

Christmas Lake Homeowners Association Newsletter

Spring 2020

The other night Judy and I paused to watch the beautiful sunset over Christmas Lake. The 8 pm clapping and clanging of the bells around the lake then began, and we joined in (though I really like just listening to it). These couple of moments emphasized why I'm grateful to be part of the Christmas Lake Community, even as, and perhaps especially as, we work and live another day under the State-wide stay-at-home order. Thanks to Tammy Magney for suggesting what is becoming our evening ritual to celebrate our health care workers and first responders. Thanks too to everyone who takes a minute to do so.

And now, in addition to ice-out and spring, there's a lot to which we can look forward. Before getting into that though I'd like to take a quick look back.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The CLHA Annual Meeting is set for
Monday, May 18 @ 7 pm,
Excelsior Elementary School
Auditorium (Social Distancing
Permitting)

Looking Back

Weevils - We wrapped up our 2nd summer with the weevil project in 2019. Recall that the purpose of this project was to harvest, grow and then restock the lake with native weevils that prefer to eat eurasian watermilfoil (EWM). This project was so successful that even at the beginning of the project in 2019, following the good work in 2018, it was difficult to find healthy stands of EWM that would support weevils. What this means is that when you saw weeds in the lake last year it was likely the invasive weed curly leaf pondweed, native northern watermilfoil, or other native weeds. This was groundbreaking stuff. We even made the local press. A huge thank you to so many people that gave generously of their time, expertise and resources, including John Newhouse, Dena Wetzl, Mary Fayfield and Paul and Suzy Cossette.

Winter - Winter was kind of short (right?), but there were a few days in February where I thought the track around the lake was a good as I've ever seen it. Steve Midthun, again, donated the use of his snowmobile and roller groomer to make this happen. He also was the principal groomer operator. Thanks, Steve, for helping us experience the beauty of the lake in the winter.

2019 AIS Inspections - We continued with our aquatic invasive species (AIS) inspection and decontamination efforts during the 2019 boating season. Nearly every watercraft is inspected before it enters the lake, and if necessary is decontaminated by the equipment there. The CLHA owns the decontamination equipment. We subcontract with a local company called

Waterfront Restoration (WR) to do the inspections and decon work. All the inspectors have gone through DNR training. This costs us a lot of money, so it's fair to ask why we do it and whether it's working. My answers are (1) we have an amazing lake here, and if we don't protect it no one will, and (2) it is working. We are extremely lucky to have Joe Shneider as the head of our AIS efforts and our AIS committee. He can respond to any AIS issues with authority, but here's a few key points that are compelling to me.

- The DNR isn't going to do anything meaningful to protect our lake. They are still largely depending on boater education and behavior to slow the spread of AIS. The numbers below just for Christmas Lake shows that the DNR's approach is not working to stop the spread of AIS. The regional inspection models which Joe Shneider has promoted for years now appears to be dead in the water with the DNR. The reality is that the DNR doesn't have sufficient staff to inspect many boats, so they rely on "deputized" inspectors who work for local governments or lake associations to do the majority of the AIS inspections statewide. We are not alone in our efforts, but the costs to protect Christmas Lake are high given the relatively few homeowners on the lake.
- We face significant AIS threats. The data collected during the 2019 boating season at our lake access ramp shows us this:

Total watercraft inspected before entering the lake	1347
Wakeboard boats with ballast tanks inspected before entering the lake	82
Boats arriving to enter with drain plugs still in	127 (9%)
Boats arriving that had last been in a lake contaminated with starry stonewort	14

- AIS continues to spread across lakes and rivers in the state. Starry stonewort (SSW) was found in Medicine Lake. It is spread by boats. Last year 9 boats arriving at Christmas Lake had last been in Medicine Lake. SSW is one of my greatest concerns. The lake association for the 1st lake in Minnesota to get it, Lake Koronis, believes it will spend upwards of \$250,000/yr. for the foreseeable future to try to control SSW. I guess you pay now, or you pay later. Please note that 11% (154) of the boats coming into Christmas Lake were last in Lake Minnetonka, so **when** Minnetonka gets infested with SSW our likelihood of getting SSW increases significantly.
- As with COVID-19, flattening the curve to delay or prevent the introduction of a new AIS infestation in Christmas Lake gives science a better shot at providing AIS vaccines and treatments.

2019 Memorial Day Fun Run Donations - Following last year's run the CLHA had two years' worth of fun run proceeds totaling \$7300, to donate to local charities. After getting input from our members, the Board decided to split the donation between [The Treehouse](#) and the [Hope House](#) (part of the OpenHands Foundation). Both of these support at risk youth in our

community. I have received kind notes of thanks from both organizations, including a hand-written note from the Executive Director of OpenHands on behalf of Hope House. Thank you to everyone who makes our annual fun run a success, including Deanne Sheeley and Harley Feldman. It's not part of the CLHA's mission to support other non-profits, but it is now part of our DNA through the fun run and part of what makes this a great organization. Thanks everyone.

Who Are We? – A list of all CLHA members is available on the CLHA website. The website is at <https://www.christmaslake.org>. I'm also attaching to this newsletter a list of the current board members with the year their term expires, and the standing committees of the board. Committee members can be non-board members, and we encourage any member who wants to get involved with a committee to contact the chair of that committee.

Looking Ahead

Yes, spring, finally, is nearly here. You probably saw that April 2 is the official ice-out date this year. Now that the ice is out, please be careful with your boat wakes. The lake level is high. That is normal in the spring though remember we ended last fall with high water, so we are higher than normal this spring. To prevent shoreline erosion (and potentially damage to personal property along the shoreline) we need to minimize our wakes as best we can, and if you will be throwing larger wakes, please do so near the middle of the lake.

Docks and Lifts - The CLHA is again coordinating the put in of docks and lifts in order to minimize the threat of AIS from service providers. You'll be hearing about that soon. Thank you to Roger Norberg who has spearheaded and organized this thankless task since its inception. He now almost makes it seem easy. Maybe we should name the landing after him.

Board Member Elections – We elect about 1/3rd of board members each year. A list of the current board members is attached. Kerri Hawk, a former board member, has agreed to run the election procedure again this year. Thank you, Kerri. The election results will be announced at the Annual Meeting.

Annual Meeting - The Annual CLHA Member Meeting is set for **Monday, May 18** at the Excelsior Elementary School Auditorium, starting at 7 pm. Covid-19 precautions very well may require that we postpone this date or experiment with holding the meeting virtually, but we are not there yet. Among other things we have invited the head of the UofM's Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center to come speak to us.

What Do You Want to Hear About at the Annual Meeting?

Let me or any CLHA board member know if you have any topics that you would like us to address at this year's meeting.

2020 Memorial Day Fun Run – Memorial Day is May 25, and we'll hold it again this year, social distancing permitting.

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates – Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR) is a non-profit “focused on protecting Minnesota’s lake and river heritage....” It is a lean team which importantly includes an active lobbyist who is effective in advocating on lake quality issues at the state capitol. You can learn more about MLR [here](#). Why is MLR in this newsletter? First, the CLHA supports the MLR with a small donation. Second, MLR runs something called the Citizens Action Network (CAN). I’ve signed up, and I encourage all CLHA members to [sign up to receive CAN emails](#). Among other things, signing up for the CAN allows you to send an email to your legislators with a click or two. The MLR also provides updates through the CAN on important lake issues which MLR is promoting or which are active at the state level. Bottom line: It’s an easy way to stay informed and get as involved as you want.

2020 AIS Inspections – We will continue with our AIS inspection and decontamination program in 2020. Waterfront Restoration (WR) will again provide the inspections. Inspections start on April 15. In our Board meetings last fall and this winter the Board took special note of the fact that this program is, by far, our single largest expenditure, and so asked Joe Shneider to work with WR to see if there was any way to reduce our spend without putting the lake at any significantly greater AIS risk. Joe and WR took a detailed look at our costs and risks and came up with a plan that reduces our estimated costs in 2020 by \$5000 while exposing the lake to only marginally more AIS risk. We think the trade-off is worth it as we try to keep costs under control. I’m sure Joe will talk more about this at the annual meeting, but I wanted to let member know that we are trying to be careful with the dues money you send in each year, and we want to hold our dues levels steady. We do still receive financial support for our AIS inspection program from the City of Shorewood, Hennepin County, and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, but your annual dues cover most of the cost.

Financial Snapshot

Harley has long shouldered the responsibilities of being the CLHA Treasurer. He continues in that role today. He recently sent me a 2019 income statement with some of his comments that he wanted to share with the membership. So, here you go.

Hello Everyone,

I wanted to give you a summary of the 2019 financial picture for CLHA. Below is the income statement for CLHA for 2019. The statement does not include the transactions for the Spring and Fall 2019 lake equipment installation and removal as billed by our providers nor the reimbursement to CLHA by the residents. Ultimately these expenses and receipts are neutral for the CLHA, but due to the timing of these transactions they distort the true financial picture of the CLHA. This therefore is the Income and Expenses for the CLHA without these transactions.

Christmas Lake Homeowners Association - Income and Expenses 2019

Income:

<i>Fun Run donations</i>	\$3,560.00	3.8%
<i>Annual dues</i>	\$54,835.00	58.3%
<i>AIS Reimbursement - MCWD</i>	\$20,095.75	21.4%
<i>AIS Grant - City of Shorewood</i>	\$5,000.00	5.3%
<i>Nazarian Family Donation</i>	\$500.00	0.5%
<i>AIS Grant - Hennepin County</i>	<u>\$10,000.00</u>	<u>10.6%</u>
<i>Total income</i>	\$93,990.75	100.0%

Expenses:

<i>Fourth of July party</i>	(\$341.70)	0.3%
<i>Fun Run expenses</i>	(\$1,174.20)	1.2%
<i>Goose management fees</i>	(\$250.00)	0.3%
<i>Bank service fees</i>	(\$15.00)	0.0%
<i>Stamps/envelopes</i>	(\$91.97)	0.1%
<i>Website hosting</i>	(\$304.92)	0.3%
<i>Tax filing fee - State of Minnesota</i>	(\$25.00)	0.0%
<i>Charitable donation</i>	(\$7,300.00)	7.5%
<i>D&O Insurance</i>	(\$1,432.00)	1.5%
<i>AIS Inspection</i>	(\$72,744.37)	74.3%
<i>Decon Trailer license</i>	(\$17.00)	0.0%
<i>CGL/Prop Insurance</i>	(\$1,094.00)	1.1%
<i>A-Frame trailer maintenance</i>	(\$68.75)	0.1%
<i>Decontamination equipment maintenance</i>	(\$3,936.50)	4.0%
<i>Weevil project</i>	(\$9,000.00)	9.2%
<i>Filing penalty</i>	(\$160.77)	<u>0.2%</u>
<i>Total expenses</i>	(\$97,956.18)	100.0%

Net income: (\$3,965.43)

Notes:

1. The percentage numbers in the second numbered column represent the percent of the Total Income or Total Expenses. As you can see, AIS Inspections are about ¾ of the total expenditures.
2. Charitable Donations includes Memorial Day Fun Run/Walk donations collected in 2018 and 2019. The donations were split evenly between Tree House and Hope House.
3. The Filing Penalty is a result of a delay in mailing the annual non-profit tax statement due to the State of Minnesota. I apologize for this error.
4. The net loss of \$3,965.43 is mainly due to the expenses of the Weevil project being larger than projected as the CLHA Board decided to pay the volunteers for their time to grow and transplant the weevils. We don't anticipate any weevil project expenses in 2020.
5. CLHA had a cash balance in the bank of \$73,419.09 as of December 31, 2019.

If you have questions, please feel to contact me at harleyfeldman@gmail.com. I'll also be available for questions at the May 18 annual meeting.

Harley has worked tirelessly for the CLHA for so many years. Some of us know him for his financial statements and the modeling he does for the Board every year as we look at financial projections. Some of us know him as the guy who sends out all the CLHA-wide emails. Some of us know him as the guy with the normally quiet, wry smile that holds the secrets of the lake. Some of us know him as the guy who judges the boats and docks each 4th of July. Perhaps most of us know him as they guy in the huge hat who tells us, in rhyme, the winners of the 4th of July boat and dock awards. For everything you do Harley, thank you.

That's it. Stay safe and healthy.

Todd Erickson
6 April 2020

CLHA Board Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Tom Kelly	2020
Mary Shaw	2020
Gregg Elliott	2020
Doug Punke	2020
Aaron Peterson	2021
Steve Midthun	2021
Harley Feldman	2021
Roger Norberg	2021
Todd Erickson	2022
Paul Cossette	2022
Joe Shneider	2022

Standing Committees of the Board

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Members</u>
AIS	Joe Shneider, Chair Todd Erickson Paul Cossette
Docks and Lifts	Roger Norberg, Chair Paul Cossette Todd Erickson
Elections	Kerri Hawk, Chair Ellen Johnson Patty Feeney
Events	Gregg Elliott and Harley Feldman, Co-Chairs
Membership	Paul Cossette and Joe Shneider, Co-Chairs
Onboarding (new resident welcome and orientation)	Anne and Patrick Gavin, Co-Chairs Mary Shaw