

Crystal Lake Association



Summer 2022 Newsletter





Prominent Township Items

Tim Dorch

Crystal Township Board: Two duly elected Township Trustees, Diane Rydahl and Roger Martin, resigned from the five member Board effective July 22, 2022. Both had been the minority votes in several Township issues rejected by the Board. Their resignations followed after the Board voted down hiring a specific outside contractor to develop and maintain the Township's long defunct website. In a joint statement to the Daily News, they said: "Board members will always disagree. Out of respect for the process, we have no comment as to our reasons for resigning, which we would prefer to remain private. We encourage residents and the taxpayers of Crystal Township to engage and to attend meetings. We thank our electors and apologize that we were unable to fulfill our term." Crystal Township has not had a working website all year and the matter has been tabled several times. The absence of a website means that staying informed about some Township matters requires checking for notices taped to the entry door of the Community Center. Simply getting access to Board meeting minutes requires much more than a click on your electronic device of choice.

Town Supervisor Curt McCracken told the Daily News that the Board voted down the motion to hire to look for cheaper options. He also provided his opinion about added workload for the Township Clerk with a website, and battles over the Community Center in which the two resignees also held a minority position. Bottom line, the majority and minority views expressed by this Township Board over time have been sharply divided.

As you likely know, the Crystal Township Board consists of five voting members who are elected for two year terms by Township taxpayers. Typically, when a vacancy occurs the Board has a public process to identify potential interim candidates, conduct public interviews, and vote their selection publicly to fill the remainder of that term.

Community Center: The public spotlight has run hot and cold about this issue since 2018. Not only the Crystal Township Board, but community sentiment regarding the aging facility remains deeply divided as well. For better or worse, our Township Board has been 'on break' with respect to building deliberations since February 2022. A motion to place a milage on the ballot for a voter consensus was defeated and further Board action has not been taken.

Park Redevelopment Plan: In a recent giant step, Crystal Township authorized a \$100,000 expenditure to jump start the 'reimagined' Park project following the \$300,000 Grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF). It's too soon to know the extent of the project given the lapse of time since conception and sharply rising costs in our post COVID economy; however, best guessing suggests maybe three tiers, a cropped hilltop, and three hundred feet of sand beach. Project timing is key with respect to park availability for Summer 2023. The process involved in securing contractors through the bidding process and then integrating their availability is daunting. Once the State releases the grant money (almost there) the project must be completed in two years. The Township authorized expenditure noted above triggered actual real time 'plan' development by Michigan based Wolverine Engineering with today's costs taken into account. Ultimately, this step will push us closer to the bidding process. Bottom line, the process to get shovel ready will take time.



The best information to date summarizing the preliminary project cash flow was noted by the Board in late June 2022: \$300,000 Grant; \$100,000 Township; \$50,000 in kind services; \$40,000 committed private donations. Other potential funding sources were unclear as of this writing.

Potential Acquisition Grant for the Go Cart Property: As previously reported, the Park Redevelopment Grant triggered what was believed to be a golden opportunity for the Township to purchase the Go Cart property in Downtown Crystal and thereby enhance the overall vision of the reimagined park. The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund has such piggyback grant monies available for land in conjunction with the kind of grant previously awarded for our reimagined Park. The fine print, however, limits the grants to land acquisition and excludes buildings. Consequently, the likelihood that the Township could proceed without grant monies is super slim given the prominent building on the property.



Wind and Solar Energy Considerations: Not on Crystal Township radar.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA): Crystal Township was awarded approximately \$286,000 for its general fund with government strings attached, including reporting requirements demonstrating how the funds were used. The Township is in the process of identifying how to spend it consistent with the rules. Thus far, Crystal Fire (equipment) and South Pier Park (rehab) have been singled out.

In addition to the Crystal specific ARPA dollars, in recent County action, Montcalm County Commissioners awarded each Township a \$50,000 cash benefit from County ARPA funds. The Township general fund was enhanced by the County gift. Unfortunately, the

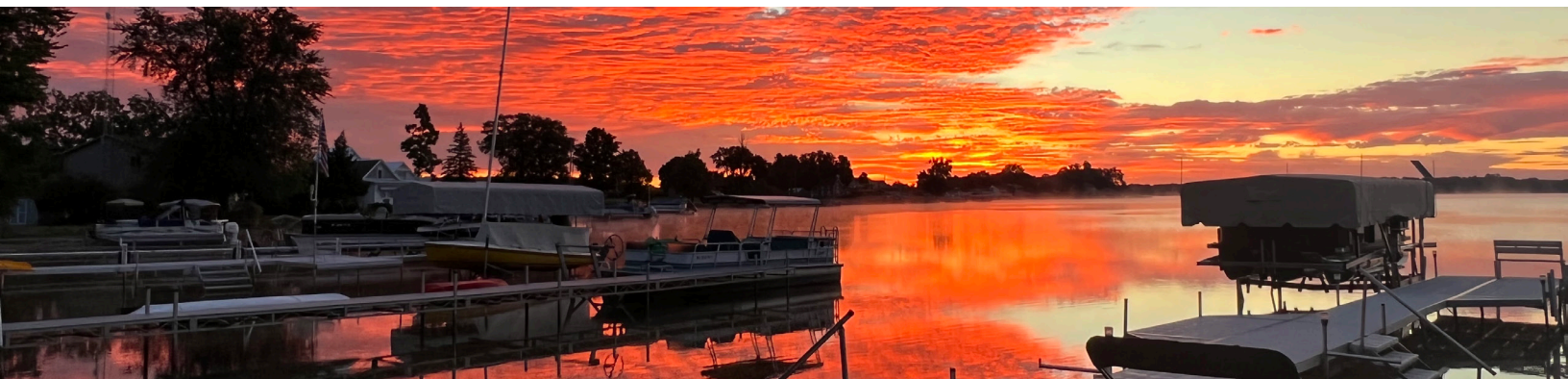
specific request for County dollars to help support Park redevelopment was not acted on.

Police Services Contract: The existing contract between the Township and the Montcalm County Sheriff for forty hours of Crystal specific coverage each week will expire at the end of this year. On August 2, 2022, Crystal Township voters approved a contract renewal through 2025 at a cost of about 97 cents per \$1000 of taxable value. This coverage is an enhancement over what the Montcalm County Sheriff and Michigan State Police provide through routine 'Road Patrol.' Recall that Montcalm County voters approved a countywide millage in 2020 to improve then inadequate County police protection resulting from County budgetary issues and irregularities not connected to the Sheriff's Office. Police coverage remediation, including new hires, equipment acquisition etc., is not an overnight process but more like turning a battleship around in strong and gusty winds in our current troublesome economic environment.

In a Daily News interview following passage of the police millage, Crystal Township Supervisor Curt McCracken was reported to have said that although the millage passed, he didn't think it would be worth it after Montcalm County voters approved a countywide sheriff's millage in 2020. "I can't believe it passed. It's kind of double dipping" he was quoted as saying. He further said that "When the county got their police millage a couple of years ago, ours ran out and it was time for renewal but people want double coverage, I guess." This is America, so we're all entitled to an opinion. Another way of looking at this, however, would be from the point of view of average cottage owners on Crystal Lake who are 'homesteaded' elsewhere but pay Crystal Township taxes at a premium rate, have no voting voice, and whose property remains unattended for about nine months of the year. Lifestyle choice! For sure! The Township police service contract will not create a 'perfect world' in terms of property protection, but it's better than an intentional nothing. Thank you, Crystal voters!

Rescue and Recovery Concerns: In light of the recent lake drowning in approximately eight feet of water, not far from the Public Beach, The Montcalm County Sheriff's Office urged the Township Board to consider supplying the beach area with lifesaving throw rings. The point here was that the modest cost to acquire or replace (even if stolen) pales in comparison to saving one life. Neither Montcalm County nor any of the local fire and rescue agencies have adequate recovery technology or equipment. Belding (Ionia County) is the closest jurisdiction with adequate recovery technology and equipment and is often 'on the road' helping neighboring jurisdictions. Although Montcalm County has a dive team, underwater searches more often than not exhaust existing capabilities before recovery.

Crystal Township Fall Clean-Up: Noll Park, Saturday, September 24, 2022, beginning about 8am.





Membership Sets New Record!

Nancy Ayres

We currently have 394 CLA members in 2022, surpassing our goal of 375. We hope to hit 400 by Labor Day, so if you are reading this and you don't have your 2022 placard in the window yet please renew your membership. We can't thank our members enough for this tremendous support! Memberships continue to increase in South Shore Campground and they are close to having 60 members in 2022. We would also like to thank Jeremy Sheets for paying for all 28 members of the Crystal Lake Yacht Club to be members this year.

Please remember that you don't need to be a property owner to join the CLA. You just need to be someone who enjoys the lake and wants to help support and protect it. Renters, campers, day visitors to the lake are all welcome to join.

Below are all the programs and activities that your membership supports:

- July 4 fireworks show
- Water treatment to keep the lake clean
- Goose control program
- Newsletters
- Facebook page
- Sherif patrol on the lake for safety
- Annual Directory of lake residents

By the time you read this newsletter it will be late summer. This is just a reminder that Crystal Lake is a four season wonder. Don't forget about beautiful fall colors around the lake and winter events like the Winter Festival, ice fishing and snow shoeing. Support our local businesses and the Crystal community year round. I also would like to welcome Carl Jonas to the membership committee and he will be serving as co-chair. Thank you again for your support. The CLA can't do our work without the financial support of all our members.



Water Quality Report

Joe Kopchick

We started our water quality program in April with a water sample taken to measure the amount of phosphorous in early spring. Phosphorus is an essential nutrient for algae and aquatic plants which in turn provide food for fish and other organisms. Too much phosphorous leads to algae growth, but too little limits food for natural plants and fish. We will take a second phosphorous sample in September. Samples will be turned to the Michigan Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Department for analysis, and we'll receive the reports next spring.

Starting in May we have been taking monthly samples for chlorophyll. These will also be turned in to EGLE in September. Jim Ayers has been helping with the sampling.

Finally, we take Secchi disc readings weekly for water clarity. This is another indication of the amount of algae and chlorophyll that are in the water. This year we have been having some surprising results. In late May we were able to see the disc 32 feet down. It dropped to the mid-20's in June and then down to 9 feet on July 7th. Then on July 23rd we were able to see the disc at 19 feet. The measurement this time last year was only 8.5 feet. The water seems to be much clearer this year. It could be we have less boater activity which would lessen turbidity, and that there is less algae.

We had our surveys in June for invasive aquatic species which turned up 10 acres of Eurasian Water Milfoil and 5 acres of curly leaf pond weed. This compares to the 40 acres of milfoil we had last year. Treatment was completed in late June. Treatment cost this year has been much lower.



Docking Lights Are Not Headlights

We have recently noticed boats on the lake with either no lights on during the required times, or using their docking lights as headlights.

Contrary to popular belief, boats do not have headlights, as they interfere with others trying to see the actual navigation lights, and they really don't allow you to see any better. That is why they are labeled docking lights and should only be used for docking.

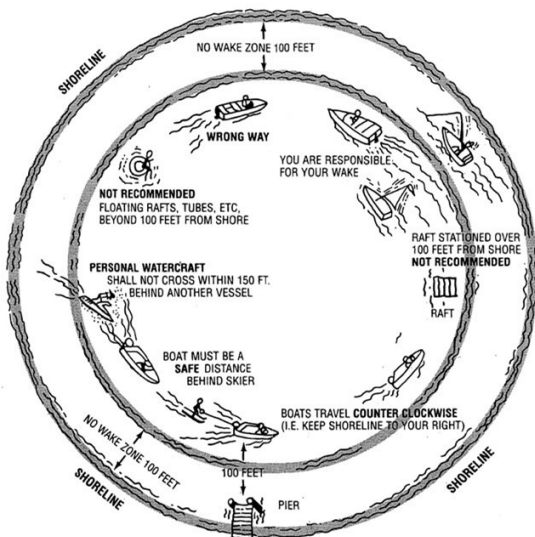
So here is your friendly PSA from the Michigan DNR Boating Laws.

Vessel operators must make sure that their vessels are equipped with the proper navigation lights and use the lights during these conditions:

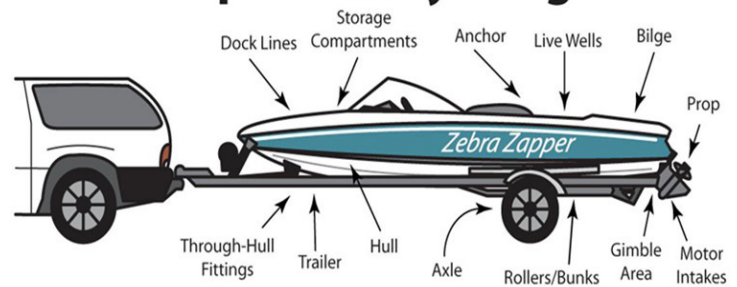
- When away from the dock between sunset and sunrise
- During periods of restricted visibility such as fog or heavy rain

The required lights are:

- Red and green sidelights visible from a distance of at least one mile away.
- An all-round white light or both a masthead light and a sternlight.
- These lights must be visible from a distance of at least two miles away.
- The all-round white light (or the masthead light) must be higher than the sidelights.
- No other lights that may be mistaken for required navigation lights may be exhibited.



Before leaving and before launching...
inspect everything!





Fourth of July Fireworks:

Mike Manning

HAPPY SUMMER hope you enjoyed the 4th of July celebrations at the lake. Of course, you noticed the wonderful fireworks show and yes, the show was shorter than normal. This was a tough and educated decision with great concerns for safety. That decision had to be made by the fireworks committee the CLA board and the “shooters” of the fireworks.

From early morning and throughout the day radar was closely watched for the storm that was predicted to come and when it was going to be at the lake.

The concerns were for the safety of the pyrotechnic crew that loads, preps, and shoots the fireworks from the barges on the water.

Factors that came into play -

1. Decision to load the tubes on the barges needed to be made as early as noon. The prep time required can be up to 8 hours to complete the task to be ready for show at approximately 10:30 pm.
2. It is not safe for the barges and the shooter to be out in the water during a storm especially lightning. It takes roughly one hour to get the barges out to the location and one hour to bring them back.
3. Shoot the show a bit earlier than normal like 10 instead of 1030 however the color would not be as vibrant due to not being completely dark. The decision was made to shoot at 10pm as we had good cloud cover for a dark sky
4. If the tubes were loaded and then unloaded due to no show, it would have cost more money and very dangerous!

That said, another decision was made to shoot the show early and at a faster rate to try to have the very best possible show under the weather conditions we endured that night.

Not every tube was fired as we did have rain out on the water. It was a “shoot them or lose them” scenario.

With all the behind the scenes work and effort the fireworks committee spent many agonizing moments throughout the day trying to insure the best show possible under the circumstances.

As the fireworks were a success, the crews were rewarded with a downpour and were soaked when they got back to shore, and the unloading, packing up and cleanup was completed.

We are very mindful of all the donations that are used for the expense of the show and that is not treated lightly. Your donations are so very important to the shows each year.

The fireworks are fully funded by donations, and we can't thank you enough. It is always the intention to do the best possible job for everyone to enjoy.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to either Kent Roth or myself Mike Manning

Please enjoy the rest of your summer and Thank You.



New Board Member

Nancy Ayres



At the July 9 Annual meeting of the CLA, Carl Jonas was voted in as the newest CLA Board member, and first ever board member from the campground. Carl and his wife, Brenda, reside in Belding but spend their time at Crystal Lake as members of the South Shore Campground.

Carl worked for many years with his parents, who owned a car dealership in Belding. Once that dealership was sold, Carl started his own business in soda blasting and ran that for 17 years until his retirement. Soda blasting is similar to sand blasting, but more environmentally friendly and a milder form of removing rust, paint, oil etc. from surfaces than sand blasting.

Carl and Brenda have been at South Shore Campground for 9 years and are certainly fans of Crystal Lake. When the CLA started recruiting for new members in the campground two years ago, they stepped right up to help identify and sign up many members at the campground. Carl stated that many campground members thought that you had to be a property owner in order to be a CLA member. Once he explained that was not the case and that anyone can join the CLA, memberships at the campground started to grow. The campground now has about 60 CLA members and that number continues to grow every year.

Carl and Brenda have two children and 4 grandchildren. They enjoy boating, the fireworks on July 4 and enjoying all the activities associated with the lake. We welcome Carl to the board and look forward to all that he will add to the CLA Board.

Crystal Lake Association Information

Property Inspection Request

The Montcalm County Sheriff's official website continues to offer a Property Inspection check program. The Sheriff's Office has forms available for interested property owners (see excerpt at right).

You may request a vacation house check by downloading the 2-page form at this web address:

http://www.montcalm.us/document_center/Sheriff/property%20inspection%202017.pdf

Fill it out and either print/mail it to the Sheriff's Office; or if you wish, scan/email it to mcsheriff@montcalm.us.

MONTCALM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PROPERTY INSPECTION REQUEST	
NAME :	PHONE: ()
ADDRESS:	
	EMAIL:
DESCRIPTION OF HOUSE:	
ALL BUILDINGS LOCKED?	ANY UTILITIES ON?
CONTACT PERSON: <small>NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER OF SOMEONE NEARBY WE CAN CONTACT IN CASE OF A PROBLEM</small>	
WHERE CAN YOU BE CONTACTED WHILE AWAY?	
	PHONE: ()
LEAVE DATE:	RETURN DATE:
OTHER NOTES:	
DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - DEPARTMENT USE ONLY	
DEPUTY ASSIGNED:	HOUSE CHECK NUMBER:
PROPERTY CHECK LOG	

Board of Directors

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Steve Meinhardt
e: steve@casair.net

Vice President

Nancy Ayres
e: nayres3801@gmail.com

Treasurer

Kim Morgan

Secretary

Roxy Eaton
e: roxy4msu@yahoo.com

Directors

Tim Dorch
Eric Johnson
Joe Kopchick
Mike Manning
Carl Jonas
Kent Roth

Why CLA Membership?

- Water Quality
- Goose Roundup
- Fireworks
- Sheriff's Patrol
- Newsletters
- Township Meeting Attendance
- Lake Association Directory
- Community Support

Membership is easy:

Visit website crystalonline.org or mail form (last pg)

Dues:

\$45 per year directly support your Crystal Lake!

Crystal Lake Association
P.O. Box 307
Crystal, MI 48818



CLA Membership Application and Donation Form

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Mailing City, State & Zip: _____

Crystal Address: _____

Contact Phone: _____ **Contact Email:** _____

Check here if you would like future correspondence via email:

We Now Accept PayPal, Credit Cards or ACH.

Pay to: Crystal Lake Association

Mail To:

Crystal Lake Association

P.O. Box 307

Crystal, MI 48818

2022 Annual Dues (\$45.00) \$ _____

Fireworks Donation \$ _____

Water Quality Fund \$ _____

Legal Defense Fund \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Renew online at: <http://www.crystalonline.org/renewonline.htm>