



NEWSLETTER

Portage Lake Association President's Letter for November 2011

Fall at Portage Lake has been beautiful and I hope you have experienced the same wherever you are.

We sponsored Fall Fun Fest on a beautiful Saturday and Village Park was packed with fun loving children and their parents. The pony rides, bull train, wagon tours, bouncing house, balloon man and face painting were all free for the children. Many vendors displayed their crafts and creations. Apples, pumpkins, and other vegetables were for sale along with donuts from Trinity Lutheran Church and the food wagon from the Onekama Lions.

The next event for the Portage Lake Association is "Celebration of Lights" which will take place on **Saturday, November 19th**. The Craft Show and Chili Cook-off portion of the event will be held at the Onekama School Café from 10 a.m. to 3p.m. The Chili cook-off is sponsored by Boy Scout Troop #63. The Celebration of Lights tree lighting will be held at the Farr Center at 5:30 in the evening. Each light will represent a tribute to a family member or friend. Join us for the tree lighting, refreshments, and caroling with the Church of the Brethren choir.

The Portage Lake Association is a group of volunteers from our community. Some are new to the area and others have lived here their entire life. We have many different projects going on in the community and always welcome more volunteers. If you would like to plant and/or water petunias, help with our fundraiser dinner in June, be part of the committee that organizes the Concerts in the Park, Fall Fun Fest, Celebration of Lights or any other project that we do, there is a position, large or small, that you can be part of.

www.onekama.info is the Portage Lake Association website and if you haven't checked it out recently be sure and do so. We continue to add to it for your usage and information. Facebook pages (1,) and (**Portage Lake Association**) are available for your information and comments. A new link [PLA Merchandise](#) will be showing clothing for sale with the Portage Lake Association logo and other items of interest.

*Margaret Punches, Portage Lake Association,
President*

THE CELEBRATION OF LIGHTS 2011

The Celebration of Lights, sponsored by the Portage Lake Association will take place on Saturday, November 19th. The Craft Show and Chili Cook-off portion of the event will be held at the Onekama School Cafe from 10 AM to 3 PM. What a great place we have for our event!!!

The craft show will feature many local crafters and artists representing their own unique creations. Many beautiful items will be offered, along with lots of wonderful baked goods made by members of our local churches. While the craft show is taking place, Boy Scout Troup #63 will be holding their chili cook-off. Local 'chefs' will be showing off their secret recipes for all to taste. You be the judge as to who has the best chili!!!

The Celebration of Lights tree lighting will be held at the Farr Center at 5:30 in the evening. Each light on the tree represents a tribute to a family member and friend. Honor the memory of your loved ones with us at the Celebration of Lights. We invite you to join us for the tree lighting, caroling with the Church of the Brethren, and refreshments, compliments of the Portage Lake Association. Start your Holiday season with friends and neighbors in Onekama!!



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Onekama items, scarves, purses, toys and much more.
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and we ship. (Santa should have it so good.)*



NEWS FROM THE VILLAGE

There was a lot of activity throughout the Village this summer with several events in the park, Explore the Shores presentations and conceptual drawings of all the parks in the community, and the meetings concerning disincorporation of the village and having one government - the township. Our main street was made beautiful with the petunias, thank you PLA! The Onekama Garden Club is responsible for plantings at Farr Center and in the park and their maintenance throughout this summer, again thank you! We better not to forget the work our village maintenance staff do on a day to day basis to make our village look good and to see that all things mechanical work well. A big thank you to them!

The subject of disincorporation of the Village...has been a major focus this summer with an assessment of the possibility of a one government option for the community to reduce costs and achieve the visions and goals of the community, as well as improve participation in our local government. There were two open forums to share the assessment made by Citizens Research Council of Michigan and follow with questions/answers. Following the last meeting, petitions were circulated in the village and signed by 63 qualified voters to bring the question of disincorporation for a vote by the electorate, which could be as early as February 2012.

After receipt of the petitions, the Village Council Trustees did pass a resolution on October 19 to form a Disincorporation Commission to report as to how the village would disincorporate into the Township. Volunteers from the village and township (3 each) will work on the commission and report to residents the information needed to consider a vote for disincorporation.

The provision of Michigan Public Act 3 of the Public Acts of 1895 charges the Disincorporation Commission with addressing the issues following that are relevant to our community as a whole:

Methods for dealing with land use planning and zoning within the Village

Payment of any indebtedness of the Village

Disposition of the Village's real and personal property and other assets

Disposition of all public records of the Village

The transfer or termination of Village employees

Jurisdiction over the Village's roads, sidewalks and any public easements, including street lights and snow removal

Jurisdiction over traffic control

Provision for any special assessment districts within the Village

The transfer or termination of public utilities and public services of the Village including water, sewer, drainage, cable

TV, street lighting, electric services and garbage and refuse service.

The regulation of orderly transfer of responsibility for any special districts

Provision for any authorities that the Village has established or in which the Village is a member

Findings regarding the fiscal impact of dissolution upon the Township and the residents of the Village

A process for the resolution of any disputes that may arise in the process of disincorporating

The effects that disincorporation may have on property values, public service levels and costs and local property tax rates

When the Disincorporation Commission's work is completed, the plan will be submitted to the Village and Township Boards for their approval. Pending approval, the question of disincorporation would appear on the ballot at the next general or special election to be held in the Village.

Village office hours for clerk and treasurer are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 to 2.
Address of Village Hall is 5283 Main Street and phone number is [231-889-3171](tel:231-889-3171).

Village Council meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 pm and everyone is welcome.

To those who leave us for the winter, enjoy but come back soon as we will miss you! For those who remain, consider the beauty of each season in this wonderland of Onekama on Portage Lake!

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ONEKAMA TOWNSHIP NEWS

The Treasurer's office now has a website for those interested in looking up their tax information. It is: onekamatwp.is.bsasoftware.com. A new way to pay property tax bills is through an ACH account with PNC Bank, like those paid for phone, gas or electric. The treasurer has a form available that asks the following: name, property number, routing number of your bank, account to have payment deducted from, and if it is a checking or savings account. The treasurer will deduct payment of the winter tax bill either in December, 2011 or in February, 2012, and in August, 2013 for the summer bill. See the treasurer in setting up this plan. Partial payments are also accepted. For winter taxes, payments may be made in December and January with the final payment before February 14. Penalties are applied after Feb. 14.

Board of Review meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 9 a.m. in the township hall. This is for corrections and errors; no appeals will be heard.

A **recycling** reminder: in addition to paper and cardboard, recycling includes (clean) plastic bottles No. 1-6; glass, aluminum cans and plastic bags. Please note that dark plastic bags cannot be accepted. There is a separate container for white plastic bags. Bins are marked for their specific contents. Please remember these containers and the truck are for materials that are **RECYCLED** only, they are not for **HOUSEHOLD GARBAGE OR TRASH, OR ANY FORM OF STYROFOAM**.

The **Planning Commission** is preparing to review the final draft of a combined township and village zoning ordinance before presenting it to the township board and village council for their review and approval. The commission is also looking into the issue of wind turbines.

The **Community Access Initiative Leadership Team** is encouraging everyone to take a look at the conceptual designs for township and village parks and public access sites which are on display at the Farr Center. The designs are part of the Explore the Shores program. Parks selected for design work and preliminary engineering were done to improve access to them and increase the usage. Comment cards will be available- **please offer your comments. Input is needed and appreciated.**

The Parks and Recreation Committee had a successful North Point Park Appreciation and Awareness Day (Aug. 6) which included a "Sharks in the Park" event. Other items the committee is working on include consideration of Disc Golf in one of the parks and working with the PLA to install bike racks in the village and township.

The township is pleased to have a new water well for the township hall and fire department, installed and completed by Rollins Well Drilling.

Fire Truck: The new International fire truck being built by Alexis Fire Equipment Co. of Alexis, IL. is still on schedule for delivery in December. It will replace a 1976 pumper truck.

Township Office hours are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Zoning Administrator's hours are Monday and Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Don't forget: If you spend one dollar in the village, township or county, that dollar should go around five times. So please try and spend your money here.

Mary Lou Millard 889-3308 Office Manager, Onekama Township



PLA 2012 FUNDRAISER – Mark Your Calendars!

Mark your calendars for June 23, 2012 for the annual PLA fundraiser. It will again be held at the Little River Casino Resort and promises to be the event of the year!

Over 40 volunteers helped make the 2011 event one of the best ever. Over 200 people attended the event and over \$23,000 in prizes, raffle and auction items were given out. Our objective is to make the 2012 event bigger and better than the 2011 event, with more raffles and auction items & a bigger coupon book with even more savings for our members at local business and entertainment centers.

Planning for the 2012 event will start this month. We are always looking for folks that could bring new ideas to the event or would like to plan the event, work on the program, develop the coupon book, secure donations, decorate and help on the day of the event. If you have any input on what we can do to enhance the experience, or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Al Taylor at 889-0205 or email at windsongmi@aol.com. You can also use this contact if you would like to donate goods or services, or if you would like to have a coupon in the coupon book.

	<p>Chateau Grand Traverse Wine Tasting. Gourmet Foods. Gifts.</p> <p><i>Linebacks</i> FOR THE FINER THINGS</p> <p>4990 Main St., Downtown Onekama. • 231-889-0333</p>
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Mentoring Program for 2011 In Onekama School

The second year of the K-3rd Grade Mentoring Program is in the final stages of preparation for the 2011-2012 school year. Volunteers from the first year will join with new volunteers and teachers to work with children on reading and math skills starting in November 2011.

The program has specific academic goals "to ensure that all students master the basic and essential academic skills for their grade level." The community volunteers will meet with students to help them learn sight words, review math facts, and practice their reading skills. Others will read aloud to students in the classroom and assist teachers with special projects that required extra sets of hands in the classroom.

Teachers saw marked academic growth in the students involved in the 2010-2011 program. However, the rewards of the program were not one sided and were shared by the volunteers. Helping children learn and develop and knowing that a difference was being made were a common outcome reported by the volunteers. Over 90% of the volunteers indicated an interest in being a part of this year's program.

In addition to continuation of the K-3rd grade program, other programs are being evaluated for the 2011-2012 school year. With projected budget cuts, the needs for assistance will be greater and community support will be critical. Programs being considered include Career Days, individual mentoring of students in higher grades, and writing, composition, math and science assistance on an individual and classroom basis. More details will be available on additional programs around December.

Volunteers from Onekama, Bear Lake, Arcadia and other townships in the OCS district are being sought for this year's program. Training for the 2011-2012 K-3rd grade program was held on October 24th at the school. A makeup session will be held for those who missed that date. If you are interested, contact Al Taylor at 231-889-0205 or email at windsongmi@aol.com.



Watershed Updates "Explore the Shores" Project

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then the conceptual drawings of six community parks unveiled at a recent community open house are priceless.

The drawings, on display at the Farr Center until the end of October, illustrate ideas proposed by the Onekama Parks Leadership Team under the guidance of consultants Beckett & Raeder. If you haven't gotten to the Farr Center, you can also see them by going to <http://www.onekama.info/watershed/> and clicking on Onekama Coastal Parks.

You may recall that Portage Lake Watershed Forever (PLWF) received a grant of \$34,000 from Coastal Zone Management (via the Alliance for Economic Success) in connection with the Manistee county-wide "Explore the Shores" program. The purpose of the funding was to determine how to re-engineer parks in the Onekama community to make them accessible for people of all ages, needs and abilities to enjoy and benefit from the County's rivers, lakes and wetlands and our 25 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. In addition to the PLWF Plan, "universal accessibility" is also an objective of the Onekama Township Parks and Recreation Plan, and the Onekama Community Master Plan.

The 're-imagined' parks are the Farr Center, Glen Park, Langland Park (the 'turn-around' on Lake Michigan), Onekama Village Park, the township's newly-acquired Wetlands, and Zosel Walk-in Park. Not unexpectedly, changes suggested for the Onekama Village Park generated the most comment as the designs call for a new play area, a splash park for kids, an impressive outdoor concert stage, rest room facilities and other upgrades.

As yet, however, these are still "concepts". Assuming that the Village and Township give us the nod, and keeping in mind that we are still functioning at the "big picture" level, the next phase of the project will be drill down to further refine designs, budget, time frames, priorities, and fund development.

The Community Access Leadership Team includes Susan Barnard, Kathy Ervin, Tom Gerhardt, Alice Hendricks, Phil Joseph, Mary Lou Millard, Jon Phillips, Margaret PUNCHES, Mary Reed and Al Taylor.

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Concerts In the Park Committee Report

Our concerts for 2011 were well received by audiences of 250-350 for each concert. Our goals are:

1. *To provide wholesome entertainment for local people and visitors.*
2. *To provide a variety of music styles throughout the season and change from year to year.*
3. *To continuously improve the quality of the music and entertainment.*

We have purchased and are now using both an elevated stage and stage lighting. We find most of our talented performers from the Michigan Arts & Humanities Council, along with tips from the audience and from present and former artists. We are always looking for new artists with varied styles and presentations, so keep those cards and letters coming with suggestions.

We welcome new members to our committee and need people to: help set up the stage each Monday about 1 hour before the concert and to put the cover back on after the artists have gone; to help "pass the bucket" during intermission; and to help with publicity, and selection of music or entertainment groups.

Our present concert committee consists of: Al Taylor, Steve Szilvagy, Margaret Punches, George Punches, Mary Fairgrieve. We'd like to thank Nancy May for her several years of being a part of the Concert Committee. She was very effective in making sure notices, write-ups and photos were sent to local newspapers & media both before and after the concerts. Nancy has asked to be retired from her position.

Contact George Punches 889-4306 or [231-233-7870](tel:231-233-7870) (cell) gpunches@chartermi.net

Onekama Days Big Fish Contest 2011

Submitted by: Frank English, Chairman



The Onekama Days Big Fish Contest, sponsored by the PLA and Ludington Beverage Company, proud distributor of Anheuser – Busch Products, was a Great Success. There were a number of boats entered, but only five fish weighed in, the largest being a 26.5 lb King Salmon caught by Ken Franklin of Onekama aboard the First Light.

Second Place was a 20.25 lb King caught by Phil Sedelmaier of Kaleva, MI. There was a tie for Third Place- Ralph Drum and Mike Mastrianni both caught 18.95 lb Kings and the Fourth Place winner was Mike Kroulik of Saginaw, MI.

A special thanks to Budweiser for sponsoring this great fishing contest over the past 12 years.

Third Annual Fund Fundraiser

Thanks to the generous support of the 130 people who attended the Portage Lake Watershed Forever's third annual Annual Fund Cocktail Party in July, and the many more who weren't able to come but who sent in donations, PLWF's annual fund grew by nearly \$15,000. The event, held under a tent on the beautifully coiffed lawn of Paul and Jane Mueller's "Canfield House", featured hors d' oeuvres from Arcadia Bluffs, scintillating conversation among many guests, and a brief presentation about the goals and objectives of the Watershed Plan.

The money raised for the annual fund is used to 'keep the wheels on the PLWF wagon' – mailings, printing, grants (such as the one given to support "Salmon in the Classroom" for Onekama 3rd graders or the contribution PLWF

made to enable a study of the pros and cons of merging the Village and the Township) – and education/outreach efforts. DeeDee Miller, who chaired the party, was aided by a stalwart group of volunteers who, day in and day out, rise to any occasion and make it fun!

Special thanks go to Mike Acton, who made sure we were legal, and Paul Fairchild, who again this year made sure we looked good.



Another Blooming Success, But Help Is Needed!

The Petunia Parade Committee would like to once again thank every individual, group, association and business that helped make the 2011 Parade another beautiful success. And although the petunia's no longer bloom along M22, plans have already begun for the 2012 Parade.

There are many things that are needed to achieve the beautiful display that runs through Onekama ... monetary donations, seeds, soil preparation, planting, fertilizing, weeding and watering. Each year donations and volunteers have more than exceeded our expectations.

However, there is one area where help is needed so that we can continue this project – **people to water**. If you would be interested in knowing more about this process, please call Tammy Messner at 889-5442.

And once again, thanks to everyone who helped!



ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS

Nancy Cody says goodbye from Nature's Elegance



As with any successful business, it all begins with a realistic business plan, educational tools, sweat equity and love of what you are doing. The beginning of **Nature's Elegance** took place in Grand Rapids, Michigan in the spring of 1997. My love of gardening and presidency of a garden club there provided my business name.

Despite Grand Rapids' and Onkama's geographical differences in size and retail foot traffic, both locations shared amazing similarities. Both sets of customers loved beauty. Whenever a spouse would question their significant other's purchase by saying, "What are you going to do with that?" the indignant response was always, "I don't know. I want it because it's beautiful!"

A main street location provided immense entertainment, to my staff, and other businesses. For example, blustery lake winds and rain was challenging when attempting to stand on a stepladder to remove Nature's Elegance's flag; this situation resulted in frantically clinging to the overhead porch post, in a skirt, only to have the step ladder collapse.

In the fall, many along Main St. participate in dressing up scarecrows. As dog lovers, Nature's Elegance wanted to do something special. I asked Hopwood's Heating and Cooling, Inc. if they would be willing to create a stovepipe tin dog for us. This fun project turned into a family affair, which included Hopwood's life-size tin man standing next to our tin dog named Madison. Apparently, our dog looked too realistic, as a shaggy-haired dog sniffed ours and lifted his leg!

Nature's Elegance has met its 15 year goal and closed on Oct. 1. Countless customers shared their concerns that Onkama has so many closed stores. "It's not what it used to be," the long time customers would say. As new residents to Onkama in 2004, my husband and I have sacrificed seven years of our lives to beautify and serve Onkama. My genuine hope is that some more individuals will leave their legacy by investing in downtown Onkama. If you truly believe in this place, help our village to thrive and become the two-lake jewel that it once was.

Nature's Elegance thanks you for your outstanding patronage and friendship. Our next chapter is to move back to Grand Rapids, be closer to our granddaughter, and focus on one more goal... Play!

Shalom my friends and sincere thanks, **Nancy, Roger and Val** ~ The Staff of Nature's Elegance

INVASIVE SPECIES- Portage Lake Management Update

At the end of the third year of the management plan, Portage Lake has been successfully treated for phragmites and eurasian water milfoil. Eighty-three acres of phragmites were treated the first year; and this year, less than 10 acres required treatment. This includes stands that were identified in other areas of the township and on the Lake Michigan shoreline.

In 2009, 162 acres of eurasian water milfoil (ewm) were treated and this year we successfully treated 22 acres. Because of the clarity of our lake, the ewm is now growing in the deeper areas of the lake. Treatment of these areas will require additional permits for next year's treatment. Samples were tested this year and some of the

ewm has hybridized. Because of the location of the ewm and the fact it has formed a hybrid, next year will require a special permit, and perhaps new products and techniques of administration.

There are also several other invasives such as japanese knotweed, purple loosestrife, hybrid cattails and blue lyme grass that are being monitored.

An important part of the treatment of invasives is the ongoing monitoring of the lake's water quality that is being done. Data has been gathered this year from several areas of the lake, feeder streams and storm drains. The management report for 2011 will be received soon and will be posted on the Internet on the Portage Lake Watershed Forever site.



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Something for Everyone

I hope everyone has had an opportunity to visit our enhanced web site recently. The site has great information for everyone, if you are a life long resident of the area, or a weekend visitor. If you are visiting the area, find out what is happening by checking out the calendar of events. You can find places to stay, where to eat, and where to shop, and where to worship on the various pages in the site. The site will also provide information about all the recreational activities available in the area. It is always interesting to learn about the history of an area. That too can be found.

We all need to keep abreast of the governmental issues of our community. That can be found on the Village and Township pages. Concerned about our lakes and streams? Check out the Portage Lake Watershed Forever page. Need help to do the small jobs around the cottage, or a major construction project? You can also find contractors ready to assist you.

Are you interested in seeing your business or organization on the web site? In the last two months we have had over 3000 visitors to the site from as far away as Germany and the Philippines, and as close as next door. Great exposure for your business!

If interested, contact MS Creative Services @ 231 723 9097, or contact any PLA board member for information.



NOVEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

planewsed@gmail.com, Newsletter Editor

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