

Our weed problem has been getting worse because the chemicals we are using are less efficient every year.

New technologies are needed to combat the weed problem, however these solutions are very costly.

The association has paid for Mr. Gordon Potter (who also does all the Secci disk testing) to attend Michigan Lakes and Streams Conference. Mrs. Shirley Westveer is on ML&S Board of Directors and Mrs. Helen Boss is also a regular attendee, plus Tim Slavens has been the coordinator for at least the past 5 years, along with Mrs. Judy VanderGutche from E. Suwanee. So we have asked our resident experts to help guide us. We are investigating all weed kill alternatives, regardless of cost. The next Smoke Signals will be dedicated mostly to their recommendations so we will only cover this topic briefly.

Currently our dues bring in about \$36,000, about \$20,000 to 25,000 goes towards weeds, and obviously this isn't enough. (Plus about \$3,000 purchases fish). There have been many advances in the fight against Eurasian Milfoil – Sonar (tradename) is the new chemical that is out. Indiana has had approval for its use for about 3 or 4 years and has tremendous results. Michigan has also approved its use last year, although not quite at the levels that Indiana allows. Sonar is expensive and very effective. A couple of prerequisites for its use are first we need to know the depth of every well on the lake (please e-mail this info to the website). 2) We have to have a sonar map (a topographical map under the water) to determine the depths of the lake, the weeds contained in the lake, (a hidden benefit of this survey is that they determine the number and type of fish in the lake). Normally, consultants do this; they also contract for the chemical applications, apply for state weed kill licenses and help choose the fish to be planted. Since consultants do this for many different lakes they have buying power, and their discounts almost cover their overhead costs, except the initial survey.

The weedkill company, Pinecrest, which has serviced us for the last 4 years, will be here to hear public opinion on Thursday Night, February 8. If you are one of the many people who call the board members to complain, now is your chance to talk to them directly. This allows you a forum to voice your concerns and to learn some of the restrictions that we are limited to! Location to be announced. Please check the Web Site.

FISH

Last year we spent about \$3300 on fish. We plan to spend about that this year. We have asked our resident fish experts: Pete VanderGutche, Bill Merritt, Mike Moody and Ed Wink to help guide us in this year's purchase. We have authorized \$3,000. We need to order fish in February for this spring's plant. If you want to help with next year's order please, let us know.

FENCES

Remember the Covenants and Restrictions and By-laws say **NO FENCES**. Plus, all sheds and fence requests have to have building permit (obtained from Mr. Dave VanDam or Mr. John Westveer for a fee of \$10 – our Architectural Committee).

The board needs to make a decision. Do we sue property owners for putting them up? We have a fence committee forming to determine if we should modify the by-laws or take legal action.

Dog pens are not considered covered under this section, but fencing a whole yard saying it is a dog run will not stand up in court per Brian Vincent. Split rail fences have never been a problem because they were only used on the road side and they are see-through, but now we have people running chain link into the lake, and at least 6 people have put up over 8 foot stockade fences. The lake Development Company had great forethought in not allowing many things like boathouses which obstruct the view of the lake, fences which chop apart neighborhoods and signage which can make the lake look trashy and bring down property values. That is where it stands for now – if you have an opinion e-mail it. We will update you as things progress.

In the meantime please consider using a natural fence or call the architectural committee with your building permit request. READ the by-laws and C&R! They are available on the website.

PARK MAINTENANCE

We have been working very hard to maintain and improve the parks. The parks are becoming more and more important as the back lots fill up since this is the only access to the lake for many people. Our mower is dead – it has been resurrected so many times, there is nothing left to fix and is not worth rebuilding. Mr. Al Godley did most of the mowing (FREE of CHARGE) last summer with his own mower. The weed whacker died and we wore out Mr. Westveer's finishing up the summer. We are forming a park maintenance committee to help make a plan. Do we want to hire teenagers again? It is much cheaper than a lawn service and more things get accomplished but takes supervision and our own equipment. Can we piece together another mower for the summer or do we buy a used professional quality one or a new homeowner quality one? Can we afford one at all?

If you would like to be part of the planning process and **HELPING** out please e-mail your name and number. Please back lot owners – the parks are for you. We need your help.

WEB SITE

Welcome to the Lake Shores Association Website, www.indianlakes.org

This is also a main contact site – not only are the by-laws and Covenants & Restrictions on the site but so is boat registration and pavilion rental forms. This site gets checked daily. Thank you Paul Church.

New Accounting System

Paul Church implemented a new state of the art accounting system last August. The previous accounting system had at least three different databases that had to be converted and merged into one central database. This system has many new features that will make us more efficient as time goes on. Many thanks to all of you that helped get this off the ground, especially Amy Veneklase.

ICE/PUMPS/TAXES

First, please beware of the ice this year, since the snow came so quickly after the ice formed, it is not thick and not safe in many places. Some places it is only 2 inches thick (near Cedar Point Park).

Also, due to the electric company's rules, when we turn off the pumps for a whole month, they are allowed to charge us a rate equal to the highest month's usage. In other words, if we shut the pumps totally off for the winter, they can charge us July or August rates, which ever are higher. (about \$5,000/month) Therefore, we must use some electricity every month this winter. So watch carefully. When the "PUMP ON" sign goes up, the pump will be running for 2-5 days and the ice in that area of the lake WILL BE UNSAFE.

Also, on your tax bill you will notice a significant increase on the "Indian Lake" section. This is an assessment to cover the cost of the pumps and their electricity. This amount has been about \$35 for years but there were complaints that there was too much money in reserve. The Drain Commissioner emptied all the reserves and the taxes were lowered for a year. Now there are no reserves, and one pump will be rebuilt this January or February for a cost ranging between \$20,000-\$30,000 (still in the bid selection process). The other pump will have to be rebuilt in about 3 years. (FYI, what you see on the pump lot is the motor and the pump is submerged. It takes a specialized company to pull such a large/deep pump and rebuild it).

SPECIAL NOTES:

Dale Larsen, of Thunderbay Drive was severely hurt in a snowmobile accident Please remember him in your prayers.

SMOKE SIGNALS

Volunteers needed to help write, print and mail the Smoke Signals. PLEASE HELP.

PIG ROAST/POTLUCK

This spring, instead of our normal spring meeting, we would like to have a potluck or maybe even a pig roast. We need someone to help plan it. Please contact us if you can help with this undertaking. Let's start the year on a positive note.

MICHIGAN LAKE & STREAM ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

If you would like more information about this, please visit our web site www.indianlakes.org

Donations

Donations are needed for the fireworks and the ski show. Please include donations with your dues.

Thank You,

Lakeshore Board