

# JUNE 2005 Silver Lake

## IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION *Caring for the future of the lake*

### Bits from the Past...

In a recent conversation with Bill Weitschat, a resident at the north end of Silver Lake, he described the summers that he began spending on the lake in 1943. His uncle H. O. (Heinie) and aunt Teddy Weitschat became his adoptive parents during those adventurous times. Bill describes the following original account as "Thoughts of a big city guy, H.O. Weitschat, moving into his new home at the north end of Silver Lake in the 1920's."

Out of the little square east window, you looked out on Maudie and Ollie's yearling cherry orchard, a spindling thing seemingly of no promise in those days, but now a producer of such vigor that they have to prop up the lower branches to save them from breaking under the weight of their fruit. And beyond was Dohrman's woods, split by a winding road that led down to the sandbar and the best beach on the lake. A swale at its northerly edge was an over-night stop for the mallards on their southward flight in the fall, and again on the return trip in the spring. From both these woods, Rousch's and Dohrman's, came the drumming of partridges and the call of quail. Sometimes at evening you might spot a deer venturing out for a drink off the beach. The woods were a playground for the cottontails too, until the time came which called for a showdown, whether we would have a garden or the cottontails. The garden won, Buster the Bounding Beagle was added to the household, and the rabbits thenceforth stayed where they belonged, in the woods.

They were more than just a piece of landscape, these woodlands. They gave us the first blush-pink arbutus that peered up through the snow in the spring, trilliums later, and many another wildflower with a beauty more maturely graceful than anything that could be nurtured in a greenhouse. And when the urge for some food fresh out of the ground at the end of a long winter was upon us, they yielded the white and brown morels, a mushroom treat unknown to those whose acquaintance with the delicacy is confined to the button types that roll out of a can.

Southward, the valley which separated us from the road and which plunged us into a feat of engineering, cost me more than I could earn in a year, and provoked the natives once more into a spell of head-shaking expressive of their wonderment and disbelief. We moved enough dirt into that valley to provide us with a straight driveway right up to the top of the knoll.

Given time, progress will prevail over dense ignorance. Take it from us. On what was often referred to as "that sand-hill" there came into existence as the months and

years went past, a vineyard, berry patch, truck garden, fruit trees, shrubs and a lawn. We learned many things you can't pick out of books. Like, for instance how to tell when spring is here. Not by a calendar date or by keeping a steady eye on the thermometer. No, up at the lake spring came one morning when you were jolted from your sleep by a series of wild, maniacal shrieks, coming from the lake. First time I heard them, I pictured regiments of madmen, turned loose in an inferno.

But it was just the loons, lighting on the water, the moment the ice broke. They knew, far better than any human, the exact moment when the floes would crumble and crash against the beaches, the lake would be open once more, and spring would be at hand. They've proclaimed the changing of the season for us in that weird manner every year we've spent on the lake.

So you see, the neighboring woodlands became our friends, the sand hill took on a coat of green, the dirt fill through the valley became a useable drive, Buster the Bounding beagle showed us how to control the cottontail menace, the loons told us about spring. Unconsciously, each morning we made the round of the windows to see that all the beauty around us had not been disturbed through the night, that the night had not robbed us of any of the beauty surrounding us. Why, we had even advanced to the point where neighboring farmers, instead of merely recognizing us with a nod, were beginning to accept us. This highly significant development in social relationship dawned on us one evening, when Bill Bratch called on us, hesitantly, almost apologetically and asked us if we wished to contribute to the cost of a floral wreath. It was to rest upon the casket of a farmer up the road whom we had never met. He was never a good man with horses, and a kick finished him. But it was to bear the lettering, "Our Neighbor."

By that time, we were not referring to it as the lake anymore. It was Our Lake.

*Heinie was editor in chief at the Detroit Free Press and campaign manager for several gubernatorial candidates, including George Romney. Teddy was a proof reader for the Detroit Times and also wrote poetry. But to Bill Weitschat, they were the aunt and uncle who opened a wonderful world of discovery for their urban nephew. Bill retired and has been a full time resident of Silver Lake, on the family property, ever since.*

Submitted by Vicki Bush



### SLIA BOARD OFFICERS

|                 |               |          |
|-----------------|---------------|----------|
| President:      | Jim Lievens   | 943-3757 |
| Vice President: | Dick Bogard   | 943-4845 |
| Secretary:      | Pat Adams     | 947-5502 |
| Treasurer:      | Janet Wheeler | 943-4443 |

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

|                             |                |          |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Lake Monitoring/<br>Exotics | Russel Adams   | 947-5502 |
| Fisheries                   | Kevin Gagnon   | 943-5226 |
| Social                      | Nancy Knight   | 943-9487 |
| Membership/<br>Nominating   | Janet Wheeler  | 943-4443 |
| Communication               | Pat Adams      | 947-5502 |
| Township Liason             | Peter Haddix   | 943-8825 |
| Rules/Grant Writing         | Chuck Fricke   | 943-8868 |
| Welcoming                   | Gloria Fricke  | 943-8868 |
| Web Site                    | Wayne Knight   | 943-9487 |
| Drain                       | Jerry Wheeler  | 943-4443 |
| Sediment Reduction          | Dave Fashbaugh | 943-8543 |

### SILVER LAKE SWIMMERS

The walleye, smallmouth bass and bluegill. If you have fished Silver Lake, you probably have hooked one of these game fish. Have you ever landed a white sucker or a brown bullhead? While seldom caught, these two species do inhabit Silver Lake. Let's learn a bit about these Silver Lake swimmers:

**White Sucker** - Averaging 12-20" and weighing 2-4 lbs. the white sucker is so named because of the creamy white sides and under belly and dark brown or black on top. With their fleshy mouth aimed downward, they vacuum up worms, clams and, some say, the eggs of other fish. These fish spawn in the spring and are seen splashing next to shore during the spawning process. Though the meat is firm and good tasting, white sucker seldom appears on a menu, perhaps because the name lacks market appeal. As a result, it is often processed under a variety of names, often called "mullet". They are good smoked or in soups and chowders.

**Brown bullhead** - Averaging 8-12" and weighing about a pound, the brown bullhead is olive to dark brown on the sides, fading to cream on the underside. The "whiskers" on each side are black and aid in sensing food. It feeds eagerly on nearly anything available and has a voracious appetite. The brown bullhead spawns in the early spring. Females will lay 2000-10,000 eggs and are guarded by both parents until hatching in 5-8 days. At this point, they are herded about in schools for several weeks. The hard spine on the front fins is sharp and can stick an angler.

Have a good angling season and remember to report any trophy or unusual catches from Silver Lake. The SLIA website is just waiting to announce your catch!

The 3rd annual SLIA fishing contest is set for July 4th. Meet at the public launch at 715 am. All SLIA members and friends can participate. See the registration form enclosed in the newsletter.

-Kevin Gagnon

### LIGHTING THE TORCHES

It's the beginning of another summer on beautiful Silver Lake. Let's get out the beach torches and start the summer tradition. Be sure to light them each evening during the holiday weekend as a welcome sign to everyone. If you don't have a torch, they are selling them everywhere pretty cheap. Join the fun and start your tradition. It would be great to see the lake's beaches lit up for the 4th and throughout the summer.

### YOU GOTTA REGATTA

COME ONE - COME ALL

JULY 4TH - 3 O'clock SHARP at the Boat Launch

Decorate your boat and join the competition for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes.

Last year in spite of the weather we had pirate ships, party boats and patriotic themes - BUT - we did have a little problem locating the owners of some of the entries to award prizes. So we have come up with a plan we think will work. Call 943-9487 (talk to the machine if no one's home) and leave your name, telephone number and your house number - your house number will be your entry number - just display it on the side or back of your boat. This would be better than trying to register everyone at the launch at 3 o'clock - chaos!

We will have judges at various points around the lake, so we encourage you to join the fun and come up with something original and see what happens! (If you would like to be a judge call the same number and talk to Nancy - those of you that have such fun with your score cards at the end of your docks would be excellent candidates!)

If you don't want to decorate but just want to enjoy the ride and join the fun - don't worry, be happy!  
**It's the Silver Lake Community in action - and that's what it's all about .....**



## BEAVER BATTLE

*The following was submitted by Kevin McElyea, Grand Traverse County Drain Commissioner who has been hard at work since early spring keeping the lake drain open. (We have edited the submission to fit available space.)*

Since the end of March, we have found debris clogging the Silver Lake Drain which impedes flow through the drain. We removed debris daily. About mid-April we determined beavers were responsible.

We initiated research to determine best management practices. Some recommended we declare the beavers a nuisance and dispose of them. Others cautioned against disposal.

Research suggested beavers have an ecological importance far greater than the small biomass they represent. Beavers increase biological productivity. Wetlands they create increases landscape diversity. Their rooting, feeding, and digging till the soil and recirculate nutrients. Their activities break up monocultures like cattails and reed grass, creating a diverse habitat that is accessible to more species.

The Drain Commissioner's office strives to respect beaver populations compatible with public uses of land while attempting to minimize their negative impacts on humans. Additionally, your County Drain Commissioner is committed to performing the duties and responsibilities of the office — such as maintaining court mandated lake levels to promote the health, safety and welfare of people.

We decided that the beavers' dam building was not a hazard to property owners, just time consuming nuisance to the Drain Commissioner's office. Best management practice would be to construct an exclusionary device or "beaver fence".

We installed the fence on April 30. Silver Lake water level on that day was 862.4' AMSL. As of May 6 the water level has dropped to 862.3'. We expect the mandated lake level (862.0' AMSL) will be reached by the end of May.



## AREA DEVELOPMENT (TOWNSHIP NEWS)

As our area grows and development activity increases we can expect increased traffic and population. The result will be increased pressure on Silver Lake. Silver Lake lies in two townships with the North half in Garfield Township and the South half in Blair Township.

In Garfield Township there are no new developments being planned on the lake at this time, however, with the expansion of utilities to the area we can expect increased activity.

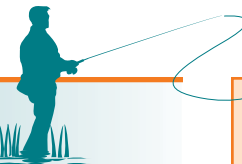
The new park is a welcome asset and will continue to be improved with the addition of a pavilion and restrooms this summer.

We continue to monitor the status of the application to the DEQ, for the opening of the channel between the North end of the lake and the Pond to the North. We believe this pond was connected to the lake in the past and its reconnection would enhance the natural fish spanning for the lake.

In Blair Township, development is active and is expected to increase. Presently the new Menards store, the new ball park and future water park will all put pressure on the road systems. The sewer extension work is scheduled to begin this fall. The sewer is to extend from the Garfield Township line down US 37/31 to Chum's Corner then West on US 31, to East Silver Lake Road. With water and sewer now in the area we can expect development to boom.

As we reported in the last newsletter, MDOT work on the Chum's Corner intersection will result in rerouting of US 31 traffic along East Silver Lake road to the improved Rennie School road then to US 37/31. Traffic lights will be installed at Rennie School and US 37/31 and East Silver Lake and US 31.

**Drive carefully!!**



### FISHING CONTEST

Monday, July 4th, 2005 - 7:30 - 11 a.m.

Get your fishing gear ready once again for the Fishing Contest on Silver Lake. Meet at the boat launch off E. Silver Lake Road. Pre-registration forms are on the back of the enclosed membership form and should be mailed before June 22, 2005. Any questions should be addressed to Kevin Gagnon at 943-5226

### CHAIRMAN'S COVE

**"HEAR NO EVIL, SEE NO EVIL, SPEAK NO EVIL"**  
This is what many of us prefer to practice but cannot afford to do.

As members of the Silver Lake Improvement Association, we need to constantly keep our senses about us in order to **HEAR, SEE** and **SPEAK** of the issues that threaten Silver Lake, and the surrounding areas that affect our lake.

Presently the lake association is watching the sale of both the Fedrigon property and the Watson property, on the southwest part of the lake, for "keyholing" violations. We are talking with the Garfield Township supervisor regarding the park property on the north end of the lake pertaining to a "fish passage" channel connecting Silver Lake to the pond to the north. Furthermore, we are listening to the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association and their recommendations for a cleaner, healthier lake.

Please assume part of this great responsibility by supporting YOUR Silver Lake Association by listening, watching and talking about the issues that affect our Lake.

**Jim Lievense**  
President - Silver Lake Improvement Association

### LANDSCAPING FOR THE LAKE

A popular topic at a recent lake association conference was landscaping to improve water quality. Two techniques employing native plants are used, vegetative shoreline buffers and rain gardens. Shoreline buffers intercept precipitation runoff and filter out pollutants, increase infiltration into the ground and stabilize soil to prevent erosion. Rain gardens are depressions built into landscaping to capture runoff from roofs, driveways and other impermeable surfaces. Like buffers they filter runoff and increase infiltration into the soil.

Photos of these techniques demonstrated they can provide an attractive as well as functional landscaping solution. Native plants used are carefree relative to other landscaping options as they are optimized for local growing conditions. Native plants require little or no fertilizer. Buffer and rain garden areas require no mowing.

Native plants have deep root systems, reaching from one to several feet deep. Turf grass roots on the other hand only extend a few inches into the soil. Studies have shown that turf grass captures only about one third of the rain in a downpour, the rest runs off (in our case into the lake).

SLIA has ordered copies of a 50 page booklet "Landscaping for Water Quality" a guide for lake friendly landscaping. Call the Adams at 947-5502 to get a copy. Native plants are available from six Michigan nurseries. Contact information for the nurseries is at [www.noblc.org/MNPPA.btm](http://www.noblc.org/MNPPA.btm). The website also includes a list of native Michigan plants. Another supplier is J.E New Company of Indiana ([www.jfnew.com](http://www.jfnew.com)). A more exhaustive resource for eco-friendly landscaping is "Landscaping for Wildlife and Water Quality" published by the Minn. Department of Natural Resources (1-800-657-3757). If you are not a web user, call the Adams for nursery contact information.

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE LOBBIES FOR MEETING CHANGE

### *New Format to include food*

The social committee is pleased that the annual meeting scheduled for Saturday, August 20th at the Garfield Township Park will also be a social event. In conjunction with this first time format we are in the process of planning a simple picnic lunch and games for young children. The games would be held at the same time of the meeting so parents can attend without being distracted. We also discussed softball or horseshoe for older youth and adults. Additional details will be provided in the next newsletter. Anyone up for a friendly East vs. West softball game?

*Submitted by the Social Committee*

### Membership Dues

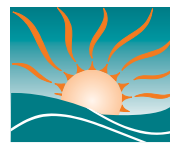
It's that time of year again to start thinking about supporting YOUR lake association by renewing your annual dues. Please find a membership form enclosed in this newsletter if you wish to pay your dues by mail. You may also pay at the annual meeting on August 20th. We would appreciate receiving your dues before September 1, 2005. If you would like to become part of a committee, please indicate on the membership form or call the committee chairperson. When paying by mail make your check payable to SLIA and mail to Janet Wheeler, Treasurer at P.O. Box 2133, Traverse City, MI 49685-2133

## It's Annual Meeting Time Again !

**Saturday, August 20, 2005 is the date set for our Annual Meeting**

We are in the process of planning something different for this year.

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us for a full day of fun and games for the whole family at our new Garfield Township Park on East Silver Lake Road. More specific information will be coming later.



**Silver Lake**  
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 2133 • TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49685-2133