

**LOOK FOR OUR  
BOOTH AT  
WILD RICE DAYS  
SAT., SEPT. 3**

## **IN THIS ISSUE:**

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We care about Big Sandy Lake and our neighbors

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How to remove mineral deposits

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### **MN DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE**

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### **AND THEN THERE ARE THE REGULARS:**

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BSLA members are welcome to attend the Board of Directors meetings held from 8:30 -11 AM on the 2nd Friday of each month, except for January, at the Grace Lutheran Log Church on CR 14.

#### **Website:**

[www.BSLassociation.org](http://www.BSLassociation.org)

# **BIG SANDY LAKE ASSOCIATION**

AUGUST 2011

## **President's Letter**

**Jim Krezowski**

I hope all of you are enjoying a wonderful summer at beautiful Big Sandy Lake. By all reports, the fireworks were spectacular and the lake has been safe and trouble free, with everyone enjoying a safe boating and water activities season.

I want to thank the membership for making our annual June meeting an educational and entertaining affair. Thank you also to our Board members who have retired from the board after serving you willingly and well for many years; Jack Johnson, John Merboth, Neal Sampson and Karen Tero. Thanks also to those who are still serving on the board and the four new members; John Gornick, Janet Hill, Andrew Streeter and Mickey Utech, who were recently elected to your lake's board.

We are off to a great start for the fiscal year and look forward to your participation and help with our needs and activities. Unfortunately, we had to cancel one of the most important meetings; our July 11<sup>th</sup> invasive species training program. We will reschedule this class again as soon as our state government gets their financial affairs in order.

Since we have temporarily lost the help from the DNR in our effort to protect our lake, let us all be responsible for our water quality and fisheries and encourage our friends and neighbors to do so also. Remember clean water is our goal.

As most of you know, I have been absent from our lake this past spring and into the summer and have missed important meetings. John Sturner and the board have taken on my duties and are doing a great job. I will be back as soon as I am able to get out and pitch in with all of you. We are a STAR LAKE.



# Letter from the Editor...

**Bruce Johnson, Editor, BSLA Newsletter**

On behalf of the Lake Association I would like to thank Dave and Nancy at the Big Sand Bar for allowing us to use their facilities for our annual meeting in June. The pre-meeting rolls and coffee and post meeting lunch were appreciated and enjoyed by all.

Secondly, we hope to see everyone at Wild Rice Days in beautiful downtown McGregor on the Saturday before Labor Day. We will have Big Sandy Lake Association merchandise on display, including some new items (coffee mugs, floating key chains, etc.) and all of our logo items will be for sale at very reasonable prices.

Don't forget that the Big Sandy Lake Association's purpose is to protect and preserve our beautiful lake for our enjoyment and for future generations as well. We all need to be conscientious and good stewards to set an example for all lakeshore owners.

If you would like to attend any of our monthly board meetings, please feel free to join us on the second Friday of each month, except June and January. The meetings are usually at the Log Church, but you can check the website to confirm the time and location for each meeting.

## Memberships on the rise...

**Dean Anderson, Editor, Membership Chairman**

Greeting Members, I am happy to report we have (59) new members so far this year. A reminder - memberships run from Jan.1 thru Dec. 31st.

I'm sorry to inform you we are not publishing a Membership Directory, as more than 50% of members have informed us they would like to keep their personal information private. Phone numbers can still be found the old fashioned way (the phone book).

However, accurate email addresses are very important to us for quick communication when emergency situations arise, as well as for our new membership renewal process.

I would also like to touch on the association newsletters. We have decided on one address per member. There is a lot of time & energy in keeping track of 540+ members with seasonal residence. For example, if the address is wrong it costs an additional \$1.19 per newsletter to return back to us, which more than doubles the cost of the newsletter, as USPS does not forward this class of mail.

All newsletters are available on our website, if anyone would be willing to take your name off the newsletter mailing list and read future issues online, please contact us at [www.blsa@blsassociation.org](http://www.blsa@blsassociation.org). I personally check this on an average of three times a day and direct any correspondence to the lead person of that topic.

Thanks for your support! I look forward to working with all of you to make Big Sandy Lake the best place to live, and a great part-time getaway for all the weekend warriors.

### BSLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name	Phone	Email	Name	Phone	Email
Jim Krezowski, Pres. ....	426-3194	krezco@frontiernet.net	Bill Reed .....	426-0137	williamreed@yahoo.com
John Sturner, V. Pres.....	426-5436	johnsturner@comcast.net	John Gornick .....	426-5607	
Brian Herbranson, Treas.....	426-4565	brianherbranson@gmail.com	Janet Hill.....	259-4090	janet.hill@rocketmail.com
Karen Trembley, Sec.....	426-4421		Andy Streeter .....	218-341-6864	ajs2186@yahoo.com
John Merboth .....	426-3606	syjohn@frontiernet.net	Mickey Utech.....	426-3834	mickeyute@aol.com
Mark Anderson .....	952-913-5891	halsteadcomm@aol.com	Jim Carlson, Liaison .....	426-4256	carlsona@frontiernet.net
Dean Anderson.....	426-3516	mainmoose463@yahoo.com	Bob Greifzu, Liaison .....	426-4055	mcragbag@hotmail.com
Vern Awes.....	426-4170	vawes@frontiernet.net	Jim Knoble, Liaison.....	426-3867	jknoble@frontiernet.net
Bruce Johnson.....	426-5221	bwj4@comcast.net	Mark Johnson, Liaison.....	612-219-8037	markjohnson@q.com
John Pilney.....	768-2106	jpilney@aol.com			



# Dues Increase Considered

It's never a good time to discuss raising membership dues, especially at a time when so many other household expenses are also rising. We've all seen increased costs at the grocery store, in clothing, healthcare and, of course, at the gas pump.

For many years, your lake association has held the line on raising dues knowing we needed to offer as much value as possible for every dollar provided by your membership. Over the years, in fact, the vast majority of dues have been returned back to members in the form of programs and services that directly benefit lakeshore owners and that help to protect our lake. That is, after all, why we're here.

We write, print and mail a quarterly newsletter to keep you informed on important issues; maintain a website that provides an immediate link to our activities and lake management information; plan and implement an Annual Meeting which provides a unique opportunity to visit with neighbors and to hear from local experts on a variety of subjects; help to fund a program that educates young people about lake safety and health and provide a voice for all lakeshore property owners with local officials and organizations.

That's a lot of value for \$20, but like everything else our costs to provide these important services have risen dramatically over the past several years. As a result, we have recently discussed the possibility of raising dues slightly to \$25 per year—a \$5 increase that will help to plug funding holes in some of our most important programs. There is disagreement over this proposed increase among Board Members, but we hope you'll view any increase as a small down payment on programs that work to keep you informed and help to keep our lake clean and healthy.

As an example, the state recently denied our grant request for shared funding of our watercraft inspections program. For the past few years, this program has helped to us to maintain a presence on our largest access points with the intent of educating boaters on the dangers posed by invasive species. We've been working to plug this hole with a volunteer-based effort, but even that has costs, and it only makes sense to also build a reserve to combat an exposure that could change our lake in dramatic ways.

We don't need to tell you how our lake will change if invasives gain a foothold on our shores; it's been well publicized. Speak with any property owner on an infested lake and you'll appreciate just how significant—and expensive—these changes can be.

That pales in comparison, of course, to the costs paid by each property owner and lake user for the changes they'll see if an infestation does occur.

Tens of thousands can be spent annually in an effort to control Eurasian Water-milfoil and recent estimates by state officials conclude that an infestation of zebra mussels will cost the average property owner \$250 in additional annual maintenance costs for each boat they own. And that's just a start.

Help us continue to protect our lake. Contact your state legislators in St. Paul and voice support for their efforts to control the spread of invasives. And here at the lake, whether you're a resident or a weekender, stay involved with your lake association by continuing to support our efforts to educate and inform our membership and guests.

Please take a moment and share your thoughts by contacting any Board Member or by sending an email to [bsla@bslassociation.org](mailto:bsla@bslassociation.org). As *always, we appreciate your input and your membership.*



## Be a Good Neighbor and Lake Steward

**Submitted by Vern Awes**

As property owners and visitors, what we have in common is that we care about Big Sandy Lake. We care about the environment, the quality of the water, the size of the fish, the beauty of the shorelines and how the lake is used. On occasion, however, we forget to care enough about our neighbors. While we cannot always control occurrences in or on the lake, we can control relationships with our neighbors.

The Big Sandy Lake Association (BSLA) has recently been the recipient of letters from property owners describing a variety of unbecoming behaviors and illegal acts. While almost everyone enjoys a party, those occurring between 11p.m. and 4 a.m. are not enjoyed by most property owners and visitors to our lake. Instances of shouting voices, blaring music from yard and boat speakers and 4th of July type fireworks most every weekend, are clearly infringements of the rights of others.

The BSLA is not in the business of ordinances and enforcement. However, we do sympathize with those who must endure the annoyance of such behaviors. We suggest that neighbors work together and, if necessary, with the Aitkin County Sheriff's Department, to find solutions to such problems. Most of all, we suggest that courtesy and common sense be the rule of the day and night.

# Welcome New Board Members...

**JOHN GORNICK:** John moved to Big Sandy Lake in 1998, after he retired from Control Data as a software engineer. He visited friends here for 25 years and decided he wanted to live here permanently after he retired. John currently resides at his home on Bridge Road. He is interested in hiking and seeing that the water quality is maintained and improved, along with weed control.

**MICKEY UTECH:** Mickey moved to a cabin on Big Sandy Lake in 1994. In 2004 she moved to a townhouse, when she sold her home in Eden Prairie. She is a retired insurance underwriting specialist. Mickey will be working on the Newsletter and also Wild Rice Days.

**JANET HILL:** Janet moved to Big Sandy Lake in 2008 from St. Paul. She and her husband now happily live year round on Raspberry Island. Because of her island home, Janet is on the lake nearly every day and is very familiar with its issues, from algae to people. A former technical writer, she brings to the board her willingness to sit for long hours at a computer and will be helping with the newsletter and with the Big Sandy Lake Water Management Project (BSLWMP).

**ANDREW STREETER:** Andy is 25 years old and lives on beautiful Big Sandy Lake in Davis Bay. He has lived there for 23 years and graduated from McGregor High School in 2004. He is extremely active in the outdoors hunting and fishing. He also enjoys everything the lake has to offer, such as boating and water sports in the summer and ice fishing in the winter. He joined the lake association because he is extremely proud of and passionate about Big Sandy, and wants our lake to be a clean and healthy ecosystem for generations to come and enjoy. Andy will be involved with the "Invasive Species & Vegetation" program and also work with Membership.

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## Clean Boats...

Submitted by Mickey Utech

**Q.** *How can I get the whitish, scaly stuff off boats and Jet-Skis?*



**A.** The spots are mineral deposits, and Ducky Water Spot Remover handles them best, said Joe Hausladen of Hannay's Marine in St. Anthony. He said you just spray it on and wipe it off. Other products can be used, such as rubbing compounds, but it's a lot more work. If the sun has baked the surface and the gelcoat is starting to degrade, however, you'll need an oxidation-removing product to get rid of spots, followed by a coat of wax or sealant.

In general, when cleaning, painting or doing maintenance on your boat, Clean Boating America recommends:

- Choose products carefully. Read product labels and buy nontoxic cleaners (such as Ducky's). Avoid those that warn "do not get in eyes" or "always wear gloves" because these can harm the environment. Also be careful when buying products by mail order. Any product used to clean or paint your boat must be approved for use in Minnesota.

- Consider scrubbing with alternative cleaners, such as baking soda, lemon juice or vinegar. Avoid those with bleach, ammonia, lye or petroleum distillates.

Think about where all the dirt and solvents will go and choose a method that reduces the chance of getting any in the WATER. Do as much hull work inside or under cover where rain can't wash materials into the water. Clean boat bottoms ashore, over hard surfaces or a tarp, where debris can be contained.

A little cleanser goes a long way. More does not necessarily work better and can be harmful. Keep caps on bottles while cleaning, as an open container might spill into the water. Buy only as much cleanser as you need, so you don't need to dispose of leftovers.

In addition, it's very important to look for and remove exotic species from your boat and motor each time you enter or leave a waterway and when you do boat maintenance.

- Remove aquatic plants and animals from the boat motor and trailer.
- Drain lake or river water from the live well, bilge and motor.
- Dispose of unwanted live minnows and worms in the trash.

If the boat is moored more than 24 hours, rinse off the boat and equipment with high-pressure hot water to remove zebra mussels.

If that is not possible, set the boat, motor and trailer in the sunlight for five days to dry. You want to keep zebra mussels out of our waterways, but also out of the engine cooling system and off fiberglass hulls, which they can destroy.

# Did You Know...?

By Robert O. Harder

In this space in the past we have several times written articles referring to Savanna Portage State Park. As it happens, this year, 2011, is the 50th anniversary of the park's opening. A public celebration marking the event, including cake, music, and a presentation by the Sandy Lake Band of Mississippi Chippewa, has been scheduled for Aug 13th at the Park Headquarters (this was written prior to a final resolution of the State of Minnesota's budget difficulties--hopefully the park will be open by Aug. 13th). Although this newsletter appears after the anniversary event, the moment does offer us an opportunity to talk about one of the park's primary founders-- local pioneer, entrepreneur, state legislator, and for many of a certain age, a man who was widely known as "Mr. McGregor, Minnesota." We are speaking here of Oscar Linus Johnson (1889-1977).

O.L., as everyone called him, was an original--in this writer's opinion, the single most impactful citizen in the history of the greater McGregor/Tamarack/Minnewawa/Big Sandy Lake community. Just after World War One, and while still a young man, he helped organize McGregor School District #4, serving as Clerk on the city's first Board of Education. He remained heavily involved in local and statewide education issues for over 30 years. In 1927, for \$550 dollars, he purchased the local crank telephone system and slowly expanded service. Taking a large personal gamble, O.L. borrowed money to install modern dial phone service in the 1950s, along with changing the name to the Pineland Telephone Co. In 1969, he sold the entire enterprise for seven figures plus to Continental Telephone; today, O.L.'s phone company is part of Frontier's nationwide telecommunication system. And if the phone business wasn't enough, in 1932 the Johnson Funeral Home opened. After twenty years, O.L. turned that business over to his son Clyde, who operated it from 1951-1976. Today's McGregor Funeral Home is the Johnson mortuary's direct descendent.

With his business career well in hand by the early 1940s, O.L. turned to politics, serving the district for a total of ten years in the Minnesota House of Representatives, taking special interest in his Education, Game & Fish, Public Domain, and Conservation committees. O.L. represented his district with intelligence and vigor. One of his most important statewide accomplishments was the statewide licensing of mortuaries, making official certain standards in that sensitive business. Local successes included securing funding for the Pioneer Villa senior housing in McGregor, the hiring of Clifford Greer, a WPA projects writer, who wrote an extensive history of the area which O.L. later personally published at his own expense ("Twelve Poses West"), and most importantly, working tirelessly for many years on the establishment of Savanna Portage State Park.

Although O.L. had left office (1958) before the time was finally ripe for legislative approval, he nevertheless is credited with steering the park bill through the St. Paul political labyrinth, making sure it dotted all the legislative i's along the way. Concurrently, he organized a key meeting at Kare Phree Pines Lodge (now Big Sandy Lodge) in February, 1959 where Mr. George A. Selke, Minn. Dept of Conservation Commissioner, presided. From that meeting, in coordination with then State Senator Norman Hansen and Representative Burger Nirminen, the Savanna Portage Park Assn was formed to carry on the work of the project. Officers elected were: President, Lawrence Hansen (later replaced by Warren Johnson, O.L.'s son), Vice President, Steve Antolik; Treasurer, Alphons Mescher; Secretary, Hazel A. Sorenson. The Board of Directors were: Isadore Iverson, Fred Boelter, Robert H. Harder, Dr. C.H. Whitney, P.A. Johnson, and Phil Werner. As previously discussed at some length in this newsletter (see January, 2010 issue), the lion's share of the work in making the park a reality fell on the shoulders of Hazel Sorenson (working on behalf of the board) and O.L. Johnson (lobbying his old friends and associates in the Minnesota Legislature).

After a year of intense effort, the job was done. Six members of the Park Board journeyed to the State Capitol in St. Paul on April 10, 1961. With Senator Hansen and Representative Nurminen, plus special guest, Mrs. Myrtle Shisler of the Aitkin County Historical Society (O.L. Johnson was content to remain quietly in the background), the group met with Governor Elmer L. Andersen in his office and witnessed his signing of the bill creating Savanna Portage State Park.

By the late 1960s, O.L. was fully retired from both business and politics. Long enchanted by Big Sandy Lake, he bought the very large and beautiful lot on the tip of what was then known as Menzer's Point (Long Point) on Bell Horn Bay. He greatly enjoyed his lovely log cabin and the many majestic pines on the property, so much so he called the place after the fictional ranch in a favorite television program, *Bonanza*, a name that still sticks--his "Ponderosa Point."



# Big Sandy Lake Foundation...

By Jim Carlson

**WHAT IS THE BIG SANDY LAKE FOUNDATION AND WHO BENEFITS?** The Foundation is a separate entity from the Big Sandy Lake Association (BSLA); however, it is designed to serve the association goals and the surrounding area quality of life and ecosystem. The BSL Foundation, an affiliate of Minnesota Community Foundation, benefits people in the Big Sandy Lake/McGregor area. Its mission is to support these objectives: A healthy sustainable ecosystem; Protection of the quality of water, fish, shorelines, vegetation, trees, birds, and other wildlife; Eco-education; and Promoting community relationships.



**HOW DOES IT WORK?** The Foundation operates under the direction of a Board of Directors to: Bring together youth from all segments of the community; Distribute available funds to eligible organizations through a grant process; Inform the community of the Foundation's work in order to strengthen public understanding and support; Serve the community by working with grant seekers and donors; Seek contributions for the ongoing work of the Foundation.

**PROGRAMS THE FOUNDATION IS CURRENTLY SUPPORTING:** The Big Sandy Water Institute is a summer educational, recreational program. Using primarily non-motorized watercraft, the Institute focuses on teaching students how to enjoy and preserve local waterways through boat and water safety, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, snorkeling, environmental education and swimming lessons. Over 4,500 kids have taken part in this program, which is also supported by your Lake Association, since it began in 2002.

The foundation also supports the McGregor Schools Eco-Education programs to help send 6<sup>th</sup> graders to Long Lake Conservation Center and pays for busing for a field trip to the Libby Dam for 5<sup>th</sup> graders studying environmental sciences.

**VISION FOR THE FUTURE:** Establish an ongoing scholarship for college bound students who will pursue a career in eco-education, environmental studies, or conservation programs; Support programs that broaden horizons of area youth; Develop adult eco-education programs using our local valuable resources.

**YOU CAN HELP.** Your tax deductible gifts will support these current programs and our vision for the future. To make a donation, go to [www.givemn.org](http://www.givemn.org) and type Big Sandy Lake Foundation in the search box. Or you can directly link to the Foundation through the Big Sandy Lake Association web site. Instructions are provided for making a donation. After your transaction is completed you will be given an electronic receipt which you can print and keep for your tax records. Big Sandy Lake Foundation will get a summary of all donations made on a monthly basis.



**JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 20<sup>TH</sup> AT BIG SANDY LODGE FROM 2:00 TO 4:30 PM.



**LIZ ERICKSON, Communications Coordinator**

Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Plant Protection Division

## ***Dear Big Sandy Lake Association Members,***

Your effort in communicating how important it is to not spread aquatic invasive species is commendable. The area around Big Sandy Lake should be equally protected. Trees are a huge part of the landscape along the lakeshore and surrounding community. A tree infested with invasive species, such as Emerald Ash Borer, is difficult to identify in the early stages. Here are a few ways you can protect your trees from invasive species as much as you protect your lake:

- Do not bring any unfinished wood product out of our currently quarantined counties of Hennepin, Ramsey, and Houston Counties.
- Don't move firewood to or from your lake home from long distances. (You typically can't see if firewood is infested or not, so why take the risk?)
- If you do need to move firewood a long distance, only buy MDA Certified firewood (look for the logo) — it is treated so most invasive pests are killed and cannot reenter the firewood.
- When you burn firewood, burn it all (unless it's MDA certified). Moving firewood from place to place provides a vehicle for unwanted pests to move to a new location.

For further information about preventing the spread of invasive forest pest, please visit the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's website at [www.mda.state.mn.us](http://www.mda.state.mn.us).

Thanks for your help in keeping Minnesota's landscape healthy and native.

# Slow No-Wake Zones

Scott Turner  
Aitkin County Sheriff



## Big Sandy Lake SLOW NO WAKE ZONES

Pursuant to Aitkin County Ordinance

1. On Sandy River, from MN. Hwy. 65 bridge 100 feet upstream and downstream
2. On Sandy River, from Hwy. 232 bridge 2500 feet north and 100 feet south
3. Bridge Road Bridge 100 feet north and 100 feet south
4. Prairie River, from County Rd. 14 bridge 100 feet upstream and 100 feet downstream

Hopefully, as this newsletter hits your hands, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will be back to work and will have approved the amendment to the slow no-wake zone that was approved by the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners at their June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. This followed a public hearing in which there were many people in attendance. Many people spoke, all of whom spoke in favor of increasing the slow no-wake zone on the Prairie River. We heard from people who gave a historical perspective on what life on the river used to be like and what it is like today. We heard about how the enjoyment of living on the river is lessened by the current boat traffic. We heard about the near misses – the “almost” accidents. What passed was increasing the slow no-wake zone to include the area 4350 feet upstream and 900 feet downstream from the Lake Avenue bridge over the Prairie River. As soon as the approval is granted by the DNR, buoys will be placed accordingly.

This change was a cumulative effort that started with residents working through the Big Sandy Lake Association Board to effect this change. As I have talked about before – residents working together to make their neighborhood safer came from a different angle. The result lent towards the same goal: safety. So – Thank You – to the residents who brought this issue to the forefront, to the Big Sandy Lake Association Board for carrying the torch and to the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners for giving this the attention that it needed. When we work together our neighborhoods are safer and more enjoyable for all.

***As always..... Enjoy Aitkin County..... Safely!***



### **Q: Why does the water in Big Sandy Lake look brown?**

**A:** The wooded areas of far northern Minnesota and into Ontario Province consist of almost exclusively coniferous and larch forests (i.e., pines, spruces, balsams, tamaracks, etc.). The soil is rock based. As a result, there is little to naturally contaminate those waters and the lakes remain quite clear and pure,

especially from the Boundary Waters northward.

In our region, which is a transitional zone between the great Canadian Shield coniferous forests and the plains/prairies/leaf bearing deciduous trees, it's a different story. There are all kinds of organic matter that enter into the water systems from these trees, and that material naturally flows downstream into reservoirs like Sandy.

The leaching of highly water soluble tannins from decaying vegetation and leaves along a stream may produce what is known as a black water river. Water flowing out of bogs has a characteristic brown color from dissolved peat tannins, which is the case for Big Sandy Lake via the Prairie and Savanna Rivers.

This year, we have had a tremendous amount of rain all spring, which has greatly increased the amount of tannins coming into the rivers and down into the lake, thereby turning our lake waters browner than normal.

This golden brown coloring is in no way harmful to humans or to the fish in the lake.





## STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Clean ✓

Drain ✓

Dry ✓

Boats and trailers, it's the law



Great Lakes Maritime  
Research Institute  
A University of Wisconsin - Superior and  
University of Minnesota Duluth Consortium



# ON THE WEB...

## [www.BSLassociation.org](http://www.BSLassociation.org)

### UP-COMING EVENTS AND AREA INFORMATION

*You can find updates, copies of newsletter articles, coming events and area information, as well as the minutes of the monthly board meetings.*



## BIG SANDY LAKE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 21

McGregor, MN 55760

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