Welcome All. First of all, let me say that it has been my continuing pleasure to serve as your President. Nearly every day I see examples of how much your Directors and our members “love your lake”. It’s more than just a saying, it’s a commitment and I want to thank all of you – for your membership, your sponsorship, your directorship, your calls to report problems, your volunteerism and your attendance at our meetings and events.

I hope you’ll enjoy this latest issue of the Intermediate Lake Association Newsletter. From the reports made by your fellow members, you’ll find just how far we’ve come in the last short period of time. In brief, I can summarize as follows:

COMMITTEES
We have a strong core of Standing Committees, working on the projects and programs that are suggested by our Bylaws. These committees and the chairpersons are: Membership (Keith Shahan), Communications (Melissa Zelenak), Conservation & Environment (co-chair Linda Gallagher), Water Safety (Ron Turner), Swimmer’s Itch (Jim Gilleylen), Lake Level (co-chairs Janet Hickman & Dave Christian) and Loon Platoon (members: Dick West, Bob Webb, Paul Winkler, Andy Hickman).

Membership: Since January 1st this year, our paid memberships have increased from about 125 family units to about 175. This number represents about 40% of the lakefront property owners on Intermediate Lake. Membership brings three realities to organizations: Money to pursue programs and projects, volunteers that are needed to carry out the tasks of programs and projects and standing in the community, with politicians, businesses and vendors and with other lake associations and environmental groups.

Keith Shahan, ILA Membership Chair, and the membership committee introduced a new ILA Sponsorship Campaign. Letters were sent to businesses in Central Lake, Bellaire and outlying areas, asking their financial support for ILA programs and activities. ***Please go to Page 9 of this newsletter or to the menu of intermediatelake.org for a list of our...
sponsors and links to their websites or Facebook pages. ***

As of September 30th we have six sponsors: 1. the Pelican Family (Adams Madams, the Blue Pelican, The Chief, Pelican’s Nest, the Side Door Saloon, Centennial Golf Club, Bellaire Hardware), 2. Blarney Castle [Central Lake BP], 3. King Orchards, 4. Lake Living Services, 5. Patton’s Barber Shop, and 6. Pine Hill Nursery. Thanks so much to our sponsors!

The Membership Committee also staffed table top displays (ILA and environmental information) at the Central Lake 4th of July Parade (right on Main Street) and on the Courthouse lawn in Bellaire during the Rubber Ducky activities.

Financial: Dave Christian, ILA Treasurer, reports that on December 31st, 2018, we had a total of $14,150.10 in the Association checking account. Expenses for 2018 were $2,006.63.

As of October 1st, 2019 we had $20,567.44 in the checking account, and YTD Expenses of $6,596.66. Dedicated Swimmer’s Itch contributions have totaled $6,800.00, with YTD SI expenses of $4,135.45. ILA will be receiving a $2500.00 (50%) reimbursement from Michigan Swimmer’s Itch Partnership (MISIP).

Conservation & Environment: Linda Gallagher has volunteered to co-chair the committee and jumped right into the thick of things by coordinating an Invasive Species Inventory for Phragmites and Purple Loosestrife on the lake. As of this writing, we have not received the report from Ben Van Dyke, Antrim County Conservation District; CAKE-SISMA Team, but we understand there were no Phragmites found and only a few instances of Purple Loosestrife, which appeared to be intentionally grown for decoration.

In addition, we have arranged with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council to conduct an Aquatic Invasive Species Inventory on October 14th. Dave Edwards from T.O.M. will travel the lake in an ILA Volunteer's boat to look for milfoil and other matting type weeds.

Water Safety – Ron Turner is the chair for the committee and has received many good suggestions for issues and activities to tackle on behalf of ILA. Three examples are: disregard of marked No Wake Zones, a general lack of compliance with Boater Safety and Marine Law and a possible participation in a simulated “Emergency Lake
Rescue” scenario coming up in mid-October, coordinated by Leslie Meyers of Antrim County’s Emergency Management Department.

Lake Level: You may be aware that in the early 1990s, a lawsuit was brought in Antrim County District Court concerning an argument among property owners concerning lake levels on Intermediate Lake and how they were controlled. As the parties could not come to a mutual agreement, the judge set the levels making his summer and a winter levels legally binding. In recent years, lake levels have been difficult to control and almost impossible to maintain the court ordered levels.

Starting in May 2018, ILA and some lake front property owners brought this issue to the fore. Since then, ILA formed a Lake Level Committee co-chaired by Janet Hickman and Dave Christian, who have moved this effort forward. See the Lake Level Committee report later in the newsletter. Stay tuned. There’s a lot more to come!

Swimmer’s Itch: No one wants to personally experience or stand by and watch as their grandchildren suffer the effects of Swimmer’s Itch. Everybody’s heard of it, some have experienced it, but the reality has been that there hasn’t been much in the way to effectively prevent, protect against or relieve the “Itch”. Swimmer’s Itch was identified in the early 1940s and has been studied extensively ever since. People had it before then, but not much practical has happened in the U.S. until the 1970s.

Jim Gilleylen, ILA Vice President, has taken charge of the ILA Swimmer’s Itch effort from the start. See Jim’s report for additional details.

Communications: Next is our ILA Standing Communications Committee, chaired by Melissa Zelenak. Her primary charge is to maintain and improve the internal and external communications of the Association. Melissa brings lots of experience and many contacts and relationships to the Association, not to mention her ideas.

Thanks in large part to Melissa’s efforts, the ILA Social Hour, held recently at Torch Lake Café, was a great success. What a great event. We had between 45 and 50 attendees, some good food and beverages and lots of great discussion between individuals and small groups. See Page 10 for details and photos.

Melissa has demonstrated a great understanding of Facebook, and is planning to offer several training sessions for the “Facebook challenged”. So, if you’re interested, watch for more information to come.

Loon Platoon: Dick West, Bob Webb, Andy Hickman, Paul Winkler, Jim Gilleylen and others did a great job for another year at managing the maintenance, placement this spring and retrieval this fall of the Association’s Artificial Nesting Platforms. The Loon Platoon kept close tabs on the nests throughout the season. You may have discovered this by reading Dick West’s entertaining stories about our 2019 loons. Dick provides a more in-depth report of the committee’s activities later in this newsletter.
We look forward to welcoming our loons back next Spring. Thanks to the Loon Platoon – great job.

**Generally:** In ending my comments, I want to leave you with two thoughts:

First, you need to know that you have such a great Board of Directors: Vice President – Jim Gilleylen, Secretary – Ken Freeman, Treasurer – Dave Christian, and Directors – Melissa Zelenak and Keith Shahan. Your Directors are hard-working, conscientious and committed to make our Association and Intermediate Lake the best they can be.

Secondly, while the Directors do a great job, they can’t do it all alone. Maybe our biggest single organizational need right now is enough persons to spread the workload out. Simply put, we need more volunteers! We have 7 current standing committees that are thinly staffed, and just need more warm bodies to make them even more efficient and effective.

Additionally, we have identified 8 sub-committees that the Board feels necessary to further meet the planning and implementation goals of the Association. These are: Water Monitoring, Water Quality, Fishing/Fish Shelters, Fund Raising, Website Expansion and Improvement, FaceBook; and Newsletter / Annual Report. We are also hoping to install a board position of Volunteer Coordinator to recruit, train, keep track of and manage our volunteers. If you are interested in any of these tasks, please contact me at 989-859-6362 or steve.young@chartermi.net OR send an email to the Association at email@intermediatelake.org

Thanks to all; members, Directors and volunteers, for all that you bring to the Intermediate Lake Association – Ours to Protect.

**Steve Young, President**
**Intermediate Lake Association**
Fall 2019 Loon Report

This was a very successful summer for the loons on Intermediate Lake. We were very fortunate to again have three pairs nesting on the lake. Our three nesting pairs each hatched two chicks this spring...the first time that has happened in several years. Unfortunately two of the pairs lost one chick within the first few days. The four remaining chicks all have thrived and appear to be well on their way to being ready for their long journey south.

The ILA’s Loon Platoon launched the nesting platforms as soon as the ice was gone from the lake. Most of the platforms were fitted with new cable anchors this spring. While removing the platforms from the lake recently it was noted that some of the platforms need to have the flotation material replaced. It is our intention to do that maintenance and replace the remaining anchor lines with new cables this fall. Then we should be all set to launch the platforms as soon as the ice is gone next spring.

The ILA is very grateful for the cooperation from the Arnold family and the Snowflake community in allowing us to place nesting platforms near their property. While loon activity has been observed at both of those locations, neither has had nesting occur on them. After having a platform at the Arnold property for a couple of years, the feeling among our members is that boat traffic may be too disruptive there for successful nesting. We will place that platform elsewhere on the lake next spring and see what happens.

Now that the days are becoming shorter and many boats and docks are disappearing from the lake, so too will our loons disappear over the next several weeks. On Saturday, September 21, I did see what I believe to be the Gorham Beach juvenile with both parents still together. Generally the females head south first, followed two or three weeks later by the males, leaving the youngsters on their own to figure out when and where to go. The weather can get very chilly, even with sleet and snow before they finally head out.

We wish the juveniles well and thank them for allowing us to observe them grow up this summer.

Dick West
ILA Member
Swimmer's Itch Update

During the summer months the parasite continued to plague many of our swimmers. Back in mid July we initiated a SI reporting mechanism on our Facebook page as well as on the website. 43 incidents were reported and well over 100 swimmers were effected in July-August. Going forward these reports will be archived and allow us to build a much needed data base. Please continue to use it to report your incident events next year.

Assessment Report Status: “Right now Intermediate Lake samples for DNA sequencing (both miracidia from ducks/geese and cercariae found in snails) and water sample DNA extracts are at the University of Alberta. They will process and sequence the DNA for species identification and run species-specific assays on all water sample DNA. I don’t have a firm date on their completion, but I believe we are all hoping for reports to going out in October sometime.” - Ron Reimink, FreshWater Solutions (9/05)

Elk-Skegemog Lake Association (ESLA) conducted their comprehensive lake assessment in 2018 and went forward with their control program this year. There is much for us to learn from their shared experience. e.g. They removed three broods of Common Mergansers at a cost of $3,000/brood while incurring significant additional expense implementing various other elements of their first year control program. More detailed information will be shared in their upcoming Fall newsletter.

Afterwards the Swimmers Itch Committee will be able to begin researching and vetting certified service providers necessary as well as determine protocols for executing a comprehensive control program. Until such time we are unable to accurately project a cost estimate: Part of which will include a labor intensive water sampling regimen that volunteer helpers could perform and help us minimize those costs. Much work lies ahead and the Committee welcomes more hands on volunteers to join in.

Until then there is not much new to report. When our lake data results get back we will meet with Ron to prepare and submit our control permit application to MDNR*. Also to evaluate our lake data to determine the most cost effective options for our control program next year*. We will have the benefit of new knowledge garnered from their large dataset developed from the seven lakes studied in 2018 using new refined qPCR technology.

We are happy to report that 2019 ILA SI control fund donations reached $6,800 as of August 30th. A great start and many thanks to all 59 members who have contributed. Donor names are listed on the following page. Initially we “guesstimated” our initial funding goal to support the 1st year of our control program at $5,000. That amount now appears to be understated and we hope the fund will continue to build and provide cushion going into next year.
*MDNR Wildlife Required Notice-
Subsequent to DNR approval our 3 year permit will allow us to pursue a swimmers itch control program that includes capture of common merganser broods and safely relocate them to other specified water bodies where the host snails are not present to perpetuate the parasite’s life cycle. This effort thus approved by DNR will be conducted respecting prescribed protocols late Spring/early Summer 2020 before the fledglings are “imprinted” with Intermediate Lake as their home base (before they reach 8 weeks age).

Jim Gilleylen, Vice President
Intermediate Lake Association
Lake Level Committee

The Lake Level committee continues to make progress on its mission to understand what are the root causes for the increased variability of Intermediate Lake water levels and try to do something about it when we do. While it is important to realize that this will be a multi-year effort - there are no quick fixes - we are moving forward on several fronts.

First, as part of our cooperative engagement with Antrim County, we have recommended modifications to the operating protocols for the Bellaire Dam which should improve adherence to the court established summer & winter lake levels. While these will not prevent high level events from occurring (like during concentrated heavy precipitation events or due to snow melt in the spring), we do feel they have the potential to mitigate their severity somewhat. These are currently going through the review and approval process with the county. Stay tuned for more updates on this.

Second, we continue to move forward on conducting a Hydrology Study of the entire Elk River Chain of Lakes (ERCOL). This is also being done in close cooperation with the county. This study will help us understand what is going on in the ERCOL, providing the root causes to the Intermediate Lake water level variation. Once we know the root causes, we can apply solutions to fix what is causing the trouble (hopefully!). Of course, if any near term quick fixes are identified as the study progresses, we will apply them as we are able.

We are very excited that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will be doing the Hydrology study for us. (We also interviewed 4 other organizations who were interested in doing the Hydrology study for us - all highly qualified - but none have the status and prestige of the USACE.) They will begin work this fall with data acquisition and start building the model in 2020. The entire project will take 2 or 3 years. Much of the cost for the work is being provided by the USACE (wow!!!), while we will be going before the Antrim County Board of Commissioners to fund the remainder.

Third, and as mentioned in our last newsletter, a sub-team headed by Fred Sittel of Friends of Clam Lake is continuing to measure daily lake levels for the following lakes in the ERCOL: Six Mile, St. Clair, Ellsworth, Wilson, Intermediate, Bellaire, Clam Lake and Torch, as well as the Bellaire Dam impoundment basin. This data will be of great value as the Hydrology Study progresses. Fred's team (made up of volunteers from Six Mile Lake Association, ILA, Three Lakes Association, Friends of Clam Lake and other lake property owners) has been gathering this data since April.

Finally, we continue to work with, speak to and inform various organizations and interest groups what we are doing and why, endeavoring to bring them along side us in our work. It is important all
property owners on the ERCOL know what we are doing and support us in our efforts - this work will benefit all of ERCOL and all of Antrim County as well.

Many thanks -

Dave Christian, Janet Hickman
Co-chairs, ILA Lake Level Committee

ILA Sponsors Honor Roll

Please support these sponsors who support the Intermediate Lake Association
(Click on link for more information)

The Pelican Family including Adams Madams, The Blue Pelican, The Chief, Pelican's Nest, Side Door Saloon, Centennial Golf Club, and Bellaire Hardware

Blarney Castle – Central Lake BP

King Orchards

Lake Living Services

Patton's Barber Shop

Pine Hill Nursery – Kewadin

Thank you sponsors. Your support is so very much appreciated.
Greetings fellow ILA members,

First of all, thank you to those who were able to make it to the social at the Torch Lake Cafe last month! Your participation made a fun event and gave us fine ideas for the next one!

As the ILA communications chair, one of my goals is to help our members socialize and get to know each other in person, and online, as all our schedules allow. As President Steve mentioned in his report, I will offer a class for ILA folks to help them use Facebook safely and effectively. As a social media undergrad, my career involves teaching people to use social media platforms in multiple ways. You may have seen our ILA Facebook page. If not, I hope you'll check it out as good info about our association and environment is posted there.

Another goal I have is to help build our volunteer base. If you signed up at any time to be a volunteer, watch for an email or phone call from me soon as we want to follow up and help you get involved with the association. There is much to do, and we need your help. If there is something you feel particularly strong about helping us with, please don’t hesitate to contact me or any board member and we’ll get you going!

Thanks again everyone for coming out to the social. We’ll do another fun “welcome back snowbirds” in the spring and I look forward to seeing you all then. It’s been a great experience serving the ILA and I am eager to help our lake and its people.

Melissa Zelenak, Chair
Communications Committee