

Hardwood Lake Property Owners Association

www.hardwoodlake.org



President	Kevin Ohlrogge
Vice President	Clay Dees
Secretary / Treas	Sandra Schafer
Director	Shelly Golden
Director	Royce Humm
Director	Michelle McMorris
Director	Paul Shanahan
Past President	David Sommers
Newsletter Editor	Edith Sommers
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FALL 2025

The newsletter is
in **color** on the website and Facebook.



Fall is here

It is hard to believe summer has passed so quickly and bright fall colors will soon be here.

There was a lot of activity on the lake over the summer

Memorial Day saw the annual golf cart parade with eight participants on Hardwood Heights. Just a few weeks later, on June 21 following a brief rain delay the inaugural kids fishing tournament was held with 10 entrants. Zeddy Schafer had the largest catch with a 10.5" Bass. Later in the day the bi-annual potluck picnic was held. The 37 attendees enjoyed a beautiful evening,

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Many thanks to the residents that put on firework displays on the 4th around the shore of the lake.

EASY FUN
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Lake Association continued

though the winds were howling. The Lake Association provided pulled pork, sausage, water, paper products along with the ever popular Blackbird Ice Cream.



The next weekend, June 28, had a morning filled with three meetings. The first was a public hearing to determine if we were to proceed with ongoing improvements to the lake. Rick Buteyn, our consultant, an environmental scientist with Progressive Companies made a presentation regarding the most likely course of action for weed control treatments for the upcoming five years. Rick said there are primarily three species of invasive weeds in the lake. Eurasian Milfoil, Curley-leaf Pondweed and Starry Stonewort. They will take over the lake if not treated. Also ongoing issues with planktonic algae, the green floating pea soup that

we see sometime in the summer. Rick makes monthly inspections of the lake and determines the type of treatment needed. Algae treatment is limited by State regulations and is limited to the populated areas of the lake, up to 100 feet of a property shoreline out to 100 feet from shore. The entire length of the campground is treated. Because of the relative small areas we are allowed to treat there is little overall impact. A treatment may last a couple of days or a week or more. Rick explained that phosphorus is the big cause of the weed growth. An entire lake treatment to control phosphorus would be expensive and Rick wasn't sure how effective it would be. After much discussion the Lake Board agreed to allow for a limited test area to determine if phosphorus control might be effective. It would likely be a five acre area for approximately five years and limited to \$5,000 per year. Lake treatment is shown below.



The Lake Board voted unanimously to proceed with the lake improvement project for the

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years of 2026 thru 2030.

The second meeting was to confirm the special assessment roll and direct the collection of the special assessment for lake improvements. This was a meeting where residents could protest the special assessment. There were a few questions regarding our consultant and herbicide applicator. Rick was estimating the cost for a years treatment at \$30,000 with annual property costs around \$350 for front lots and \$175 for back lots.

The Lake Board voted unanimously to confirm the special assessment roll and the two townships to collect the special assessment.

Association meeting

Following the public meetings HLPOA held the annual meeting.

There was a discussion of social activities during the past year and potential for next year. Activities included golf cart parade, kids fishing tournament kids fun run, boat parade, biannual picnic, ice cream social at sunset and Halloween Hoot

Elections for the two year terms for board

members were held. Kevin Ohlrogge was reelected as president. A couple of months prior to the meeting Dan Joseph announced he was stepping down as a board director as his family was moving to Florida. It was bittersweet, Dan has spent most of the summer months as a youth at his grandfathers resort on the north shore of the lake. Dan will be greatly missed for his roll on the board.

Reelected were directors Shelly Golden, Michelle McMorris and Paul Shanahan. Royce Humm, above, was elected to fill the spot left open by Dan.

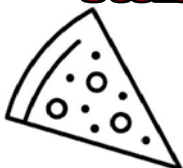


The lake received five algae treatments over the summer, included were some treatments for invasive weeds like eurasian milfoil, starry stone-wort and curley leaf pondweed. A couple patches of phragmites was also treated.

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Michelle McMorris



The July 4th kids fun run keeps growing in numbers. Race Director Royce Humm, above left, said there was a record high of 56 kids participating in the run.

Royce was elected to fill the open Directors position on the Lake Association Board.

Royce and his family have been visiting the

lake for the last 10 years. His wife, Kaela's parents, Steve and Kelly Packard are on the lake and about four years ago Royce and his wife purchased their own property. They have two children, Cate and Colby and greatly enjoy the lake.

Originally from a farm in rural Breckenridge, Michigan. His professional career has been in education, though not as a classroom teacher—beginning in technology and evolving into broader leadership roles. He also served as a high school track and field and cross country coach for eight years making him the perfect leader for the July 4th Fun Run coordinator.,

Royce's has served on his local school board and township Board of Review for five years.

The family calls DeWitt, Michigan home.

New newsletter editor and webmaster named

Edith and Dave Sommers decided that 2025 will be the last year as newsletter editors. It's been an incredible journey and time to pass the torch. They have been doing this since 1993, which is 32 years or over 64% of the organization's life. **Shelly Golden** will take over the duties of producing the newsletter.

Dave has also been the webmaster since it was first introduced in 2017. He felt it was time to pass that on with a smooth transition. **Jim Simms** has agreed to take on that roll. He redesigned the web which is up and running. Take a look.



President Kevin Ohlrogee led the popular Forth of July boat parade in the three mile loop around the lake. About 30 boaters participated.

The Mawhorter family, on Gillings Road suffered a devastating fire on the morning of Saturday, August 30. Three family members required hospital admission for injuries. The

cause of the fire is still under investigation at this time. The lake association made a \$100 donation to the family. Contact Secretary Sandy Schafer to make a donation.

60+ years on the lake

I am Edith Sommers, Editor of the Hardwood Lake Property Owner's Association newsletter along with my husband Dave. My family has been on Hardwood Lake since early 1960's when I was about 6 or 7. We originally stayed at a resort on the East end of the lake which Kevin Ohlrogge (current President of the association.) now owns. His grandmother Lavina Warner rented out stand-alone cabins - one room - which had a small kitchen, a double bunkbed and table & chairs. No frills, no TV, etc. They provided rowboats for fishing or rowing, excellent swimming, sunbathing on the long wood dock.

My parents liked the lake so much they bought a cottage on Hardwood Heights in 1963. It was barely insulated (I remember feeling a draft through the walls), a hand pump inside, the only running water and no bathroom. Yes, we had an outhouse, a double seater with a great view of the lake. The stove was propane gas and the only source of heat was an oil burning stand-alone furnace. The cottage cost around \$4,000. But what a great get-away for a family with four kids. My twin sister and I, along with my older brother and sister. The cottage came with a green wood rowboat. We eventually got a 14' Clinker Built wood boat with a 40 hp Evenrude motor. So much fun learning to water ski first on two ski's then dropping one to slalom. The only

continues on page 6

tubing was with real inner tubes from tires. We got our first sailboat from Ruth Bradley's son (they lived on the end of Hardwood Heights, 2nd from the end), a racing boat named Nipper. Over the years we went through a couple sailboats, the last one being a Sunfish.

For a few years there was an eight foot sandy beach along the shore. We put lawn chairs out and even had a campfire. No one had sea walls or rocks on the shoreline which caused a great deal of erosion - we lost over 10 feet of land along the shore over the years.

Where the current campground stands (south shore) there was a campground for youth with two barrack type buildings, one as a mess hall and the other bunks. I don't remember it being used much. It eventually became dilapidated and torn down. There was also a resort with stand alone buildings on the North shore five properties to the East of us. Originally Tracey's Resort, then sold to Algonquin and finally Pennington's (which stopped renting early 2000's.

I remember going to Hardwood Lake during the winter a few times during the winter. We would shovel off snow on the lake and skate. Sometimes the ice would freeze super smooth, depending on wind and temperature. My dad did some ice fishing after spudding a hole through the thick ice and put in tip-ups. No fishing shanties back in the day. There would be cars on the ice with other fishermen trying their luck.

Dave and I took over the cottage when my dad died in 1985 (heart attack at the lake), We took off the asbestos siding and gutted the inside. Took out ceilings and modernized it though it is still pretty humble. Especially compared to the new and renovated "cottages" that are popping up.

Overall we are very happy to have a getaway with peaceful surroundings and the 'up north' vibe that so many people in Michigan enjoy.

The poem at right was written about 15 years ago. Its sums up my experience on Hardwood Lake. This is my last edition being Newsletter Editor after 30 some years. Time for young blood to take over. Thank you for reading if you got this far.

AGE 9 AND BEYOND

*Childhood memories take me up north
To summers at the cottage on Hardwood Lake
All day outdoors no restrictions put forth
For us kids and our friends, boy it was great.*

*All kinds of boats, sailing and tipping,
Motorboats running out of gas
Rowing and singing aloud our rounds,
Not realizing the whole lake could hear our sounds.*

*We lived in our swimsuits
Lawn chairs on the dock
Slathered in baby oil who ever heard of sun block
Summer blond sprayed on our hair
Turning our chairs with the sun
Jumping into the water to cool off or just float
Why would we want to exercise or even run.*

*We were about 12 my twin sister and I
When a typical weekend up north went awry
Our pregnant beagle made a nest under the bed
The labor pains started - my parents filled with dread
The sounds of puppies crying much to our joy
Meant a week alone at the cottage with 6 puppies as our new toys.*

*We became expert skiers, hop-starting from shore
Thought we were pretty special slaloming galore
Til the neighbor boys would outdo us by bare-footing
Showing off even more
Not to be outdone, we'd buy beer by the case at 18
Thanks to the new law when it was legal to do so
What luck for teenagers who couldn't agree more
When 3 years later 21 became the new law.*

*As summer would end with school around the corner
Down came the dock, pull in the boat and wonder
How it happened so fast, it didn't feel right
Another summer of fun ends and geese take flight.*

Why dark skies matter at Hardwood Lake

If you are around Hardwood Lake, you know its beauty goes beyond sunny afternoons and quiet mornings on the water. One of its greatest treasures comes after sundown, when the lake grows still and the sky darkens enough to reveal a view that has vanished in much of the world—the stars.

Across most of Michigan, city lights have washed the sky pale. In many places, the Milky Way is invisible, erased by street lamps and glare. But at the lake, you can still step outside, look up, and see the galaxy in its full glory. On summer nights, Cygnus spreads its wings across the heavens, mirrored faintly in the water. In winter, Orion gleams sharp above the frozen lake. And in August, the Perseid meteors streak overhead like sparks from a fire.

This gift of natural darkness is more than beautiful—it is essential. Birds migrate by starlight, bats and owls thrive in true night, and fireflies carry out their luminous court-

ship without interference. Even people need the rhythm of day and night. Research shows we sleep more deeply and stay healthier when evenings remain truly dark.

Hardwood Lake has always been a place where people and nature intertwine. Families recall fishing at dawn, skating across the frozen surface in winter, or gathering around campfires while children enjoy s'mores. Cottages have been passed down through generations, carrying not only memories but traditions. Stargazing is one of them. Who doesn't remember lying on the dock, hearing a parent point out the Big Dipper, or making a wish on

a shooting star?

The geography here makes the skies especially brilliant. Inland, away from the glow of Lake Huron towns, the air is clearer and the horizons wider. A dock, a meadow, or even a boat drifting quietly at night becomes a perfect observatory. Unlike busier shorelines, Hardwood Lake remains personal and intimate, a place where darkness is still allowed to be dark.

This area is one of the darkest locations in the Lower Peninsula

Living here means enjoying a balance of accessibility and seclusion. We're close enough to Tawas or West Branch for needs, but far enough to preserve quiet and stillness. When night falls the lights dim, and the whole lake becomes a shared observatory. The silence deepens, crickets sing, loons call across the water, and above it all, the stars keep their timeless vigil.

For those of us who call Hardwood Lake a special place, the dark sky isn't just scenery—it's part of the rhythm of

life. It frames family gatherings, campfire stories, and quiet moments of reflection. It ties us to the generations who first settled here and to those who will inherit it after us.

As light pollution spreads, places like Hardwood Lake are growing rare. Protecting our dark skies means protecting the essence of this lake—its wildlife, its traditions, and its sense of wonder. Each time we step outside and see the Milky Way shimmering overhead, we're reminded that this is more than a place to live. It is a place where the universe still belongs to us.

Tips to reduce light pollution

- Aim lights downward
- Choose warm-colored bulbs
- Use motion sensors or timers
- Shield lights properly
- Turn off decorative lights overnight
- Dim dock lights
- Avoid "blue" LED bulbs
- Encourage neighbors to join in
- Close curtains at night
- Enjoy the stars instead

Step outside and look up
nature rewards the effort.

Upcoming events

2025

- Halloween Hoot October 4, 2025 4 pm

2026

- Golf Cart Parade, Saturday, May 23 - noon
- Lake Association Meeting June 20 - 9 am
- Corn Hole Tourney, June 20 - 2 pm
- Kids Fishing Contest, June 20 - 7 pm
- Kids Fun Run July 4 - Run at 10 am
- Boat Parade July 4 - 2 pm
- Ice Cream Social August 8 - 7:30 pm
- Gather at Sunset August 30 - 7:30 pm
- Halloween Hoot October TBD, 2026



The Memorial Day weekend golf cart parade is a popular event.

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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