

The West Laker

News You Can Use—June 2026

Summer—Bring it on!



Dear fellow riparians,
Summer is finally here! Memorial Day usually kicks off the summer lake and boating season and the weather was perfect for family and friends to enjoy West Lake at its finest. Your West Lake Board has been busy over the winter and spring seasons preparing for all of the fun activities for the summer. The youth fishing contest was well attended, even through we had a little rain. It is gratifying to see the youth on our lake engaged in fun activities.

Please attend your West Lake annual membership meeting on June 10th at the West Lake Preserve. The meetings are short and full of useful information. Our fourth of July boat parade is coming soon. Please enter your boat. It's not about the competition, it's about participation. Look for other activities such as bands on the shore, the poker run, boat night light parade, and others listed in this newsletter. Speaking of our newsletter, I want to give a shout out to our editor, Mary Lager, who does a fantastic job publishing the history of West Lake by doing interviews of people who lived on the lake for a long time as well as researching old news articles. Please let her know if you have ideas for future history or feature articles. Other lake associations have looked at our newsletter and use it as a model.

(continued on next page)

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Finally, the Board approved the survey and treatment for our lake. The survey was done in mid May and the treatment was completed on May 27th. Another survey will be done in the summer and another treatment authorized if necessary. Our consultant has indicated West Lake is one of the best lakes in our region due to how we manage the lake weed and water quality. We are focusing on treating invasive species in our lake and doing as much as the State will allow for native species. Hope all riparians have a safe and fun lake and boating season.
Peter Strazdas, President WLIA

Spring/Summer Happenings around West Lake

City of Portage/Lake Center District Updates- Plans by the city that impact West Lake Riparians:

Portage Road 360 Phase 1 Reconstruction – Bacon Avenue to South Shore Drive (as you may have noticed)- The contractor continues to replace hydrants and water services and build the new roadway. Work scheduled for next week includes the installation of curb and gutter along the east side of Portage Road. The project will maintain one lane of traffic in each direction throughout the duration of the project, which is scheduled to be completed in November 2026.

Phase 2 - Reconstruction of Portage Rd. from South Shore to Forest Dr. is currently scheduled for 2027, dependent on funding. This will include lane reduction of Portage Rd., rebuilding of the culvert between the lakes/under the road, and storm sewer installation, along with the addition of sidewalks. At some point, further discussion/planning may hopefully take place for a cul-de-sac on Ames Dr.

Update on West Lake Overlook Awning - According to Nick Haines from the Portage Department of Public Works, the city has started the process of looking into rebuilding the iconic metal overhang/awning from the West Lake Drive-In/overlook that was blown off and destroyed in the May 2025 storms, but the timing and details are up in the air at this time. The CIP has planned for it and they obtained pricing quotes from vendors for a similar design and are dealing with insurance coverage. He stated that the seawall at the overlook has been inspected and will need to be replaced first, all of which may be impacted by the Portage Rd. reconstruction.

Then



And



Now

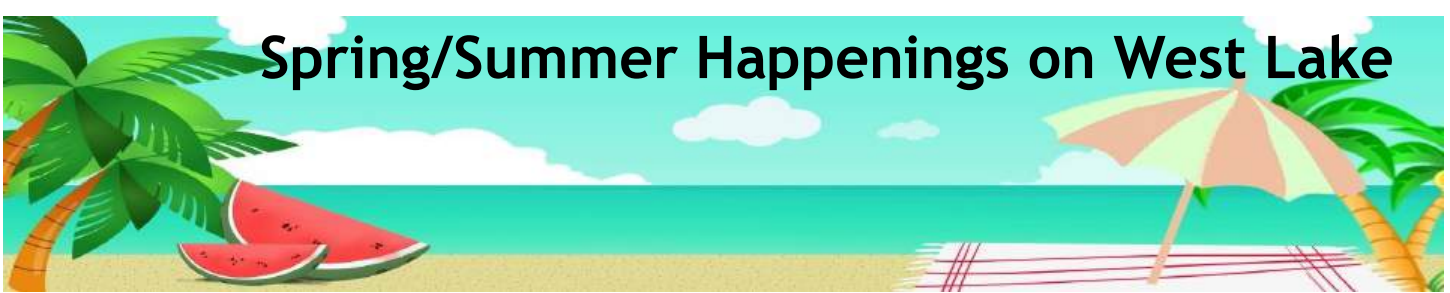


The West Lake Nature Preserve Dock

The dock that extends into the lake that was damaged over the winter will be repaired. Mr. Haines reported that he will work to get a quote and have a contractor out to reattach/repair the end section.

Austin Lake Trail Construction

Excavation work for the project is nearing completion. Work continues with grading and subbase installation, which should be completed soon. In June, the next phase begins, and the major effort switches to the aggregate base installation. The project remains on schedule and is expected to be completed by September or December 2026. Kathleen Hoyle, Portage Parks and Recreation director, stated that 800 trees of 2.5 caliper size will be planted along the trail and some sections of split rail fencing will be installed to help with buffering/yard privacy concerns, although this will take some time to become established.



Boater Safety—for riparians and their guests

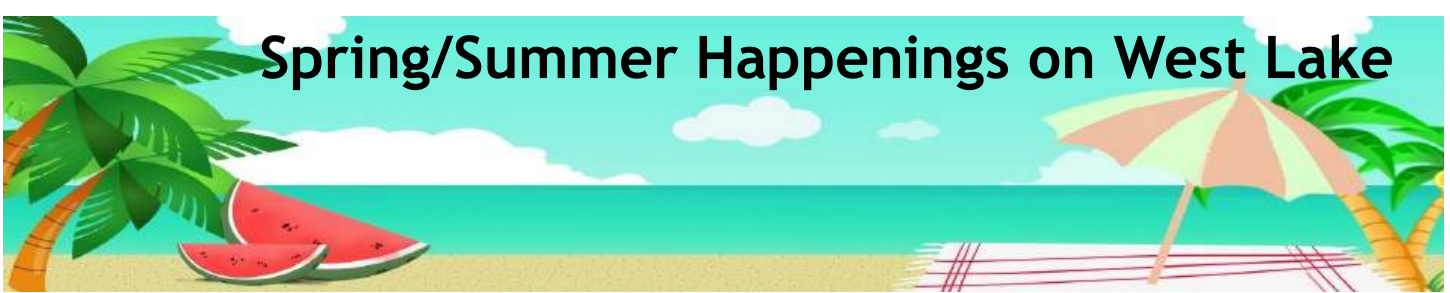
Summer on the lake is a great time to relax or have fun. The WLIA Board loves to see fellow Riparians out enjoying the water in these hot summer months. We also want you and your guests on the lake to be safe and courteous to other residents. Weekends are extra busy on the lake, making it especially important to be alert and to operate in accordance with Michigan boating regulations. Here are some key points to be aware of:

Who can drive a boat or jet ski (personal watercraft)?

1. Persons under 12 years old operating motorboats with 6-35 horsepower (HP) must:
 - Have been issued a boating safety certificate and have it on board the vessel,
 - Be under the direct supervision of a person 16 years of age or older; and,
 2. Persons born on or after July 1, 1997 must have a boating safety certificate.
 3. Any person may operate a motorboat that is powered by a motor of no more than 6 HP.
 4. A person of less than 14 years of age may not legally operate a personal watercraft (PWC) under any circumstances.
 5. A person 14 or 15 years of age may operate a PWC if:
 - Have been issued a boating safety certificate and have it on board the vessel,
 - Are accompanied by or are operating the PWC no more than 100 feet from a parent, legal guardian, or another designated person of 21 or older.
 6. A person who was born after December 31, 1978 shall not operate a PWC on Michigan waters unless they have obtained a boating safety certificate.
- Boats and jet skis are required to be 100 feet from other anchored vessels, docks, rafts, and occupied swimming areas. If you are swimming, please stay within this distance of your boat or dock for your safety. Boats are not to travel at greater than "Slow, No Wake" speed within 100 feet of other boats or docks
 - Michigan state law requires that boats have certain safety equipment, the main ones being PFDs (personal flotation devices), navigation lights, and fire extinguishers.
 - **Navigation Lights:** Don't head out unprepared, assuming you'll make it in before dusk. Michigan law requires power-driven boats less than 26 feet long to have red and green sidelights visible from a distance of at least one mile away, and an all-round white light. The white light should be higher than the sidelights.
 - Unpowered vessels less than 26 feet long should have at least one lantern or flashlight shining a white light at night while in motion. All vessels, when not underway are advised to always display a white light when anchored or adrift at night, between sunset and sunrise.
 - *As always, remember to drink responsibly. Boating under the influence was reportedly the lead contributing factor in boating fatalities last year.
 - No bow riding (legs must be in the boat at all times, not dangling over the front/side)

For more information, check out this link to the comprehensive **Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws** for laws and regulations and access to boater safety classes, and much more at: <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/boating/rules-and-regs>

If you see something unsafe, get the license/"MC" number off the boat or jet ski. Call the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's department marine division at 269-383-8822, option 6, to report what you observed.



Spring/Summer Happenings on West Lake

West Lake Improvement Association Kids Fishing Contest

By Patrick Duggan

This year's West Lake Kids' Fishing contest was a big success! Even with threatening skies prior to the contest, it went off flawlessly. Thankfully the fish were biting this year so that all trophies were awarded. We had 20 fishing contestants vying for the six prestigious trophies. The age group categories were girls and boys ages 2-8 and 9-16 years, along with a trophy for most fish caught. The most coveted trophy is for catching the biggest fish which came with bragging rights for the tournament. The contestants registered from 10-10:30 while enjoying juice, water, and donuts. At precisely 10:30 the starting horn went off and the fishing commenced. Within the first 10 minutes Claire Lowman was back at the shore to have her fish weighed. It ended up being the biggest of the tournament, weighing in at a whopping 2lb. 3 oz.

Congratulations to the winners of this year's fishing contest:

Girls 2-8 years - Sofia Dusseljee (granddaughter of Sarah Tenbrink)
 Girls 9-16 years- Claire Lowman (granddaughter of Mike and Julie Clancy)
 Boys 2-8 years- Oliver Dusseljee (grandson of Sarah Tenbrink)
 Boys 9-16 years- Cam Anderson (grandson of Dave and Mary Lager)
 Most Fish Caught- 3-way tie with 7 fish each- Willow Phelan (daughter of Dustin and Mo Phelan), Charlotte Vanliere, and Paisley Norris.
 Biggest Fish and Bragging Rights- Claire Lowman

Our fantastic judge Dave Grosser was back to weigh, count and measure the fish for the tournament. Dave and his wife Diane donated tackle boxes for all contestants and fishing poles were given to Claire Lowman and Cam Anderson for catching the biggest fish out of the girls and boys groups.

Thank you Dave and Diane for all your help, generosity and efforts supporting this free fun fishing contest. One last shout out goes to the West Lake Improvement Association, sponsor of this event and provider of refreshments.

Thank you to all the parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles who brought the kids to the tournament and finally, thank you kids for being involved in the contest. We couldn't do it without you. See you next year!



Left to right: Dave and Diane Grosser and Patrick Duggan



Easton Westrate, Oliver Dusseljee, Sofia Dusseljee, and Everly Westrate on Dale Westrate and Sarah Tenbrink's pontoon



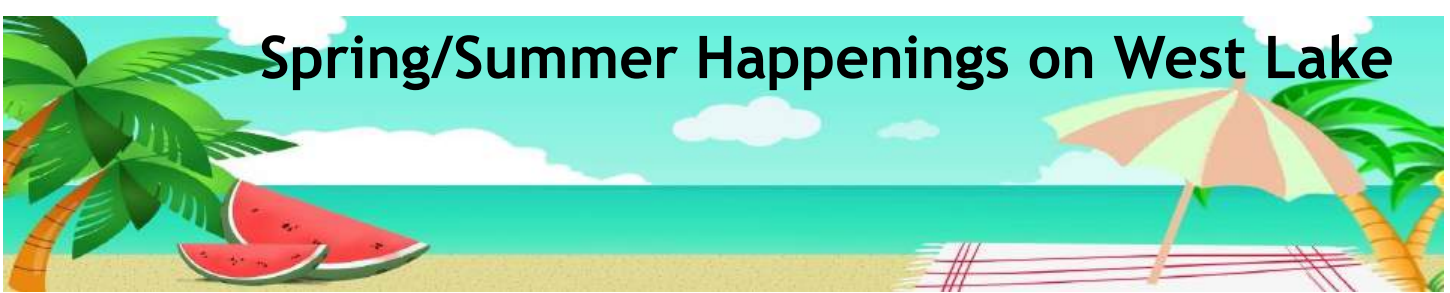
Madelyn Steinacker (niece of Justin and Ashley Grubka) looking for a lucky spot



Claire Lowman, Addie Kuhn, Haley Lowman, and Eleanor Kuhn on the Clancy pontoon



Elin Seim and Cam Anderson go after the fish lurking near shore



Spring/Summer Happenings on West Lake

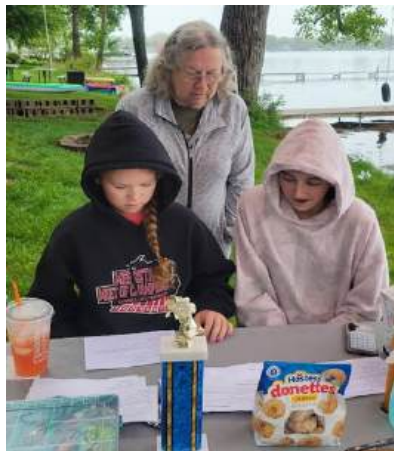
West Lake Improvement Association Kids Fishing Contest



Participants: Back Row (L to R) Dani Mason, Emma Welch, Cam Anderson, Elin Seim, Willow Phelan. Just in front of Willow- Charlotte Vanliere and Paisley Norris, and Emily Lowman. Front Row (L to R) Haley Lowman, Sofia Dusseljee, Everly Westrate, Easton Westrate, Oliver Dusseljee, and Claire Lowman



Winners: L to R- Cam Anderson, Charlotte Vanliere, Willow Phelan, Paisley Norris, Sofia Dusseljee, Oliver Dusseljee, and Claire Lowman



Diane Grosser helping Emma Welch and Dani Mason register for the contest (left)



Counting the most fish caught at 7 each for Charlotte Vanliere, Paisley Norris, and Willow Phelan



Judge Dave Grosser weighing Haley Lowman's fish



Claire Lowman sporting the biggest smile for the biggest catch of the day!



The Clancy grandkids agree these donuts taste so much better than worms! 5

Slip n' Die!

By Mary Lager

"Slip n' Die", that's what they called the slide on the north side of the lake, probably with good reason! If you were fortunate to have lived here during its existence ten years ago, surely you would have known about it, seen it, or at least, heard the excited laughter or terrified screams, whichever the case may be. Or maybe you were even one of the lucky ones to actually experience the thrill of going down it!

It all began on Forest Drive, just before the curve to Lover's Lane. One spring evening in 2016, Mike Osgood and Nick Sward, good friends, next door neighbors, and co-owners of West Lake Metal Works, were just hanging out having a couple of beers and shooting the breeze, when their ears perked up as they happened to overhear their young neighbor, 26 year old Marcus Brussee, talking with some of his friends about his idea to put a basic type of slip n' slide plastic sheet on the hill so they could slide down into the lake. Well, this definitely piqued Mike and Nick's curiosity for adventure so they headed over there to become part of that conversation. Being older and wiser and maybe crazier, they took this design idea to the next level and implemented it to make this wild dream become a reality.

Mike and Nick proceeded to "engineer" the slide, investing their time, money, skills, and labor to transform the once ubiquitous West Lake hill into something truly special and unique, a ride that you will not soon forget. Throughout that spring, they, along with Marcus and several of his friends, worked on the construction of the slide. To create the slide, they assembled 12-foot-long sections of 4 x 4 grids, including the ramp that extended into the lake to shoot riders out into the water. They drilled holes with an auger, anchoring the supports in cement five feet deep. Next 2 x 10-foot sheets of 6 ml rubberized plastic (the type used in truck beds) were screwed into the 4 x 4's. Side rails were assembled and attached so that tube riders would stay in place and not fly off the slide. The plastic expanded when hot which made for a bumpy ride coming down; whether that was a good or bad thing depended on if you liked it that way or not. The ramp at the bottom had just the right launching angle so that you could potentially land on the water and stay on the tube instead of being flipped off.

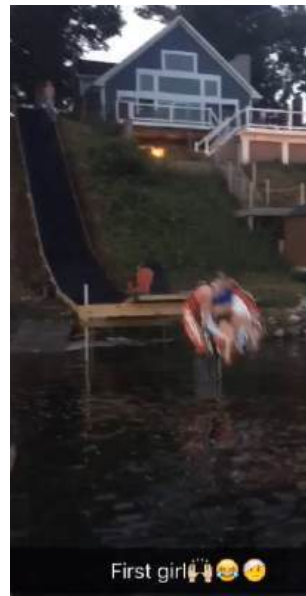


Nick Sward and Mike Osgood, creators of Slip n' Die



Slip n' Die continued

Finally, after all the dreaming, planning and hard work, the slide was finished! It opened on Memorial Day 2016, with Marcus taking the inaugural ride. So that riders wouldn't stick to the plastic and to enhance speed, the slide was typically hosed down at the top and the bottom while a copious amount of Dawn dish soap was added to make it super slippery. The first female to attempt the slide was Nikki, Mike and Wendy Osgood's daughter, who was 14 at the time (pictured right). In her words: "I remember being pumped up to be one of the first ones down! I remember being out on the hill while you all were building it getting excited! We had a blast on that thing, it was legendary!"



From that point on, for the summers of 2016 and 2017, the slide became life changing for the Osgoods and Nick Sward, and all who came along for the ride. It became a focal point on the lake, being a magnet for fun and social gatherings, with hundreds going down the slide. Boats full of people would stop and watch, often asking if they could go down it, to which the answer was usually "yes!", and then they would tell their friends about it. Mike, Wendy, and Nick said the slide was awesome, a great discussion piece, lots of fun, and the scene for lots of parties (often with 75-100 people), including one with a DJ in the Sward's yard and Marcus' bachelor party. Holiday weekends especially drew a crowd. The slide was mainly for older kids or teens through adults, and they would slide down on tubes. It was best to go down on your butt because on your stomach, you'd go feet or headfirst. If it was someone you didn't like, you had the option to spin them while pushing them from the top. It took some effort to land it, meaning staying on the tube after flying off the ramp. About 10-20% of riders were able to land it in the waist-deep water without flipping over, while others, if they were on the bigger side, would go over backwards, and if on the skinny side, would fly down faster, then go over face first. This did not tend to deter anyone from wanting to do it again.

An obvious question you might ask, especially since the slide was called "slip n' die" is: "Wasn't anybody ever injured on the slide?" and the answer, believe it or not, is "No!" Just in case, though, Nick Sward, who is a family practice physician, said that he had his mini E.R. ready to go and could've sewn up major lacerations. The only casualties were the inflatable tubes which were torn up by the countersunk screws, so they only lasted a month or two. Even when the tubes sprung a leak and started to deflate, they would last all the way to the bottom of the slide.

The slide was a popular attraction enjoyed by many riparians. Pat Duggan (pictured below), said that "it was scary at first, I loved it, it was so fun! I did it two times, going down twice each time. It's too bad it's gone." Larry Lutz, who went down only once on a tube on his butt, said that some on their bellies had a rougher landing. He liked the West Lake slide but did not love it, observing that it appeared much higher from the top looking down than from the lake looking up. As relayed to Nick Sward, DeAnna Phillips said: "I seriously thought my son would 'walk down the aisle in a wheelchair and body cast!!!", while Courtney Steffler shared that "Every trip to West Lake made me immediately sprout 10 gray hairs."



Slip n' Die continued

Riparian Margaret O'Brien shared her fond memories of the slide so eloquently that you almost feel like you were there: "Going down the slide was like reliving your childhood! It was so much fun- the anticipation, stomach flutters, increasing speed, and joyous laughter. And then you hit the end of the slide which went up- off you were flying through the air with a feeling of lightness and worry about the impending landing. The smaller and lighter people tended to fly out of the tube when it hit the water. Some face planted while others skidded across the top of the water on their fanny. Those of us who are more sturdy stock stuck our landings just fine and with a sigh of relief. It created a community feeling on the lake. All cheered for the nervous participants who wanted to go down the slide but were second guessing their life choices. Everyone celebrated a successful launch and landing. We are now left with good memories and lots of stories that have turned into legends. Our adventures definitely got around our lake and beyond."

Some of the more notable, unforgettable riders included going down the slide on an inflatable swan and the tricycle rider where the wheels flew off as it went over the ramp, not to mention the rider shotgunning a beer on the descent (all pictured below).

Unfortunately, as the saying goes, all good things must come to an end. And so it was for the West Lake slide, whose fate of doom had arrived. As it happened, Nick married Heidi and ended up buying Brussee's property which had the slide on it. He had two brothers-in-law who were both attorneys, so you can probably guess where this is going! One of them mentioned that the slide on the hill- long, slippery, and so much fun, was also a lawsuit ready to happen. So Nick and Heidi took the question to their insurance company, State Farm, asking about a possible policy rider for the slide to add to their coverage. Sad to say, the answer was a predictable "No", which, sealed the demise of the slide. Nick, Mike and Wendy summed it up best: "It was awful and a sad day when it was demolished (Nick said his wife was fine with it.). "It was so much fun, but we have great memories, and we all survived to tell about it." Mike suggested t-shirts to say: "I survived the slide on West Lake!" Another last comment was: "Zipline... now that would be cool!" West Lake slide, RIP March 29, 2018.



Summer Social Scene/Save the Date by Mike Osgood

WLIA Annual Meeting- 7:00 PM, 6/10/26 (rain date 6/17/26)

The meeting will be held at the West Lake Nature Preserve (bring your own lawn chair). Please remember the WLIA needs your support to keep all these events going. Make sure to become a member and encourage your neighbors to join too. Thank you and we look forward to seeing everyone on the lake.

*Don't forget to pick up your West Lake gear at the meeting!



Friday Night Tie-Ups

As usual, there will be a tie-up every Friday starting with the first Friday in June through the end of August. This is a great way to get out and meet your neighbors as we gather in the middle of the lake. It usually starts between 7 pm and 8 pm and goes until you are ready to leave. Feel free to come for an hour or stay all evening. We would love to meet you out there this summer to have great conversation and wash the week off.



Another Summer of Great Bands On The Lake

Please check our Facebook page and watch for emails letting you know when and where there will be bands performing on the lake this summer. This is not something that the board puts on, we just try to help get the word out if the host wishes to share the event—let Larry Lutz (website), Ashley Grubka (Facebook), and/or Mary Lager (newsletter) know if you want an event publicized.



4th of July Boat Parade- 1:00 PM, 7/4/26

The contestants will start at the West Lake bog and do one lap around the lake to show off their creativity. After the lap is complete, they can go to the Osgood's dock for the announcement of the winners and handing out of the prizes. If you would like to enter your boat this year, please call or text Wendy Osgood at 269-720-2503 to register and receive your number. Last year there were 13 boats entered into the parade. We would love to beat that number this year and have 25 for celebrating America's 250th birthday. Whether you want to do some simple decorations or go all out with creativity we encourage as many to participate as you can. The more boats that are in the parade the better the event is for everyone. Come out to cheer on the boats, including the grand marshals riparians Clark and Bonnie Lang who will be riding in the WLIA lead boat.

In years past we have had a number of great prizes donated by local businesses. If you are interested in donating prizes for the parade this year, please reach out to Wendy Osgood at 269-720-2503 and let her know as soon as possible. After the parade, we will put out a list of all who donated. We ask that all riparians please not only help support these local businesses but also help us say thank you when you are there.



Oktoberfest, last year's winner, is the boat to beat!

Summer Social Scene/Save the Date by Mike Osgood

West Lake Poker Run

The poker run will be held this year on **Sunday, September 6th**. Once again this will be on Labor Day weekend. Just like last year, each dock will represent a different holiday and serve a drink associated with that holiday. I am excited to see what holidays will be chosen and see the fun that will be enjoyed.

Last year we had 245 participants and we will be capping the number at 300. It is hard for the docks to handle any more than that. We are going to keep the 8th dock that you turn your hand in. That kept things well organized last year. We are still looking for a few more host docks this year. If you would like to host a dock, please call or text Mike Osgood. We would like to have all the docks set by the end of July. The first docks to volunteer will receive their first choice of holiday.



The other improvement that was made that will be continued is that we are going to sell the passports at selected times on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday before the event (or until 300 passes are sold) so that we do not have the chaos in the middle of the lake getting passes. We hope that this continues to be an enjoyable event for everyone, and we appreciate everyone's participation as we continue to try to make this a smoother and more successful event every year.

West Lake Night Light Boat Parade

Because this event was so successful and fun the last 2 years, WLIA is going to have the light up boat parade, on **Saturday, August 1st this year at 9:00 PM**. There are not going to be prizes for this event, we are just looking to get participation. We had 13 boats participate last year. People that want to participate should decorate your boat with fun lighting to show off your fun and creativity. We will meet at the West Lake Bog and make one lap around the lake. If there is interest, we may do a tie-up in the middle after. For those that do not want to light up your boat, please make plans to be out and cheering the boats on!



West Lake Trunk or Treat (at West Lake Nature Preserve)- TBD

The WLIA Board looks forward to putting this on again this year. Last year was well attended and lots of fun for all! Trick or treaters enjoyed activities such as ballon animals, pumpkin decorating, ring toss, and of course getting candy from the treaters' trunks.



Recipes by Mary Lager

These scrumptious summer pizza treats are made with fresh fruit and vegetables, whether purchased from the new Portage farmers' market or our nearby treasure; H & B Market. They are perfect for any occasion, every day to a holiday, from appetizer to entrée! Try these easy, flavorful crowd pleasers!

Veggie Pizza

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans crescent dough sheets – Or use crescent rolls and pinch the seams together. Or can use pizza dough/crust
- 2 (8 ounce) packages of cream cheese – softened
- 1 ounce packet ranch seasoning mix
- ½ cup sour cream (or can use Greek yogurt or mayo)
- 2-3 cups finely diced assorted vegetables (dry them off) – such as cucumber, bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, shredded carrots, broccoli, black olives or cauliflower
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Optional- 1/8 cup fresh chopped herbs – parsley, dill, basil, or cilantro



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. Unroll both crescent dough sheets and spread them side by side, onto a greased 11×17 sheet pan.
3. Bake according to package directions, about 12 minutes, until golden brown.
4. Beat the sour cream, cream cheese, ranch packet and fresh herbs together until fluffy. Chill it.
5. Remove crust from the oven and set aside to cool completely (will cool quicker in the fridge).
6. Spread the cream cheese mixture onto the crust.
7. Top with the diced vegetables and cheese. Chill then cut into squares and enjoy!
8. Refrigerate leftovers (if you have any!)

4th of July or Any Day Fruit Pizza



INGREDIENTS

- 1 tube chilled sugar cookie dough about 16.5 ounces
- 8 ounces cream cheese softened
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter softened
- 1 1/4 cups powdered sugar sifted
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt

Fruit- Flag=1 cup fresh blueberries and 1 cup sliced strawberries, washed and dried and 1 sliced banana. Non-flag= fruit of your choice, arranged in design or random.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 12-inch pan with parchment paper (or coat with cooking spray) and press the chilled dough evenly into the pan. Bake for 13-15 minutes until the edges are lightly golden. Remove the pan from the oven and let the crust cool completely.
- Beat together the cream cheese, softened butter, powdered sugar, vanilla extract, and a pinch of salt until smooth. Spread the frosting over the cooled crust.
- Arrange fruit as shown to form the American flag (or not).



Kids' Corner

By Mary Lager

Homemade Bouncy Balls



- These Homemade Bouncy Balls are a fun, educational, and colorful DIY science project for kids. They're easy to shape, bounce, and customize with glitter or bright colors. See how high your ball bounces, ours got to 3 feet+!
- In case inquiring minds want to know, here is the science behind it: DIY bouncy balls are created through a chemical reaction called polymer cross-linking, which transforms liquid glue into a solid, elastic elastomer. Borax acts as a bridge, linking the polyvinyl alcohol polymer chains in the glue, while cornstarch increases density and structure, creating a rubbery material that bounces. These super bouncy balls are basically very thick slime.

Materials

2 small disposable cups/bowls

Measuring spoons (1 tbsp., 1/2 tsp. and 1/2 tbsp.)

Plastic spoons

Borax powder

Warm water

Glue-Elmers-white, clear, glitter, or glow-in-the-dark

Cornstarch

Food coloring and/or glitter

Ziplock baggies or airtight containers (for storage so they don't dry out)

Instructions

Borax solution- In a cup, mix 1/2 teaspoon borax with 2 tablespoons of warm water. Stir until fully dissolved.

Glue base- In another cup, combine 1 tablespoon of white glue and 1/2 tablespoon cornstarch. Add food coloring and/or glitter and stir.

Slowly pour the borax solution into the glue mixture while stirring continuously. A blob will form as the materials react.

Remove the mixture and knead it with your hands until it becomes smooth and rubbery. Roll into a ball shape. Let it rest for 1-2 minutes, Now BOUNCE it!

*For swirl effects, mix 2 glue colors and gently combine before shaping. For a translucent ball (see upper right hand corner), combine clear and glitter glue. Use more glue for a larger ball.



Budding scientists and neighbor friends Noah Knapp (son of riparians Brandon & Liz Knapp) and Emmett and Hunter Atkinson (sons of Andrew & Renessa Atkinson) intently measure and stir their formulas.

Kids' Corner

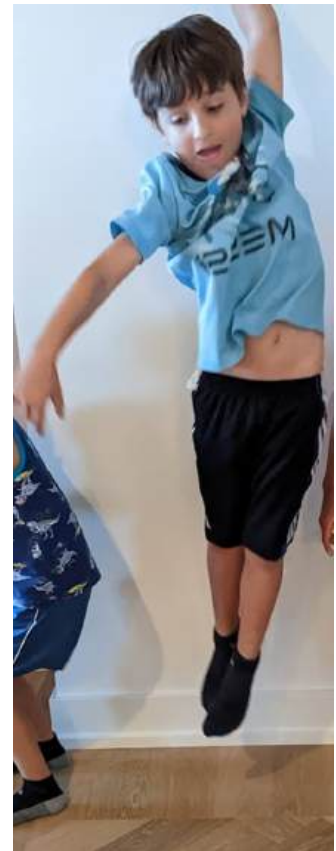
By Mary Lager



Having fun mixing and kneading the gooey mixture.



Shaping and proudly showing their completed bouncy balls.



Noah going airborne like Messi to achieve maximum bounce!



Even though the balls are not visible in this picture, they had just bounced them together on the count of 3.



Emmett catching his ball after his bounce surpasses counter height.



Hunter looks like he's adding some dance moves while bouncing his ball.

Communicating with Your West Lake Community

West Lake Association website!

Check out the WLIA website at <http://westlakeassociation.com/>

Join us on the West Lake Association, Portage Facebook Page! By Ashley Grubka

Be sure to join our Private Facebook group. You can follow us by searching for 'West Lake Association, Portage.' From there you can simply request an add. In this private group, members will be able to make posts of their own and interact with others in the group. We hope you enjoy this feature. If questions, contact Ashley Grubka at ashley.grubka@gmail.com



West Lake Association, Portage



+ Invite



Discussion

Rooms

Members

Media

Files



Write something...



Reel



Photo/video



Room

About

This is a private group for those that live on or near West Lake to enable community engagement.

Learn more about the West Lake Association at ... See more

WLIA MEMBERSHIP—Why belong to the West Lake Improvement Association – WLIA? -

by Mary Zoeller

1. The \$135 weed assessment does not take care of all the THREATS (invasive plants, storm drain runoffs) to our lake.
2. You have a VOICE in the Management of our lake. Our Association is well run and organized, with all board members being riparians (lake homeowners), as compared to a lake governmental board, filled by the city, where only 1 seat out of 4 would be a riparian.
3. COMMUNICATION – What is going on with your lake? Our WLIA board is actively involved in the health and safety of the lake. They provide information to all riparians on these issues. Association members receive pertinent information through the newsletter and email on topics of interest and concern, such as lake quality, events, meetings, and social activities. The West Lake Association Facebook page is another excellent resource to connect with your neighbors. If you have questions, please contact anyone from the board (see list). We are here for you!
4. The board was started in the 1960's, with the health of the lake being the number one reason for its creation. The VALUE of your lake home is directly tied to the health, wellness, beauty and safety of the lake.
5. Your yearly contribution of \$35 is a small price to pay for the STRONG ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP TO PROTECT THE LAKE AND YOUR INVESTMENT.

Thank you for being a member of the West Lake Association! If you encounter a neighbor who is not yet a member or if you know of anyone who is new to the lake, please let them know the benefits of membership, share a newsletter with them, and encourage them to join! Have them give me a call to be added to the WLIA list or for more information. They can also use the membership form on the next page, which can be used for renewals as well. Membership chair/contact: Mary Zoeller, 269-599-5334 or dmzoeller@hotmail.com

****Members please let Larry Lutz (llutzenterprises@gmail.com) know if your e-mail has changed****



WEST LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Portage, Kalamazoo County, Michigan

2026 WLIA COLLECTION MEMBERSHIP FORM

***The first 150 members who pay their dues will receive a 2026 WLIA Flag!**

Yes, I want to do my part and join the West Lake Improvement Association (WLIA) for 2026 and support our organization. Enclosed is my \$35 membership dues-make checks payable to: WLIA (If the membership fee is a hardship, please call Nick O'Brien at (269)324-9626 – We still want you to join!)

We want your comments and, if you have never signed one, we need you to sign the "Multiple Year Approval" noted below to update our records. ALSO, if you elect not to join WLIA, PLEASE let us know why--WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU...No association member will call on you once you send in this form.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Please visit our website at www.westlakeassociation.com or visit us on Facebook

Please mail in this membership form to:

Nick O'Brien
1220 Forest Drive
Portage, MI 49002

Email us at info@westlakeassociation.net

OR: drop it off at any one of your West Lake Director's homes.

COMMENTS (Please use reverse side as well):

MULTIPLE YEAR APPROVAL: (please sign if you have not done so before) DATE: _____

I hereby give my/our approval for the planned selective herbicide treatments of West Lake if and when needed to control the excessive growth of exotic weeds and to treat for swimmers itch if an outbreak occurs. I fully understand that all permitting is approved by the MDEQ.

I/we understand that there is a possibility of not being able to irrigate my/our lawn and/or garden with lake water during forewarned specific dates following a treatment. This approval includes my/our shoreline to the center of West Lake in Portage Michigan.

SIGNATURE: _____ ADDRESS: _____

(Detach here for your receipt)

2026 WLIA MEMBERSHIP DUES RECEIPT

_____ at _____ has paid the 2026
(WLIA MEMBER) (ADDRESS)

dues and is now a member of the West Lake Improvement Association for calendar year 2026

Thank you! Signed _____ / _____
(WLIA REPRESENTATIVE) (DATE)



2026 West Lake Improvement Association Directors

Name	Position	Email
Pete Strazdas	President	peter.strazdas@wmich.edu
Patrick Duggan	Vice President & Liaison with the City of Portage	269-267-8292
Nick O'Brien	Treasurer	mnobrien@hotmail.com
Linda Todd	Secretary	ltodd74@gmail.com
Mike Osgood	Board Member	mosgood@alro.com
Larry Lutz	Board Member	llutzenterprises@gmail.com
Steve Hessen	Board Member	SHessen@KEHB.com
Ashley Grubka	Board Member	ashley.grubka@gmail.com
Mary Zoeller	Board Member	dmzoeller@hotmail.com
Myla Mayne	Board Member	Mylamaine@gmail.com
Mary Lager	Newsletter Editor Board Member	Dmlager11@yahoo.com



Newsletter Help Wanted: Please send feedback/suggestions, favorite recipes, and possible newsworthy items of interest to riparians, especially West Lake history stories or current/upcoming happenings. Also, let me know if an article inspired you, whether to do a fun activity with your children/grandchildren or to try a recipe! Please include photos if available. Responses/comments are much appreciated and will help me to know what is the best “news you can use”. Please contact/send information to Mary Lager, your Newsletter Editor at: dmlager11@yahoo.com or 269-569-3520. Thank you!

Until next time, to leave you with a smile:

What kind of tree fits in your hand?
A palm tree
What's gray has 4 legs and a trunk?
A mouse on vacation
What animal is always at a baseball game?
A bat!
Why do teachers wear sunglasses?
Their students are so bright!



**Happy Summer
from your West
Lake Board!**



Gliding along in their hard-to-miss swan boat:
Back seat: Evelyn Amos (granddaughter of riparians Mike and Adele Barton) and Chewie
Front seat: Dan and Mindy Amos (son-in-law and daughter of Mike and Adele Barton)



Swan family making their home at Clark and Bonnie Lang's shaded shoreline. Between the actual swans, the swan paddleboat, and the swan float going down the slide, maybe West Lake should be called Swan Lake!