



# Pentwater Lake Association

January 2009

## LAKE WATER QUALITY REMAINS STABLE

- Tom Osborn, Co-Chair, Water Quality Committee

This past year continued to be a good water quality year for Pentwater Lake, although very high runoff in early June from the same series of storms that raised so much havoc in Mason County had some early temporary impact. We also have curiously high coliform levels in the North Branch of the Pentwater River. We've expanded our sampling considerably along the length of the stream but have yet to see a clear explanation for its elevated levels. All in all the lake continues to be in good shape.

The PLA Water Quality volunteers again took water samples monthly in early June, July, August, and September 2008. Two permanent lake sites were once again sampled, one over the deepest basin (in about 50 feet of water) about mid-lake off the village boat ramp, and a second further up the lake, not far off the township boat ramp. We also sampled both the North and South branches of the Pentwater River above their confluence during each sampling period. This year, in a continuing attempt to understand the elevated coliform readings in the North Branch, as many as 9 additional samples were taken upstream on the North Branch and on two of its tributaries.

One of our biggest long-term concerns for the lake is nutrient loading, which may have a powerful impact on lake quality and accelerate lake eutrophication. Again for 2008, no negative trends in nutrient loading were observed. The average lake nitrate nitrogen levels of 0.47 mg/l are virtually the same as last year and at the lower end of the long term average. The average North Branch nitrate concentration of 0.76 mg/l and South Branch concentration of 0.93 mg/l are each lower than last year and in the lower range of historical averages.

We are very sensitive to phosphorus levels due to our belief that its scarcity limits algae growth and, therefore, phytoplankton blooms in the lake. Available or reactive phosphorus, or phosphate, continues to be found at about its lab detection limit of 0.005 mg/l (or 5 ppb) when it's detected at all, showing that when it is available, it's taken up almost immediately by algae. A slight exception was our sampling of June 13, shortly after the heavy June rainstorms, when the stream values were measured at 0.012 mg/l in the North Branch and 0.016 mg/l in the South Branch. Total phosphorus levels continued to average 0.030 mg/l or less at each sampling location, within historical norms. Our other disturbance indicators, chlorides and sulfates, each were measured within our long term averages. Chlorides averaged less than 40 mg/l at each site and sulfates averaged below 20 mg/l at each site.

Water clarity, as measured by Secchi disk readings, ranged from about 4 to 5 feet at the beginning (early June) and end (early September) of the sampling season, to a maximum of about 7.5 feet through July. This range in clarity is about the same as the 2007 season; but, interestingly, the pattern is almost exactly inverse. In 2007 we experienced our clearest water in early June and again in August, with our least clear water during July. We experienced a drop in clarity in late August and September in both years. Of course this past summer we had very heavy rains in early June which brought a lot of turbidity into the lake, decreasing clarity considerably. In 2007, we experienced a fairly significant algae bloom in July which decreased the water clarity. This bloom was probably caused by blue-green algae (technically a type of bacteria—Cyanobacteria) which are selec-

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## From the President



Many of our members leave the Pentwater area before the advent of winter: some to their homes in other parts of Michigan or other states, and some to winter places where warmer temperatures are the norm. My wife, Maggie, and I like to stay through the New Year before venturing south, as we both enjoy a touch of winter. This year the early winter was more than a touch. Not counting the substantial snow that fell in November, a total of 86 inches of snow fell in December. Pentwater Lake froze over by mid December and many ice fishing shanties dotted the lake before the end of the year. Then in a bewildering quirk, warm weather at the end of the month and heavy rains washed all that snow away. However, I have been told by friends who remain in Pentwater that snow in January and more cold weather has reestablished an adequate snow base for cross country skiing and ice fishing. I would like to remind you that safety on the ice must always be observed. The currents of our river-fed lake can undermine the ice and a dunk in the icy water is hazardous. A minimum of three inches of ice is necessary before proceeding on any area of the lake. Also, if you start feeding the birds in your neighborhood, please keep it up through the winter. Birds very quickly become dependent upon your generosity.

*Jerry Saylor, President*

### Officers

President, Jerry Saylor  
 Vice-President, Tom Osborn  
 Secretary, Norma Oly  
 Treasurer, Paul Anderson

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#### Until June 2009

Tom Osborn  
 Jerry Saylor  
 Don Van Zile

#### Until June 2010

Paul Anderson  
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 Kathy Timmer

#### Until June 2011

Lynne Cavazos  
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 George Richey

### Committees

Fish and Wildlife	Ron Steiner
Land Use	Paul Anderson
Water Surface Use	Dennis Winn
Water Quality	Tom Osborn
Social	Lynne Cavazos
Membership	George Richey
Publicity	Norma Oly
Newsletter Editor	Charlotte Lindstrom
Long Range Planning	Jerry Saylor

For more information about a committee or to get involved contact President Jerry Saylor at 231-869-5295 or [jerry\\_saylor@yahoo.com](mailto:jerry_saylor@yahoo.com).

### Pentwater Village Council

Juanita Pierman, President  
 Jim Alfredson  
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 Alvin Docter  
 Jared Griffis  
 Don Palmer  
 Marilyn Sullivan

Jim Miller, Village Manager  
 Dick Hutchings, Marina Manager

### Pentwater Township Board

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 Barbara Burke, Clerk  
 Janice Siska, Treasurer  
 Terry Cluchey  
 Mike Flynn

### Oceana County Sheriff's Department

Marine Deputy Tim Simon

### PLA Members Enjoy E-mail Updates!

A number of PLA members have received occasional email updates on PLA board meetings and sometimes a note about the weather or lake condition, too!

If you would like to receive email information on current issues and meetings for PLA members, please send an e-mail to: [oly@oceana.net](mailto:oly@oceana.net)

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tively avoided by our zebra mussel friends. The zebra mussels do a very effective job of filtering the less onerous green algae, leaving little competition for the blue-green algae, which they don't eat. In some lakes, such as Muskegon Lake, very nasty, foul blooms can result. If we experience an increase in phosphorus, unpleasant blue-green blooms can be the result.

This concern about phosphorus levels is one of the main reasons the PLA Board has taken an interest in the plans for a new Pentwater sewage treatment system. We asked Jim Miller, village manager, and Terry Bartels, of Wade-Trim Engineering to address our concerns regarding whether the new system would be protective of lake water quality and Mr. Bartels gave an informative presentation at our November 2008 board meeting. Many of our concerns were addressed and discussed. Hopefully this presentation will make its way to the village web site. We will continue our monitoring of the project and are confident the village will be open to further discussions with us. Of course, our ongoing water quality monitoring program will take the new project into account for baselining pre-construction water quality and for monitoring water quality impacts after operations begin.

E.coli bacteria levels in the lake itself are typically extremely low, and that was the case for 2008, except in early June during the very high storm runoff period. Our lake samples in June found colony counts of from 55 to 61 per 100mL of sample. While by far the highest we have ever found in the lake, they are still well below the safety standard for swimming or recreation. Coliform bacteria, while used as indicators of the presence of fecal matter, also exist naturally in soils and other materials that wash into streams and lakes during rainfall events.

So these elevated readings after such a severe runoff event are not unexpected.

Something that is unexpected, and which we frankly have not been able to figure out yet, is the elevated coliform levels we are consistently finding in the North Branch Pentwater River samples, even during low flows when there has been no runoff. In July, at the Monroe Road (Bus. 31) bridge, we found counts of 1046, while the South Branch only had counts of 96. These counts remained in the 400 to 550 range, without a clear pattern, in four more samples we took several miles upstream, to well east of Oceana Drive. The counts for August, while lower at nearly 300 at the Monroe Rd. site, were still clearly elevated. Our upstream sampling was extended even further upstream and still showed elevated readings, yet with no discernable up or down pattern.

In September we sampled at intervals all the way upstream to near the headwaters in the Manistee National Forest in south-eastern Mason County. We also sampled two North Branch tributaries, Dumaw Creek and Cedar Creek. The Monroe Road bridge site, the furthest downstream, had a count of 365, yet the second furthest upstream site, just outside the national forest, had a count of 435. All the sites in between ranged from 130 to 260, yet with no obvious pattern. Both tributaries were elevated also, with a count of 460 for Dumaw Creek and 230 for Cedar Creek. All North Branch samples were higher than the South Branch sample with a count of 67. Prior to starting our coliform testing in 2007, we assumed the South Branch, with Hart Lake, the City of Hart, and considerable agriculture, would have the higher coliform counts. We are still confused by the higher counts in the North Branch and will continue our quest for the truth come next year.

## OCEANA COUNTY SHERIFF ON PENTWATER LAKE

Patrolling activity during	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>
No. of hours spent patrolling:	207	185	151	104
No. of contacts with boats for any reason:	95	174	582	300
No. of accidents:	2	4	4	0
Citations issued	4	14	7	17
Warnings issued	27			
Search & rescue cases	8	3		

# News Around Town . . .

## WINTERFEST 2009!

### February 13:

- Winterfest kick off, Karaoke at the Boathouse Bar & Grill.

### February 14:

- 6th annual Cork & Canvas wine and art event (call Jim Durand for ticket prices and advance tickets, 869-5520).
- 12<sup>th</sup> annual Vegas Night at the Comfort Inn in Hart, 7:00 to midnight. Purchase tickets at the door. For more information, call the Hart Chamber office at 873-2247
- Pentwater Pathways open from 9:30 to 3:30 for cross county skiing, hiking and bonfires on the trails. For ski and trail information call Gaye Sorenson at 873-5247.
- 1<sup>st</sup> annual Perch Derby from 11:00 to 4:00 on Pentwater Lake. Registration at Cenzo's. Trophies awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place to both adults and children. Contact Joe at 869-8681.
- Kid's scavenger hunt at Colonial Golf Course: 11:00 to 11:30 up to first grade; 12:00 to 12:30 second and third grades; 1:00 to 1:30 fourth and fifth grades. Contact Harold Webb at 873-8333 for more information.

### February 21:

- Mardi Gras at Gull Landing 9:00 to midnight. Music and dancing New Orleans style, appetizer menu. For more information see [www.gulllanding.com](http://www.gulllanding.com).
- Outhouse Race in downtown Mears. For more information contact [momcastle@aol.com](mailto:momcastle@aol.com).
- Beer Tasting, downtown Pentwater. Call Jim Durand for ticket information, 869-5520.
- Pancake breakfast, Mears Methodist Church 8:00 to 10:00.
- Spa-a-Thon, Etc Salon, benefit for C.O.V.E. 9:00 to 1:00.
- Pentwater Pathways open 9:30 to 3:30.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Icicle Open at Colonial Golf Course 11:00 to 1:00. For more information call Harold Webb at 873-8333.

## BUILDING MORATORIUM CHANGED

Back in October, the Village Council voted to modify the Pentwater building moratorium to remove new, reconstructed, expanded or replacement one and two family dwellings. The moratorium still stands for new construction or improvements to existing properties that would require installation or extension of any sewer main lines or additional mains, or new developments for condominiums or multi-family housing projects unless approved by the Michigan DEQ.

## HARBOR DREDGING UNCERTAIN FOR 2009

In early November, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that there will be enough money for only 12 Michigan harbors to be dredged in 2009. Ludington is included, but Pentwater is not. Given the current economic conditions, it does not seem likely that this will change. Our best hope is for higher water levels to keep our harbor open.

## GRANT RECEIVED FOR FISHING PIER AT FOURTH STREET

Pentwater has received a \$117,000 grant from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust to construct a fishing pier at the bottom of Fourth Street, location of the present dinghy dock. According to the Trust website, "The project will provide shoreline fishing access on Pentwater Lake to provide increased opportunities to fish for migrating Great Lakes species. Pentwater is a known destination for fishing, but the opportunity for shoreline fishing in the area is limited. The proposed fishing pier will be the only designated facility in Oceana County for Great Lakes fishing for children and individuals requiring ADA access." There will still be a dinghy dock, but it will be moved to the side to make room for the new pier. One stipulation for the grant is that no boats are to be allowed to dock at the fishing pier. Both the Pentwater Lake Association and the Downtown Development Authority have expressed willingness to help provide funds for landscaping the area approaching the pier and the dingy dock.

## COMMEMORATIVE BRICKS AT MEARS STATE PARK

The current beach walkway is being replaced at Mears State Park and memorial bricks can be purchased for installation along the walkway. The cost is \$150 for a 4"x8" brick, \$300 for a 8"x8" brick, and \$1,000 for a 16"x16" brick. The funds raised will be used to improve the walkway and go towards the purchase of new playground equipment, a handicapped accessible walkway to the water's edge, and additional park improvements. Order blanks for the bricks can be obtained from Charles Mears State Park, P. O. Box 370, Pentwater, MI 49449 (869-2051).

## Getting to Know Board Member George Richey



George was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana. After graduating from Elmhurst High School in 1960, he attended the Fort Wayne campus of the Purdue/IU Extension for two years. He then transferred to the main Purdue campus at West

Lafayette, Indiana, where he graduated with an Electrical Engineering degree. After graduation, he joined Consumers Energy in Jackson, Michigan, but, due to the Vietnam War, he had to change his plans. George joined the Navy Seabees in Davisville, R.I., and served on two deployments to Vietnam with Mobile Construction Battalion Seven from 1967 to 1969.

Upon the completion of his Navy service, he rejoined Consumers Energy in Jackson to continue his career in the electric power industry. George worked the majority of his career in Jackson, but also spent several years in Flint. His responsibilities included the standards and specifications for distribution equipment and material, transmission substation design and project management. After 37 years of service, he retired from Consumers Energy in 2003. He then worked part time in the power engineering field in Jackson until 2006.

Outside of work, George and his son became involved in Boy Scouts. He served as a Troop Committee Chairman for several years. One of the highlights of his scouting experience was a trip to the Philmont Scout Ranch near Santa Fe, New Mexico. He also assisted his wife, Suzanne, with the senior high youth program at First United Methodist Church in Jackson. They were involved in leading several youth mission trips. George was also a youth league soccer coach in Jackson. By coaching his daughter's high school soccer club team, he assisted in establishing a girl's soccer program at Western High School.

George and his wife Suzanne fell in love with the Pentwater area during their 35 plus years of attending a week of family camping at the Lake Michigan United Methodist Camp, on Ridge Road south of Pentwater. In 1998, as a first step in planning for a retirement home, they purchased a lot on Cory Circle in Pentwater. Actual home construction began in 2004, and they moved in during May of 2005.

George loves boating and fishing on both Pentwater Lake and Lake Michigan. He has assisted with the 6, 7 and 8<sup>th</sup> grade fishing club at Pentwater School. Maintaining Pentwater Lake's water quality and developing partnerships to reduce the incoming sand load from the Lake's watershed are of special interest to George. He is presently serving as the chair of the PLA Membership Committee.

## News Around Town (continued). . .

### PROPOSED BOARDWALK

The Village Council has approved a boardwalk between Charlie's Marina and Snug Harbor on Sixth Street, and the Downtown Development Authority voted funds to get the project started and to apply for grants. There is a lot of traffic along the street between the two marinas and safety is a concern. If grant money becomes available, the project could be completed in 2010.

### PODIATRY SERVICE IN PENTWATER

OCCOA announced in November that foot care will be provided by Grand Rapids Podiatrists in the Hart-Pentwater area. Call the Grand Rapids office (866-456-9744) to arrange appointments and billing to Medicare. Patients will be seen at both the Hart and Pentwater senior centers.

### NEW BUSINESS IN PENTWATER

Squire Marketing Communications, owned by Sue Squire, is based in Pentwater. It provides public relations and marketing communications support to businesses and non-profit organizations from Holland to Traverse City, which she sees as needed for organizations to weather the current economic challenges. "In particular, the travel and tourism industry in West Michigan faces a very challenging year." Go to [www.squiremktgcommunications.com](http://www.squiremktgcommunications.com) for more information.

### ELECTION TURNOUT REALLY BIG!

Pentwater Township clerk, Barbara Burke, announced at the November meeting that there was an 83% turnout of Township voters for the Presidential Election on November 4, 2008. WOW!

## Pentwater's Artist Palette

*Our Continuing Series on Pentwater Artists...by Norma Oly*



Some artists are multitalented and some are multifaceted, but Jim Ege (pronounced *eggie*) is both...and on top of that he is a multitasker! The local artist has been a Pentwaterite since purchasing land here in 1994 and building a retirement home in 2000 for him and Lois, his wife of thirty-eight years.

Since he has been here, Jim has been the President of the Pentwater Historical Society for two years and is currently serving as its secretary. He is also the Vice President of the Michigan Gourd Society which includes growers and artists alike, who meet, work and share creative ideas on the second Saturday of every month at the Friendship Center. As a member of the American Gourd Society which is headquartered in Kokomo, Indiana, Jim has been both a grower and an artist, and many of his unique and beautifully dried, carved gourds are for sale at *Caesar's Palette Art Gallery* on First Street in Pentwater. Each gourd sculpture is titled, and a visit to the gallery will offer close-up views of *Whale II* (created from a long-neck gourd), *Prayer Bowl*, *Carnival*, *Coyote Vessel*, *Eagle Vessel*, *Take Flight* and *Dragon Wars*. Two-foot by one-foot *Gourdasaurus* is kept safely at home, however. It is surely not surprising that one of Jim's first gifts to his three-year-old grandson, was a gourd rattle.

It is amazing that gourd growing and artistry has spanned the world from Africa to Hawaii for centuries. Gourds have been used as vessels, pipes, purses, musical instruments, bird houses, vases, mobiles and canteens. Each year, at the Oceana County Fairgrounds, a strict judging of gourds takes place in both the growers section and the artists section and brings many Michigan gourd growers and artists together at the same time. Jim loves to experiment and use a variety of techniques, methods and media by which to develop his gourd artwork and sculptures

including clay, acrylics, resins, copper, feathers, pine needles, chip carving, inlaying and pyrography.

With a BA and MA in painting and drawing, artistic gourd work is not his only passion. As a thirty-four year classroom art educator in Elgin, Illinois, Jim's primary focus was teaching high school photography for twenty five of those years. "I first taught elementary art classes," he mused, "but really loved the older students." He is certified in photo restoration, photo retouching and holography as well. He loves to take both color and black and white photographs, and several of his photographs, including hand-colored black and white ones titled *Lake Buoy* and *Safe Harbor*, are also displayed at *Caesar's Palette*. Another talent Jim has is creating digital composites. "I was also a Curriculum Specialist in Technology when I taught in Elgin," he says, "and did many educator workshops on how to integrate technology into the classroom." He loves to develop Power Point presentations, and of course, his latest is entitled, "Living the Gourd Life!"

This father of two is also an avid sailor and motorcyclist. "The love of sailing first brought us to Pentwater years ago," he said, "and living in the woods off Wayne Road, surrounded on three sides by State Forest, gives me a chance to ride my motorcycle whenever I want." Jim and Lois especially love the diversity of the people in town, and say, "there is always so much to do here, year around." Never one to sit still for very long, Jim is currently working and experimenting with stained glass sculptures, which invoke under-lighting as a highlighter.

Jim says, "Ever since I was a kid in Catholic school growing up in Moline, I have known that I loved many different kinds of art. I did not want to be boxed in doing only one kind ...I have always wanted to express myself in many different ways." He has certainly achieved that and has contributed so much more to the Pentwater community and its artist enclave since the millennium. The left-hander held a thumb up, showing how he uses that sign as the logo on his business card. To contact this most versatile and fun-loving artist, email him at [jamesege@mac.com](mailto:jamesege@mac.com), call him at 231.869.4315 or stop by *Caesar's Palette* and take a tour of Jim's works with gallery owner Mary Thiele.



## ON THE AGENDA

The board meetings of the Pentwater Lake Association are always open to our members. At recent meetings we have had several presentations of general interest:

September 16: (1) Marine Deputy Tim Simon came to our meeting and discussed the need for a new sheriff's boat for patrolling lakes in Oceana County and assisting the Coast Guard with search and rescue operations on Lake Michigan. In 1997 the PLA helped to fund the purchase of the boat currently in use. Grant moneys from the DNR and the USDA have been requested for a new fully equipped 25 foot SeaArk. Tim advised that at the time of our meeting it did not appear that additional funds would be needed, but he would keep us updated and let us know if help from the PLA is desired. (2) Downtown Development Authority member Jim Durand and Landscape Architect Norman Booth presented plans for improvement of the dinghy dock and for a new fishing pier at the end of Fourth Street, plus landscaping designs (see article on page 4.)

November 19: At our request and due to our concerns about the impact on the water quality of Pentwater Lake of the village's proposed new waste treatment facilities, Terry Bartels, Sewer System Engineer for Wade Trim Engineering, gave us a Power Point presentation explaining the proposed system and the safeguards that will be included, and the DEQ deadlines for completion of the project. Many members and village officials were present. There will be an update presentation in July or August of 2009.

December 16: Joe Primozych and George Richey presented slides showing erosion of the Big Sandy Bend area on the South Branch of the Pentwater River. It is proposed that a grant request be made by the Conservation District, with support of the Pentwater Lake Association and the Pentwater Lake Improvement Board, for funds for sedimentation control at the Bend and the stream crossing at 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

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*Membership Application*                      **PENTWATER LAKE ASSOCIATION**                      *Membership Application*  
 P.O. Box 825  
 Pentwater, Michigan 49449

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address:

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address:

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): Local ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues:	Yearly Family Membership (one vote), from July 1 through June 30	\$ <u>25.00</u>
	Subscription to Michigan Riparian Magazine, published quarterly ( <b>optional</b> ) \$8.00	\$ <u>.00</u>
	<b>Total (Make check payable to Pentwater Lake Association, Inc.)</b>	<b>\$ <u>.00</u></b>

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January view across Pentwater Lake from the Oly house

*Photo by Norma Oly*

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