



NOVEMBER 2009
Volume 1 • Issue 1

Loon Lines

HALF MOON LAKE REHABILITATION AND PROTECTION DISTRICT

Meet Your Neighbor

by Kim Butler

Ed. Note: This newsletter we debut a new column featuring a long time resident of the lake, as a way to meet your lake neighbors and learn about how Half Moon Lake has changed (or stayed the same) over the years.

Gordy and Eleanor Mommsen bought their property on the north end of Half Moon Lake forty years ago in 1969. Eleanor was from North Valley, a community west of Milltown, and they had heard that Half Moon was a particularly pretty, clean, and clear lake. The first few years, they cleared brush from their wooded lot, and brought up a camping trailer. A tin shed from Sears served as a changing room. They had also looked at existing cabins on the south end of the lake, selling at the time for \$35,000.

In 1971, the Mommsens went to an auction on Balsam Lake. A resort was selling off their cabins, and they bought a cabin for \$250.00 plus the cost of moving it. They had a foundation built, electricity installed, and Gordy himself put in a 30 foot driven well that they used until just a few years ago. Gordy described the cabin as a one season, "minimal" cabin, "There were big gaps in the walls – you could see daylight through them." None the less, the cabin served them well for twenty years, until 1991, when, on the eve of the infamous Halloween snow storm, they began construction of their current home.



Over the past forty years, Gordy thinks the major change on Half Moon Lake has been the many cabins being turned into larger, year round houses, and the sheer number of cabins and homes, noting that there are hardly any vacant lots left around the lake. Although not a fisherman himself, he said Half Moon used to be known as a good walleye lake, and one of his neighbors recalled that on a moonlit night on the west shore of the lake, he could quickly catch his limit of walleye. Gordy believes the loon population has remained pretty stable around the lake, and even the boat traffic is much the same as in the 1970's.

These days, Gordy keeps busy at the lake with the many chores involved with owning a lake home, but says he doesn't mind because

of the pleasant surroundings. He and Eleanor raised 2 children, Scott and Lori, and their 5 granddaughters range in age from 9 to 16 years. Both families visit often, and Gordy enjoys fishing and hiking in the woods with his grandkids. He and Eleanor boat a little, but he most enjoys looking at the lake and hearing the loons.

When not at the lake, Gordy and Eleanor live in Minneapolis, where Eleanor worked as a teacher's aid in the Osseo school district, and Gordy was a Product Design Engineer with Grayco for 25 years, until he retired in the late nineties. Look for them on their pontoon next summer, or wave as you go by their place off County Road G.

Editors Column

November 2009

Here is your fall issue of Loon Lines, the Half Moon Lake District Newsletter for the residents of Half Moon Lake. I am Sarah Sawyer, your newsletter editor and I am a full time resident residing on the east shore of our beautiful lake. Everyone on the District Board is excited about our upcoming newsletters which we plan

to send out to you in November and again in May of each year. We plan to carry on the excellent quality of our past newsletters which were so professionally done by our past editor, Sheila Waldoch. Thank you Sheila for doing this for us all those years and for doing such a great job!

Our newsletters will now be printed by PaperWorx in Amery and mailed out by yours truly. This newsletter contains a short bio of all the District Board members. In addition to a chairman's and an editor's column, some of the regular features will be:

a History corner written by David Butler, Trudy's Tips, written by Trudy Gore, various reports such as Fish Stocking, Small Groups, Weed Rangers/ Clean Boats and Clean Waters written by Dan Leh, Loon Nest, Meet Your Neighbor written by Kim Butler, a Calendar of upcoming dates and events, Announcements and many more informative and interesting bits and pieces. We solicit and welcome your thoughts, contributions, and any information you would like to see in your newsletter.

—Sarah Sawyer, Editor



SMALL GROUP MEETINGS REPORT

Five small group meetings were held from July to September. A huge thank-you to the five hosts. Each meeting was fact-filled and lots of fun. We hope to expand this in the future.

LOONS-OUR LAKE FRIENDS

Hosted by Martha McMahon. Martha has been our lake Loon Ranger for over 15 years. She showed a video of a loon habitat, and gave out an informational packet to the 13 in attendance. It was decided that a Loon Platform should be installed at the south-end of the lake. A big thank-you to Doug Ebeling, Doug furnished the materials, built, and installed our permanent loon platform. Let's all hope we will now have a successful nesting next spring, and welcome baby loons to our lake. Martha retires as our Loon Ranger. She has been a wonderful watch-dog for our lake. Thank you Martha. Kim Butler will take over as our Half Moon Lake Loon Ranger.

HALF-MOON LAKE CONSERVANCY

Nine attended this meeting, hosted by Ellen Butler. Ellen shared the history of how and why the conservancy was formed. Ellen showed maps of the lake's water shed, Harder Creek, and talked about the many future projects. This group, in partnership with the Half Moon Lake District Board, is doing everything possible for the protection of our beautiful lake.

GUIDED TOUR OF HARDER CREEK

David Butler guided five people through the new trails of Harder Creek. Many plant species were identified, and people learned about the importance of Harder Creek and Tamarack Bay National Preserve to the future health of Half Moon. This marked trail is always open to the public. The entrance is on Dau Road.



Letter from the Chairman

As I write this column - I'm looking at our beautiful Half Moon Lake. The docks and boats are gone, most cabins are closed, the loons have left, and the leaves have fallen - still, the beauty is awesome. November is a month of giving thanks - and like you, I'm so thankful for our "little slice of heaven."

It has been a very busy fall for all of us on the board.

At the annual meeting of the Half Moon Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District held on July 18, 2009 - a homeowner made a motion to levy an assessment of \$20.00 per property to fund the purchase of fireworks for July 4, 2010. The motion was overwhelmingly approved by those in attendance. Following the meeting, several property owners raised the question of whether the action taken was valid, and whether the District Board of Commissioners was authorized to certify the levy to the County Treasurer. The vote was challenged on the basis that under state guidelines, proper notification was not given prior to the annual meeting. The second issue raised was, even if the action taken was proper, does the levy of a tax for the purchase of fireworks come within the lawful powers of the elector - as set out in Chapter 33 of the Wisconsin code.

We, as your 2009-2010 Board, have been working hard to get up to speed on what it means to be a district, sanctioned under Wisconsin statutes as a tax collecting entity. After many meetings, research, and much dialogue - our mission statement was created: "The purpose of a district is to maintain, protect, and improve the quality of a lake and its watershed for the mutual good of the members and the lake environment. Allocation of funds will be authorized with this mission in mind."

The board still had to wrestle with all motions made at the annual meeting. We felt we had two choices: 1) do nothing, and wait until 2010 annual meeting, or 2) honor all motions to the extent the statutes allow, and that fit our mission statement.

With the threat of Aquatic Invasive Species looming - the first option was not viable. We need to proceed with all clean water projects for the good of all of us - and for our investments as lake homeowners. Therefore, the board voted to make a one-time only donation of \$1500.00 to the 2010 fireworks fund. If you would like to make a donation to this fund, please return the envelope enclosed in this newsletter.

A big thank-you to all those involved for the time and consideration given to all views. This issue has provided us an opportunity to "clean-up" our act, and make the necessary operational changes to fit state law - and better serve you - our membership.

Mark Saturday, July 17, 2010 on your calendars. Please attend this annual meeting of the Half Moon Lake Rehabilitation and Protection District so you may take an active part in your lake community.

I hope you enjoy reading every page of the new "LOON LINES." It is full of many interesting articles about our lake and its people. Also, do read-up on the committee reports. Thank you to the many good people, making good things happen on Half Moon Lake.

Have a Happy Holiday Season, and stay healthy over the winter months. Remember, only 211 days until Memorial Day - but who's counting?

Thanks for reading, as always, let's keep an open "loon" line.

Pat McMahon,

Chairman of the Half Moon Lake Rehabilitation and Protection District Board

Meet the Board

HARLEN HEGDAL

Chairman, Milltown Township
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E-mail: WISREG@HOTMAIL.com
Owner Wisconsin License Centers, board member Half-Moon Lake District, Antler Lake District and St Croix Falls Regional Medical Center.

KATHRYN KIENHOLZ

County Representative
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I am the Polk County Board representative to the Half Moon Lake association*. In 2008 I ran unopposed for the Polk County Board of Supervisors. On that board I serve on the finance committee, the renewable energy committee, and on the governing committee for the land and water conservation department, the lime quarry, and the UW-Extension office. I am a CPA and have worked seasonally since 1993 for Deloitte Tax LLP in Minneapolis. We moved to our home on Antler Lake from south Minneapolis in 1999 after spending summers and weekends at that home since 1990. Since moving here I have been a volunteer at both the Milltown and the Polk County libraries, served

on the regional library board, been treasurer of the Friends of the Polk County Libraries, served as treasurer for the Antler Lake Association, been a member of the St. Croix Valley Green Party, and been involved in two book and one knitting group. My husband, Smokey Jensen, is a psychiatric nurse in the child and adolescent unit at the University of Minnesota-Fairview and is also an old car and model train enthusiast. We have two sons, Andrew, 24, and Matthew, 20, plus two large furry dogs and two cats.

DAN LEH

Vice Chair/Treasurer
Chair -Clean Boats/Clean Waters
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I am originally from Sylvan Lake, MI. I graduated from Michigan State University with a Business degree, majoring in Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management. I continue to work in the Hospitality Industry and work for the LodgeWorks Corporation located in Wichita, KS.

My wife Laurie and I live on SE Anderson Lake in Bloomington, MN. We married in June of 2001. We purchased our Half Moon cabin from Laurie's parents in April of 2002. The Holm Family purchased the original 1937 cabin

in January of 1961. After several renovations, the cabin retains the charm of old with the conveniences of new. We love being on Half Moon and look forward to creating many memories here.

TOM LENNARTSON

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I am a third generation cabin owner here on Half Moon Lake. My first years here were summers only in the 1950's. My love for this special place is as much for the Lake as for the people around the lake.

I'm a general contractor in the twin cities and I do some work around the lake. I've been in the building industry all of my life from manufacturing to wholesale, to retailing and now as a builder.

The cabin is a special place for my wife and two sons and their families along with my sister's family.

PAT MCMAHON

Chair
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I was born and raised in Mason City, Iowa. It was there that I met and married my high school sweetheart, Mike McMahon. After college - we spent a short time in the Air Force - landing in 1975 in Des Moines, Iowa.

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TRUDY'S TIPS by Trudy Gore

FABULOUS APPLE CRISP

Use a 9x9 pan or double for a 9x13" pan.
Combine and pour into pan:

4 cups chopped apples
1/2 cup brown sugar

2 Tbs. Tapioca
1/2 cup whipping cream

Topping: Blend together and put on top of apple mixture

2/3 cup flour
1/2 cup oatmeal
1/2 cup chopped walnuts or pecans
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 cup melted butter

1 small package butterscotch pudding mix
(cook and serve variety, NOT instant)

Bake at 350 degrees 45-50 minutes until apples are tender.

Great
Fall Recipe
courtesy of
Linda Briegel

Bird Lovers

One of the best ways to store bird seed is in a metal milk can. The cans are rodent proof and are fun to decorate.

Use duck decoys for boating markers and floats instead of old bleach bottles.

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

I received this from Dan Leh, our Treasurer and Vice Chair as this newsletter was going to print:

"FYI - My neighbor had his boat motor stolen Sunday night. Last year they stole his gas can and several others on the North side. I wonder if we need a watch out for your neighbor campaign in the newsletter. Really makes me nervous."

At the annual Half Moon Lake District meeting July 19,2009, Tim Moore, our Sheriff encouraged lake residents to "Be a Good Neighbor". If you see something out of the ordinary please call the county non-emergency number which is:

715-485-3800



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Sea Grant
University of Wisconsin
PUB-WT-747 2004



The Weed Rangers have completed their first full year monitoring the lake. A big thank you goes out to our volunteers who have spent hours on the lake this past summer. They have donated their time and resources to be our first line of defense against AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species). Those volunteers are as follows: Brian Belanger, Dave Balestri, Martha McMahon, John Weber, Rick Miller, Terry Radke and Laurie Leh. I would also like to acknowledge the board members from the Half

Moon Lake District for their support of the CBCW (Clean Boats/Clean Waters) program.

I am pleased to announce that we did not identify any Aquatic Invasive Species. Our lake was found to be full of healthy aquatic vegetation. If we remember that "weeds are to the lake like trees are to the forest" then you can understand how valuable the aquatic vegetation is to Half Moon Lake.

We will enter the collected data into the SWIMS Database (Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System). This is a Wisconsin DNR information system that holds chemistry (water, sediment), physical, and biological, and aquatic invasive data. All of the Wisconsin CBCW volunteers submit their findings into this database at the end of the year.

We recently completed and submitted the fall 2009 grant application for the Aquatic Invasive Species program to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Unfortunately, the AIS 2009 fall grant proposal was denied. We will submit an application again in February with the vision to secure the funding for the 2010 season. It is very important that we continue to move forward in our initiative to monitor the lake and we are asking for volunteers for the 2010 season. One of the reasons we were denied is that we are not currently monitoring the boat launch and educating boaters as to the dangers of AIS. The Weed Rangers lake monitoring for AIS is only half of the CBCW program.

Thank you again for your support of the Clean Boats/Clean Waters Program. See you on the water next lake season.

Dan Leh
Chairman, Clean Boats/Clean Waters



Thank you to Doug Ebeling for our new Loon Platform at the southwest end of Breezy Bay.

Fish Stocking

by Stan Myrzyn



We did receive 1247 Walleye ranging from 4"-12" in size on 10-16-09 as explained at the last Board meeting I attended. Our invoice arrived the other day and we owe a total of \$2,053.70 which is well under the \$5,000.00 that was approved in the spring. Although I am disappointed that we were not able to receive more fish than we did this should be a welcome surprise for the budget. This will be it for this year and I

will complete the information needed for Heath at the DNR and mail it out today to complete the permit requirements. I have attached photo's of the stocking. If anybody has any additional questions feel free to email me or you can call me at 715-825-4921. Thanks again for your support in this program. I am not sure if I intend to seek funding for next year, I will visit this subject in upcoming meetings.

WI Association of Lakes

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes is a non-profit group of citizens, organizations, and businesses working for clean, safe, and healthy lakes for everyone. After several years of not belonging to this very worthy organization, the Half Moon Lake District has decided to once again renew our membership. Membership includes information and voting privileges on lake

quality and ten hard copy subscriptions to their newsletter. Five of these copies will be sent to our current District Board members and the rest will be distributed to our Weed Rangers. Any resident may read this very interesting and informative newsletter electronically by going to their website at: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/newsletters/>.



The History Corner

by David Butler

The recorded history of Half Moon Lake is replete with stories about the high and low water levels of the lake and the ingenious methods used by people to slow or speed up the runoff into Harder Creek. In 1926 the Railroad Commission of Wisconsin held a hearing to determine the "natural" level of water to be maintained in Half Moon Lake. R. Ziesmer, owner of the land through which the outlet flowed, testified there were rocks and dirt that formed a ridge to hold back the water, but "someone constantly and persistently removed the rocks, made a channel, an open channel. I threw some back, and complaint was made that I was damming the lake". "These rocks were removed by some interested party, always done while I was absent from the place." "Before I bought the land the lake level was two feet higher."

Horace W. Gage, father of Clayton Gage, said, "The value of lake shore property depends to a large extent on the level of the water in the lake, and I am very desirous that you do something to raise the level". Mads Bank testified the

power plant in Balsam Lake needed a steady flow of water from Half Moon Lake to generate power so he was against restricting the natural flow as was Mr. Harder, a farmer down stream who needed water for his livestock. The township board members complained that a higher water level would wash out the newly built road running through the swamp along the south side of the lake. Charley Johnson, owner of the Harder Creek land north of the lake said his pasture would be "all spoil if they raise the lake". He said he used the land for pasture since 1917. "I took rocks out of the dam two times". He said they started to build a dam with stones in 1917 and I wrote to the Commission and said "if you raise that lake the land ain't good land."

An interesting tidbit. The transcript shows an Oscar Johnson testified at the hearing on behalf of Herman Gutzner, a mute who operated the amusement area at Sandy Beach. Oscar stated that Herman Gutzner was his father in law. Could this be the same Oscar Johnson that Oscar Lane is named after. I never heard of Oscar Johnson of Oscar Lane having being married.

HALF MOON LAKE FISHING -hosted by Chuck and Diane Erickson. Fourteen fishing enthusiasts attended this meeting. Much discussion about how fishing has changed over the years, what to do about future stockings, and possible taxing of lake fishing tournaments. Many ideas were then sent to the board for future study. A great get-together for all who attended.

MEMORIES AND HISTORY OF HALF MOON LAKE - Nineteen spent several hours sharing pictures and stories of the lake, Milltown, and Oscar Johnson-a lake legend. Hosted by Sarah Sawyer, this small group must be an annual event. David Butler is collecting any historical information about the lake and area towns for a future book. If you should have any pictures of family history, please contact David at david.butler@q.com.

Please join us for our future small group meetings. It is a wonderful way to learn more about our lake and make new friends at the same time. Let me know if you have an interest in hosting a small group, or if you have any topic ideas for our next series. Pat McMahon*mmcma 10134@aol.com

WANTED

1. New signage for the District meetings. We would appreciate anyone who has a lead or any connection with a sign company to please contact this editor or any District Board member.

2. The District Board is also looking into the cost of purchasing vs. renting a P.A. system. If you have information or a connection in this industry, please contact this editor and/or District Board as well.

THANK YOU!



1933 Oscar Lane • Balsam Lake, WI 54810

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Meet the Board

I was a mother and homemaker - teaching early childhood education part-time. In 1987, my passion for cooking took over - and I started Garnishes Catering, a full-service catering company. I owned Garnishes for ten years, and also ran a culinary cooking school - Cottage Cuisine, for three years. Mike and I have two grown children, and three grandsons. Mike joins me in retirement this January, and we plan to live on Half Moon Lake for 6 months and in Beaufort, South Carolina during the winter. Life is good as we start this new phase of our life. We look forward to many wonderful years with great friends - on beautiful Half Moon Lake.

SARAH SAWYER

Newsletter

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My grandfather, Dr. Ross Aiken Gortner built the cottage that I live in on the lake in 1939. Our family has owned and enjoyed the cottage ever since. My parents began to bring me up to Half Moon when I was only 6 months old and summers from then on I grew up on the lake so I have some definite roots here! In 2005, I sold my home in Elk River, MN and became a permanent year round resident of Half Moon Lake. I live with my dog, Wylie Blue. I have my own business selling merchant services and I office out of my home. Having a second floor office overlooking the lake, I am privileged to experience all the beauty and wonder of every season of this special place. Additionally, I am an all-breed dog judge so with judging assignments, business, and out of state family, I do a fair amount of traveling. I have two grown children with families of their own and seven grandchildren. I especially enjoy sharing our beautiful lake with all who come to visit.

SHEILA WALDOCH

Secretary

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Sheila and her husband Don were fortunate to buy the cabin on Oscar lane late in the fall, 1984. For all these years their 6 children, numerous friends and relatives and a few dogs have enjoyed Half Moon Lake and all that it offers. There is nothing like a cabin fire pit, swimming at dusk, pontoon rides, the 4th of July Boat parades to keep a family together and happy. Now their 4 grandkids splash, fish and entertain them. In the early years, they spent every winter weekend at the cabin snowmobiling, skating, cross country skiing and having fun with cabin neighbors. Sheila served on the board in the early 90s and again

in mid 2000's. She learned early on from Art McMahon, David Butler, Sherm Gardner, Gordy Mommsen that "people" are so important to the lake atmosphere and keeping the quality of our lake as a top priority. Her childhood best friend, Sue Schneider moved onto the lake and they formed "Loon Ladies". Peddling Logo merchandise has become a summer tradition for them. Sheila grew up on Forest Lake and often wonders what a difference it would have made to have a Lake District available to protect the waters. It is so important that everyone is aware of how important each and every one of us is to our beautiful lake and it's natural offerings. Friends now marvel at the crystal clear water in August, when other lakes are green with algae. Since 1974, Don has owned Waldoch Crafts and Custom, a van, truck and car customization shop and accessory store. Sheila is a sterling silver jewelry representative for Silpada jewelry. They raised their family in North Branch, MN.

WEBSITE ADDRESS

For updates, pictures, and other great information, don't forget to visit our website at www.halfmoonlake.net

If you would like to receive an electronic mailing of the LAKE CONNECTION newsletter, please forward your e-mail address to swaldoch@waldoch.com to be added to list.

• CALENDAR OF EVENTS •

(Additional events will be added
to this calendar as dates are decided)

SPRING DISTRICT BOARD MEETING:

Saturday April 17, 2010 Milltown Fire Hall

ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING AND PICNIC:

Saturday, July 17, 2010 Milltown Public Beach

BOARD MEETING FOLLOWING ANNUAL PICNIC:

Saturday, July 17, 2010 Milltown Public Beach