

President's Letter

Mike Mahoney

Some would have to wonder if the temperature basis utilized for calculating the Global Warming "Norm" was derived from temps "recorded" during the 1st or 2nd Ice Age, or calculated based on the "guesstimated" mean of temps existing immediately following both meltdowns? I don't know about your neck-of-the-woods, but we recently broke records dating back to the 30's around here ... and it shows no signs of letting up!

Since our Fall Newsletter, I've had a few calls and emails from USA Residents with regard to obtaining a **Tax Deductible Receipt for GBA Foundation** (Canadian) contributions. To achieve this, please make your check payable to: The Great Lakes Basin Conservancy; and address your envelope to: Great Lakes Basin Conservancy - PO Box 504 - Gates Mills, Ohio 44040-0504.

The LCIA By-Laws require that we "announce approximately one (1) year in advance," the date of our next Annual Meet-

ing. To be certain that this has been adequately covered, I am providing below, all Board approved meeting dates for Calendar Year 2009.

1st Board Meeting

Thursday, June 18 at 4:00PM

2nd Board Meeting

Thursday, July 16 at 9:00AM

Annual Meeting

Thursday, August 6

4:00PM: Business Meeting at Les Cheneaux Community School's Commons Room

5:30PM: Social Hour followed by Dinner at The Community Center

4th Board Meeting

Thursday, August 27 at 4:00PM

The location of meetings 1, 2 and 4 will be announced as they are confirmed.

At our last Board Meeting (8.28.08), I expressed concerns about our current LCIA Liability Insurance coverage, not being commensurate with today's

expectations and potential legal challenges relative to the "Services" we provide (e.g., Home Inspections, Channel Marker Placements, Meetings, etc.). I'm extremely pleased to report that Islands Insurance Center has been able to substantially increase our "per occurrence" policy coverage, as well as doubling our coverage "in the aggregate." This was accomplished **without increasing our premium**, due to qualifying underwriter credits. On a more complex note, Islands Insurance Center continues to research our legal exposure (if any), relative to issues involving Channel Marker Placement, with the US Coast Guard and a range of underwriters. When this analysis is finalized, I'll provide an update.

Ending on another very positive note, we're extremely pleased to announce that **Brian Harrison's "Bait Shop Boys"** will be the **Annual Dinner** entertainment this year!

Also, our Social Committee will attempt to improve the angle of the dining tables in an effort to more comfortably accommodate both sides for viewing the entertainment.

bays.

The history behind ongoing water-related Les Cheneaux projects began when Jack Edwards commissioned Mike Grant, of Aqua-Terra Labs and the University of Michigan Biological Station, to conduct a water chemistry survey in three bays. The Grant Report findings provided background data on which our five-year study was based. Information from that study provided data on which current projects have been based. All projects are aimed at a single objective: To improve the ecology and the economy of Cedarville Bay and the Islands in general.

LCIA has been supportive of all the water quality projects from

(Continued on page 2)

LCIA Water Quality Report

Bob Smith

This article will update several water-related projects. It is particularly significant that, after years of conducting studies to provide baseline data we are now acting to address the issues!

These projects are closely intertwined. As each phase becomes better managed the result will be an environmental improvement that, in turn, will encourage more water-related activities.

Solutions to ecological issues in Cedarville Bay can be applied elsewhere within the Islands. This is especially important when addressing the rapid spread of Eurasian watermilfoil throughout our channels and

(Continued from page 1)

both a financial and volunteer aspect. Continued support for 2009 will be extremely helpful.

Phosphorus in lagoon discharge water. When the present sewer treatment system went on line in 1993 about one thousand pounds of phosphorus was discharge annually for the next several years. Phosphorus is a limiting nutrient for aquatic plants in our region. Excess phosphorus in the water has the same growth promoting qualities as fertilizer applied to gardens or lawns.

Tuning the wastewater treatment system and an additional lagoon brought the levels down to a few hundred pounds a year. An experiment showed that an iron chloride solution added to incoming sewage could significantly decrease the phosphorus in discharged lagoon water. A metering system for iron chloride addition to incoming sewage was installed in 2006 and last spring the amount of phosphorus contained in over twenty-six million gallons of discharge was only about four pounds!

Two years ago serious consideration was given to undertake an expensive program to pump lagoon discharges to the open lake as one means of disposal. Given recent low phosphorus concentrations in the lagoon discharge, this approach no longer seems necessary.

Our goal is less than one pound of phosphorus discharged annually. Prior to our experiment nobody could tell us if achieving this low level of phosphorus in such a huge volume of water was possible, regardless of the sophistication of the treatment system being used. Two impressive points here are: (1) a well run simple system can achieve desired low phosphorus levels and (2) the one pound goal is very likely achievable using additional basic approaches such as additional lagoons to extend residence time of the polished water prior to discharge.

Our plan includes meeting with the Michigan DEQ in Feb/Mar to discuss acceptable approaches for lowering our lagoon discharge phosphorus levels. A key point during that discussion will be that our lagoon discharge nutrient levels need to be of the same low concentration as those in the receiving water body, Lake Huron. This may be a difficult point to communicate, however. One posture presently taken by the DEQ is that the Clark Twp discharge is far below the state limit and, therefore, there is no need to address the matter further. Our position will be that we want to preserve the pristine qualities of our channels and part of that effort includes limiting plant nutrients.

The DEQ will also be made aware that phosphorus concentrations in the Cedarville Bay water column has not perceptibly changed since the Grant study in 1994. A primary reason for this was demonstrated by a project conducted by Fred Moore in 2003. As boats pass through the shallow bay they churn up the loose sediments, creating a sediment milkshake. Phosphorus in sediment is concentrated 100 or even 1000 fold greater than levels found in the water column. A recommendation will also be made to DEQ that a percentage of Cedarville Bay be dredged to remove high residual phosphorus levels contained in the sediment. Actual volumes to be dredged will be based on the predicted environmental impact to the fishery and to the fish food chain.

Following the DEQ meeting an engineering firm will be retained to provide recommendations on how to best proceed with addressing reduced phosphorus in lagoon discharge water and the bay sediment issues.

Weed Control.

Weevils: In general, the invasive Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) presence was greatly reduced in Cedarville Bay during the summer of 2008 vs. 2007. Compared to a virtual EWM monoculture at weevil planting sites in 2007, observations at those same sites in 2008 revealed from 25% to 40% native plant regrowth. Monitoring weevil activity will continue through at least 2010 to provide a reliable evaluation of the weevil planting program on EWM growth and to provide direction on future decisions about EWM management in Les Cheneaux.

Weed Harvester: Although weevils have effectively munched their way through the milfoil beds around the shallow margins of the bay, they have not yet had an impact where boats most often travel. Recognizing the weevils needed some help from their friends, the Watershed Council contracted with Cedarville Marine to use a mechanical weed harvester to maintain weed-free navigation lanes. Use of the weed harvester for nuisance weed control from the federal channel to the Cedarville launch ramp and town dock was effective. Boaters and Cedarville Bay property owners were pleased at weed reduction last season compared to previous summers. Cedarville Marine performed the harvesting service for the Watershed Council at a significantly reduced rate vs. commercial fees and a donation of \$2000 from LCIA helped pay for harvester costs.

Results of the integrated biological (weevils) and the mechanical approach to EWM control in Cedarville Bay are encouraging and they will continue this year.

Remember that Cedarville Marine will groom around private docks and boathouses. This will help control the spread of EWM throughout the Islands. The harvester was used to remove EWM in boat slips at Waterlawn Cottages with terrific results. The EWM remained stunted into October following one cutting during July.

Federal Channel Dredge: Maintenance dredging of the federal channel through the Islands is another project being undertaken by the Les Cheneaux Waterways Restoration Group. This project has been underway since the summer of 2007. Their objective is to have the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conduct a maintenance dredge of the same areas dredged in 1967 and in 1971. Our channels have not been dredged since that time. We have had positive responses from the Corps and from the offices of our legislators. We are in frequent communication with the offices of Senators Levin, Stabenow, Stupak and state legislators Allen and McDowell.

At this stage we are working to: 1) get Les Cheneaux back on the Corps of Engineers dredge list; 2) establish a priority position on that list and 3) secure Federal and State funding. We have participated in two meetings with the Corps. Last summer the Corps conducted soundings of the channels so that recent data are readily available. Last September a meeting was held at the Boat School for an update with all legislators, the Corps, Clark Twp and many stakeholders involved.

As you see, even with twenty-eight inches of ice on Muskie Bay, a lot of volunteer effort is going on to help keep our "soft" water a northern treasure. Let me know your questions or comments!

Water Level Study Update, *Mike Mahoney*

The IJC (International Joint Commission) will be releasing the St. Clair River section of the IUGLS (International Upper Great Lakes Study) in late April. Following the release of this portion of the study, they (IUGLS Board) will provide a "Public Comment Period" from May 1 thru July 1, 2009.

Currently, the IUGLS is reviewing "Past" Mitigation Designs proposed for the St. Clair River by the USCOE (Corp. of Engineers), resulting from earlier IJC Studies.

I would highly recommend that those of us that continue to be concerned about water levels around our docks, in the channels, and it's overall negative impact on the Les Cheneaux community in general, contact the IUGLSB via email at WWW.IUGLS.ORG/EN/COMMENT.ASP. Take a minute to be heard, with regard to the importance of the IJC, to implement appropriate measures that will stop this unnecessary water loss that has significantly aided in negatively impacting our area.

The IUGLS Board recently (4Q8) identified a "5% increase in conveyance capacity in the St. Clair River," or a "loss of 6 BILLION GALLONS per DAY"! **On the one hand**, the COE has defined / charted "Crisis Levels" for our lake, which we are officially well within while **on the other hand**, they are analyzing their noted 5% increase in conveyance, to be certain that 6 Billion Gallons per Day is not in "The Range of Uncertainty." Maybe they need to tie one hand behind their back!?

A concern for many of us that have been following / working the issues, is that the **marginal** increase in water levels last summer, and forecasted again this year, (while welcome) will dilute the emphasis necessary to do the right thing.

Now is the time, (before the IUGLS's CAKE is BAKED), to "get your oar in the water" regarding our Water Level Issues and **have an impact!**

Manager's Report *Mark Engle*

Winter Weather - Snow Ice Report

The first official day of winter (Dec. 21) was a laugh in the Les Cheneaux; at that point we had a month of winter behind us! You could count on one hand the number of days with a high temperature above freezing since Thanksgiving Day. Snow has covered the ground for a long time; fortunately we have not had a huge snow storm to date. High pressure systems have been prevalent resulting in clear skies, sunny days and clear, bone chilling nights. As long as the water pipes don't freeze and there is still wood in the shed, I guess we will survive. I heard on Canadian radio that their groundhog indicated six more weeks of winter.

There is 2 feet of ice nearly everywhere and 2-1/2 to 3 feet in the larger bays. Vehicles have been traveling on Musky Bay since before Christmas. Ice fishing activity has been heavy but fishing has been very spotty so far.

The local deer herd is being hard pressed by the harsh winter. Natural food is hard to come by and although many folks are feeding the deer, many animals are looking thin and weak. Drivers must be cautious on slippery roads with hungry deer on the move day and night!

LCIA Property Inspections

LCIA property inspectors have been busy. Good ice and plenty of snow pack has allowed inspectors to get to all outlying locations. Security has been good so far although there was an outbreak of theft and break-ins of many fishing shanties on Musky Bay.

Snow and ice build-up on roofs is a problem for some property owners. We have contacted those who our inspectors felt needed immediate snow removal and many roofs have been shoveled by the local contractors and caretakers. There are still many roofs that have some snow load and depending on "future conditions," may need attention later in the winter. We will keep a close eye on those "future conditions."

Clark Township Update *Diane Patrick*

In November, Gerald Hill was elected Clark Township Supervisor, replacing Linda Hudson. Two other new township officials were also elected: Mike Miller, Township Clerk and Gary Wellnitz, Trustee. The new officials are becoming acclimated to the important task of running Clark Township.

The Planning Commission has spent the last 18 months reviewing and rewriting the Township Master Plan and zoning ordinances with the help of a professional planner from Traverse City. Many hours of study, discussion and public review went into these ordinances which will be formally adopted shortly. Of particular significance is a change in the storage building and boathouse ordinances. Briefly, it will be legal to build a garage or storage building on a vacant piece of property, but it is required to be placed so that the structure does not inhibit a future home site and must conform to current setback and height requirements. New boathouses will be permitted to be built larger than previously allowed; are size permissible as a percentage of the waterfront footage, (100', 150' etc) but are required to have greater side property line setbacks, thus placing the boathouse more towards the middle of a property.

A public meeting was held in January to present a proposal for Clark Township to adopt a Downtown Development Authority. Boundaries presented for the DDA

(Continued from page 3)

basically included an expanded Downtown Hessel area connected by M-134 to an expanded Downtown Cedarville area. There is a minimum 60 day comment period before the Township officials can vote to adopt a DDA.

Les Cheneaux Community Schools are facing a serious budget deficit for the current fiscal year, as well as significant future budget issues. In a unified effort to tackle the present deficit, teachers, students, community leaders and concerned citizens have all banded together in a fund raising effort called FUND THE FUTURE. Numerous events are planned to help raise money for this cause.

If you would like more information about Fund the Future, or have any questions relating to this township update, please feel free to give Diane a call at 906.484.5555 or e-mail her at dianepatrick@lighthouse.net.

**From Historical Committee Chairman,
John Griffin**

In the Fall Newsletter, LCIA President, Mike Mahoney, began his letter to the membership reporting that the Les Cheneaux Islands Association was organized in 1922. Mike then posed the question: "Where were you in 1922? Who among us was old enough at the time to actually recall that the LCIA even existed, or that its founding was already playing a pivotal role in the health of our Les Cheneaux Islands Community?"

In a letter to Mike Mahoney, Peggy Patrick responded to the question relating that at that time her father, Bruce Patrick, was a seven year old, helping his father in the dock building industry here in Les

Cheneaux. Bruce eventually took over the family business and later became the first Chairman of the Les Cheneaux Islands Association's Water Safety Committee. Peggy recalls her dad would take her along with him when he set the buoys in the water, marking the rocks and shoals in the boating channels and bays of the islands. The original buoys were five to six inch logs about ten feet long with a two foot high flag stake on the top. Peggy remembers when she was eight or nine years old, she helped her mother sew the eight inch flags for the buoys. Bruce poured cement in cement blocks with a metal U shaped rod to attach to the chain on each log buoy. Bruce and his helper, Dave Mondoskin, painted, flagged and placed the buoys from Prentiss Bay to Point Brulee for LCIA Manager, Captain Clifford MacLean. The Mertaugh Family later marked Hessel Bay to Point Brulee. Having a retired Coast Guard Captain as Manager of the Les Cheneaux Islands Association was what it took to get the Coast Guard to place the 'Can' and 'Nun' buoys in the islands and come to an agreement as to the additional navigational markers necessary for safe boating.

Peggy Patrick remembers, in amazement, how her father, Bruce, could find all the places that needed to be marked by using "dead reckoning" sightings of specific trees, boat houses, shoreline features and a sense of right about here, where the under water hazard would always be located. In the mid 1990's the buoy locations were put on G.P.S., and in his late 80's, Bruce Patrick retired the buoy placement job to Viking Boat Harbor owner, Wayne Honnila, who followed the excellent example Bruce Patrick had set. Upon the passing of Wayne Honnila, his son, Steve Honnila, now places the buoys in the spring and removes them in the fall. If you get a chance, thank Steve Honnila or Bruce Patrick and their families who continue to be an important part of our historic area and the Les Cheneaux Islands Association as it continues to serve its members and the communities of Cedarville and Hessel.

Next Newsletter lets talk about the number of new business owners in our area.

Do you know what happened here in 1670?

THE LCIA SOCIAL COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR HELP - Mike Mahoney

Their request has to do with our upcoming Annual Dinner Meeting Menu, or as some refer to our cuisine, "The LCIA Thanksgiving Day Feast in August." I know it's been around a long time, it's traditional, it's inexpensive, it's good, and why fix something "if it ain't broke"? That said, they've ask that you consider just one of the following Options, as a POTENTIAL substitution to our 2009 menu offering.

First, we will continue to use the same fine folks that not only do a nice job for us, but bring a great deal of family care and experience to the catering business (i.e., Stacy, Sasha and the other members of the Ledy family, owners of the Snickerdoodles Restaurant in Pickford).

PROPOSED MENU OPTIONS / SUBSTITUTION

- I. Spaghetti – Meatballs & Sauce – Vegetable Lasagna – Italian Salad – Parmesan Bread Sticks – Fresh Fruit & Vegetables – Dessert **Cost Increase + \$1.00**
- II. Roast Beef – Gravy – Garlic Mashed Potatoes – Carrots – Caesar Salad – Rolls Fresh Fruit & Vegetables - Dessert **Cost Increase + \$3.00**
- III. Keep "Traditional" Turkey Dinner **No Change**

We'd like you to select **just one** of the above options (e.g., I, II, or III) for this year's menu, and **email** your choice to lcia@lescheneaux.com. Just one vote per household.

SAMPLE EMAIL: The _____ family would prefer # _____

CAUTION: Do not try to stuff the ballot box, as we've outsourced the state of Minnesota's judges to assist Esther, with our "official" menu selection tally!