



Annual Meeting, September 9, 2020 Cancelled Board Meeting, October 12, 2020

Because of COVID 19 the SLA Board of Directors were polled and made the decision to cancel the 2020 Annual Meeting scheduled for September 9, 2020. Instead, the board met in person (socially distancing) on October 12th at the Columbia County Administration Building to address issues and make decisions on behalf of the membership. Hopefully, the SLA can meet in 2021 for a "two year" Annual Meeting.

Dennis Benson chose not to run again and Betty Gast resigned from the board in 2020. The bylaws state the SLA should have an eight member board so the directors appointed Jill Pogorelec (South) to fill the one year remaining on the term of Betty Gast. The board also appointed Don Sabey (North) to the board. (The list of Board members and their contact information is given on the last page of the newsletter.)

Jim Watson explained the high water situation and its relation to the weeds in the Fox River. (This information is given in the "Watson Watch" article.) Jim was authorized by the board to purchase another air cooled motor (price not to exceed \$3,000.00) to disturb/cut the weeds starting at the outlet of the Fox River and going towards Portage. Expenditures for gas etc. are also to be brought to the board for reimbursement. With assetstotaling \$26,944.67 at this time the board feels the expenditures are justified to help keep the water levels of Swan Lake satisfactory. This can be done with volunteer involvement.

FINANCIAL REPORT - July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020

Assets as of beginning of period:-----	\$26,944.67
Income current year:	
Dues, donations-----	\$2,160.00
Interest income-----	\$175.66
Total Income-----	\$2,335.66
Expense Recap:	
Copies - (Minutes)-----	\$10.13
Postage - (Newsletter)-----	\$198.00
Printing - (Newsletter)-----	\$424.12
Rental - (PO Box)-----	\$92.00
Water tests - (3 tests)-----	\$260.00
Stream Flow Meter-----	\$1,193.83
Cooled Boat Motor-----	\$1,500.00
Website Expense-----	\$180.00
Total expenses-----	(\$3,858.08)
Assets as of end of period:-----	\$25,422.25
Assets increased (decreased) by:-----	(\$1,522.42)

THANK YOU!!!

The SLA Board wants to thank Dennis Benson and Betty Gast for their years of service on the SLA Board of Directors and their continuing interest in Swan Lake. Betty served from 1999 to 2004 and again from 2012 to October 2020. She was president for a total of eight years. She and husband, Gerry, often help with getting the newsletter ready to mail. Dennis was a board member for eight years serving as vice president five of those years.

WATSON WATCH

by Jim Watson, SLA President

I want to go over what I reported in the last newsletter about our experiment with thick weed growth down the Fox River and continue with what happened the rest of the season.

At the end of last winter the level of Swan Lake was the lowest it has been in 3 years. It was at our long term, average normal, summertime level. After the ice and snow melt and some spring showers, it rose to 10" above our baseline "normal" level. It should be noted that 24" above that baseline is where the county Slow No Wake order takes effect.

The rains ceased and sunny weather in May had many of us watering lawns and gardens. The dry, dusty weather continued well into June. There was no extra water out of the ordinary flowing from Park Lake and entering Swan Lake So---why did Swan Lake stay at 10" during the dry spell and not drop? Then why did the lake level begin to rise 1/2 to 1 inch per day the last week of May and into the first two weeks of June with zero rainfall? With all the record rains the previous several years (several long lasting high water events each year), groundwater is high and flowing into the rivers and lakes. The wetlands are also saturated and draining into waterways. During winter and spring there are no aquatic plants in the Fox River to hold back water. As the water warms and the sun shines the plants grow rapidly and begin to impede flow. There is no doubt if you watch it day to day.

Unfortunately, I was away from the lake 10 of the 12 days in early June, so I was unable to start our "experiment" until June 19th. By then we were only 3" from the mark for the Slow No Wake ordinance to take effect. It was still rising 1" per day so, by June 23rd we would have reached that mark. Based on past experience, the high water likely would have run through the 4th of July holiday week and for sure if any rainfall occurred.

First, we measured flow at the west end outlet. We had to time small, neutrally buoyant particles as they moved one foot because our flow meter could not turn in that slow, stagnant water. Timing the slow movement at several points across the width of the Fox River, we calculated an average movement of only 0.22 feet per second!

Next, we ran the heavy boat with the air cooled, long tail, mud-motor downstream two miles and back several times. Almost all of that distance the river was completely choked with weeds to within inches of the water surface! In many stretches of the river the surface of the water was not visible at all--only a green mat that birds, turtles, and frogs could walk across without falling in the water.

We drive at a speed to generate the largest wakes possible that knock the plants down and set them wagging back and forth. The water behind the boat fizzes and bubbles as gas bubbles trapped in the mat and tangles of weeds get released. After the first trip the path made by the boat shows water is moving. Multiple trips each day for several days opened up this pathway to a 6-8 foot channel of moving water. The current helps to tip over more weeds on its own. Interestingly, some of the weeds we pulled up by hand were 5-8 ft. long and were wound and tangled like giant dreadlocks.

From that first day, the lake level began to drop 1/2 to 1 inch per day depending if there were a few light rain showers. We had to keep after it or weeds that had been knocked over would float back up. Because they were growing inches per day the level would start to rise again. After two weeks there were no matted weeds on the surface at all and much of the river bottom was visible. And, after a month the river flow at the outlet was averaging 0.93 feet per second. That is over 4 times faster than before we started this recorded experiment.

In mid-July we had some heavy rains around the lake but not enough to cause trouble. But, upstream of Pardeeville, a lot more fell, so they had to open the new emergency spillway due to bridge work on Hwy 22. That sent our lake level up, barely touching the Slow No Wake benchmark line, but not over it. We had enough room to catch the water and let that surge pass downriver.

We continued the operation even though the river looked fairly clear. In the first two weeks of August we tried to run up and down the Fox River 6 out of 7 days per week, taking off 1 day. Both of the times we did not run the river the lake rose an inch. So we know it has to be done nearly every day. We totaled over 50 days of running the river by mid-August.

With help from volunteers we could keep this going several days per week and keep the level stable or dropping. Randy Rhode, Jeff Marcouiller and his son, Sawyer, were able to keep the experiment going when I could not. By the third week of August the weed growth slowed and some died off as often happens late in the season. By then the level was down 16". Many people seem to like it at that level--if it gets much lower than that I hear complaints the lake is getting too low!!!!???

I feel this experiment was a great success! Therefore, if we start earlier, before weed growth gets too far along, and before the water gets too high, and keep at it on a daily basis, we can avoid some high water and Slow No Wake periods. And/or we can shorten the duration of some of the more extreme events.

If water rises so high above the river weeds and over-tops the lakeshore and river banks to flood the thousands of acres of marsh lands from Pardeeville to Portage, (such as the double slam we got in late August), there is nothing we can do. We had 14 inches of rain right here at the lake and over 18 inches in three days in the upper watershed between Pardeeville and Dalton. I won't go into the wind and tornado damage--everybody could see that. The double surge of water was only topped by what happened in 2008 when the lake rose 72". This storm caused the lake to rise 55"! And, the lake was 16" below our Slow No Wake mark or may have tied the 2008 thousand year flood event. Note how fast the water went down after this event. It was the second highest water level ever and it receded relatively quickly compared to lesser flood events in recent years that sometimes lingered for 6 weeks or more.

...story continued on Page 5.

KNOW YOUR BOARD

BOB BARTH

Bob Barth has been a SLW board member for at least 23 years. He is a retired carpenter who loves to hunt and fish. His parents bought the original Barth farm on Breneman Rd. on the south side of Swan Lake in 1957 for \$20,000.00. It really wasn't suitable for farmland so for years they raised mink on the property. The family also used to have a dog kennel there. Bob owns land by himself on the east end of Swan Lake and the total owned by the Barth family is over 300 acres in that area. He recently purchased 35 acres of land south of the farm. It was agricultural land and Bob will keep it as open land.

Bob's sister, Ellen, is a DNR employee and lives in Oshkosh but also spends a lot of time at the farm. He also has a brother, Jack, who lives in rural Portage.

One of Bob's interests is antique cars, which includes owning a 1072 Corvette and his favorite, a 1967 Camaro convertible. His residence is in Pardeeville but he also spends a lot of time at the farm maintaining the property. He is willing to lease land for year-round recreation if anyone is interested.

Bob is the SLA link to the Park Lake Management District, regularly attends their meetings and keeps the SLA informed of activities/issues involving Park Lake.

MICHELLE OLSON

Michelle is relatively new to the SLA Board having just completed her first year. Michelle has had a connection to Swan Lake her entire life as her parents, Ray and Maggie Dorn, built a cottage on the lake when she was just two years old. Her family would move to the cottage every summer as soon as school was out and return to their home in Portage once school was back in session. She feels very fortunate to have the cottage in the family yet today as it is definitely her "happy place." Michelle is retired from Columbia County Human Resources where she enjoyed meeting with new employees while conducting their benefit orientations and working on payroll.

She has been married to her husband, Kevin, for 40 years and together they have three children and five mgrandchildren. Michelle enjoys traveling, cooking, thrifting, photography, music and nature. Her greatest joy is spending time with family and friends and being on the lake.

JILL POGORELEC

My name is Jill Pogorelec and I have lived on Swan Lake since we moved here in 2011. My husband, Josh, and I both work at Aspirus Divine Savior in Portage and we have two children, Joseph and Abigail. We enjoy spending time on the lake year-round, fishing, swimming, water-skiing, and tubing. Our son is an avid fisherman and logs many hours trying to land the monster catfish and walleyes on the lake!

DON SABEY

I grew up in the northwest suburbs of Chicago and lived in this area until 1981 when I moved to Houston, Texas due to a job relocation.

I graduated from Eastern Illinois University in 1969 with a major in accounting and started my working career as a junior accountant for Union Oil in Schaumburg, Illinois. Throughout my 41 year career in the petroleum oil refining industry with five different companies, I held various functions in accounting, transportation, planning, refinery operations and trading.

After retiring in 2010, I knew I wanted to move back to the midwest and live on a nice quiet lake. I wanted to be able to walk out my back door, down to the pier and jump into a boat to go fishing whenever the mood struck me. Strangely, I do nowhere near the amount of fishing I thought I would.

My nephew, who lives on Lake Delton near Wisconsin Dells, saw a home for sale on the north side of Swan Lake. The house was larger than what I needed but the views from this home which is on the point at the end of Skunk Island, (as I have been told it is called), were incredible and I moved into this home in September, 2012. It turns out the larger size home was a blessing as it has allowed me to host some larger functions including family, high school friends and former college gymnastics teammates.

For the residents living on the north side of the lake, other than Saddle Ridge, I am known as the "walker" as I walk by each and every one of their homes on my daily 5 mile walk. I love being back in the midwest and enjoy all that each one of the four seasons have to offer. Can't imagine wanting to live anywhere else. We truly have it all right here!

VICKI VOGTS

I moved to Saddle Ridge in January 2015 and love pontooning on Swan Lake!! I've been a full-time administrative assistant at Portage High School for over 13 years and enjoy interacting with teenagers (sounds crazy, doesn't it!). My son, Tyler, is a UW Platteville grad in construction management living in Redondo Beach, California, and my daughter, Katelyn, her husband and six-month-old baby boy, now live in Menasha after moving back from military life in North Carolina.

Besides boating, my hobbies include golfing, quilting, curling and genealogy. Not only am I on the SLA Board since September 2019, but am also on the Portage's Historic Preservation Commission, St. Mary's Community Outreach Committee and am president of the Portage Historical Society / Museum at the Portage. Love of the outdoors and respecting nature comes from being raised on a dairy/sheep farm just outside of Arlington.

KNOW YOUR BOARD

DOROTHY REBHOLZ

My early years were spent in Bloomer until I went to Madison to study Physical Education at the UW. After graduation in 1959, I taught PE for five years at Greenfield High School, suburban Milwaukee, where I also advised the water ballet club, doing that for a total of 18 years. I met my husband, Warren, at GHS who was a Guidance Counselor there for 33 years. We have two kids and four grandchildren.

Warren's parents bought the Red Cottage on Swan Lake in 1955 and we shared that with them and his brother's family until 1970 when we bought the Green Cottage next door. We loved spending the whole summer at the lake and only went back to our home in Greendale to mow the lawn and pick up the mail!

After Warren retired in 1991 it didn't take too long to figure out two houses were too many. So in 1995, we tore down the Green Cottage, remembering all the special times, and built a year-round house. We love living here, enjoy the peaceful quiet winters and have lots of flowers and a big lawn that keep us busy in the summer.

A "later in life" interest has been playing the organ and piano for church services mainly at St. Mary's. Various other activities include Portage Center for the Arts, Women's Civic League and, for many years, Swan Lake Association where I frequently have alternated between secretary and treasurer.

Over the years I have always had a keen interest in protecting the environment. It has been said that Swan Lake is one of the few "flow-through" lakes and "best kept secrets" in southern Wisconsin. It is my hope that through the efforts of many people who hold the Swan Lake area dear to their heart, we continue to keep it that way!

MIKE MEIKLE

I was born and raised on the East side of Madison. My wife and I currently reside in Cottage Grove where we have lived for over 25 years. I recently retired after working over 40 years in the hardware industry. My family has been coming to Swan Lake since the early 1960's when my parents rented a cottage from a friend of theirs. In 1967 my parents, along with my aunt and uncle, purchased two lots on the South Shore of Swan Lake directly across from the Country Club. The cabins were built in 1968 and have been enjoyed by family ever since. In 1999 my brother and I purchased my aunt and uncle's cabin when they decided to move out west. Over the years we have enjoyed countless hours on the lake as well as time deer hunting in the fall. When not at the lake my wife and I enjoy attending Badger basketball games, watching the Packers and snowshoeing. My wife and I are fortunate that our children have always loved coming to the lake and now we enjoy having our grandkids ask when they can come next. It has been a pleasure to be involved with the Swan Lake Association to do my part to make sure that future generations are able to enjoy the lake as much as I have.

JIM WATSON

Starting in the late 1800's my great grandparents and grandparents often came to Swan Lake to picnic, camp, swim and fish. They built cottages on the north shore in 1925 and my dad spent summers on the lake. I was born in Portage and we moved to one of the cottages when I was one year old. The roads were dirt paths and water had to be pumped by hand. My dad rebuilt one of the cottages into a year-round home so my two sisters and I were fortunate to grow up on the lake.

I have lived away from the lake for only short periods of time--during college and when my wife, Dorthey, and I lived with our two young children on the Wisconsin River. We built a home in the Lakeside Park woods near my folks, as did my two sisters. Also, our son lives on the lakefront with his young daughter. Our daughter, her husband, and three children have a home in the Caledonia hills. His family has a cottage a few doors from our lakeshore property so they spend summer weekends on Swan Lake.

Dorthey and I went to UW Baraboo and UW Stevens Point. She was an elementary school teacher. I have a degree in biology/natural history and studied outdoor education, geology and Wisconsin history. I worked 35 years with WP&L (Alliant Energy) and retired in 2015 to spend more time with the grandkids. We had considered moving to northern Wisconsin or the western mountain states but nothing beats living on Swan Lake and being near family.

While I was growing up I attended SLA meetings with my parents who were on the Board of Directors. I continued involvement during my school years and have been on the board for a long time--it seems like forever! My interest in serving the SLA is to preserve everyone's enjoyment of what the lake and surrounding area offers, as our family has done for over 130 years.

DUES/MEMBERSHIP for SLA, INC.

Swan Lake Association, Inc. dues are \$10.00 for the fiscal year, July through June. The date on your mailing label indicates the year in which dues have last been paid. Checks payable to "Swan Lake Association, Inc." may be mailed to SLA, Inc., PO Box 182, Portage, WI 53901. This newsletter is periodically sent to property owners in the Swan Lake area and to people who rent boat slips at Saddle Ridge and the Portage Golf Club who are currently non-members. There are two classes of membership: (1) Individual, consisting of either an individual or entity; and (2) Joint, consisting of a husband and wife, family, or joint owners of a single parcel of real estate. Each individual or joint membership shall have one vote. Members shall designate affiliation with either the north or south side of Swan Lake.

PORTAGE GOLF CLUB NEWS

by Mark Braska

2020 has been quite the year to say the least!!! After a slow start with the government closing us down until early May, the golfers were anxious to get outside and enjoy a game of golf. As it turned out it was a great year for our golf operations. We saw a record number of rounds being played and even saw a full golf course several days in November. Many players played the Portage Country Club for the first time. With the golf course in excellent shape, most players commended on the nice condition and indicated they will be back.

Regarding the lots on the lakefront on old Hole #3, they are all sold. We have reached our goal of having no debt and have some extra money to do some projects that are needed. Some of these are the new bridge on #11, remodeling of basement locker rooms in the club house, new and improved fencing on #1, #2 and #10 and tree and stump removal to name a few winter projects. If you have any questions on memberships, outings, or anything else you can reach me at 608-335-2142.

Wishing everyone a SAFE and wonderful holiday season.

SADDLE RIDGE GOLF COURSE NEWS

What a Crazy Year!!! Saddle Ridge had above average golfing, without golf outings. Next year we are hoping a vaccine will eliminate all the distancing and allow for great outings once again. Our charities will need our help. New on the golf course in 2021--hole three will be broadcast live in the Rendezvous. Anyone who gets a hole in one on hole 3 will receive \$1,000. You could be that lucky golfer! Check out the details next year at Saddle Ridge.

Rendezvous at Saddle Ridge, the restaurant, had a much slower start. The ventilation system in Rendezvous is state of the art and is COVID compliant as we were building in the midst of the pandemic. There is plenty of space to social distance and we are sanitizing, masked and doing temperature checks. We have a great menu and do carry outs as well as deliver in all of Saddle Ridge. Call 742-2181#2 to place your order. We look forward to serving you. When it's time to gather again, we will rent out our space and cater your next event. See you soon. -- David & Margie Druce

THIS 'N THAT

by Dorothy Rebholz

A big thank you to Jim Watson for acting on his theory about helping to alleviate high water episodes on Swan Lake. The alternative of getting an "official" weed cutter to run up and down the Fox River would be a monumental task. The weeds would need to be collected at a site on the lakefront and then trucked away to a disposal site. Also, the cost would be prohibitive to the Swan Lake Association, a volunteer organization with dues of \$10.00 a year! Thank you to Randy Rhode, Jeff and Sawyer Marcouiller who helped Jim with this endeavor. Anyone who could also help please contact Jim at 608-617-9819.

Bob Barth reports at least one eagle fledged from the huge nest on the big tree on his wetland property that is just to the right of the Fox River inlet. He saw the eagles flying around. Fortunately the eagle population has increased in Wisconsin and Bob says the DNR website documents nests by county. He said there also is one near Pardeeville that is on the map.

The osprey also continued to nest on the pole in the Saddle Ridge wetlands near Skunk Island. Claire and Steve Letourneaux observed two young ones in the nest.

Kudos and thank you to the gal I saw picking up trash on Country Club Road recently!!

Thank you to Jim Hinkley for the following :)

TWO ANONYMOUS "HAIKUS, 2020"

A type of short form poetry originally from Japan

Pure Swan Lake joy;
Blazing mid-November sun
Lights the water's dance

The sun and the breeze
Reflect and nudge the water~
Swan Lake is dancing!

PORTAGE BOAT CLUB

Mike Proebstle reports the Boat Club piers and beach were used by members this past summer but they had to cancel all the usual events. He is hoping 2021 will be a better year!

WATSON WATCH, *continued from Page 2.*

Any time the water is 3-4 feet above normal the river weeds mean nothing. The restriction is then the old railroad grade at Portage. It is like a dam and all that water spread over a couple or more thousand acres of marshland has to pass through the narrow, old railroad trestle. A boat ride at that high level shows the water piled up by that trestle. Don't go near it! You don't even have to drive the boat in the river--just go over the bends like the water was doing. Some places I had no idea where the channel was.

Long story I know, but I want everybody to know what we can do. To do more would cost millions of dollars and only send our problems down the river. There are many homes and farms from here to Buffalo Lake. They get hit harder than we do because of the extra input from Neenah Creek, French Creek and many other smaller tributaries. Crops are flooded, homes too, along with the county road bridges closed, etc.

We may need more volunteers next season to spread the workload. The long tail mud motor is a handful and it needs a strong arm to steer it. Call me if you are interested in helping. It is a scenic ride and I enjoy every trip down and back.