Les Cheneaux Islands Association

Fall Newsletter ~ October, 2019

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President's Letter

Jim Keighley

Greetings from the LCIA

Fall has been very wet yet a busy construction season. Heading into this winter LCI has never looked better in the 40+ years that I have been coming up here. *How so?*

- M-134 & M-129 have been resurfaced to M-48 & Pickford. US-2 & M-28 are also in great shape. The Cedarville Harbor Project is nearing completion; paving is done and parking lines painted. The launch ramp is done and new dock is in place. Pictures need to be hung, a few minor plumbing and electrical tasks need to be finished. It looks great!
- Many cottages, docks and boathouses are being fixed up/redone throughout the islands.
- Every contractor I talk to is busy with big projects. If you are thinking about having something done next year – better to set that up now vs. waiting until the spring.

This past year we put some extra LCIA emphasis on the buoy program and membership:

- The navigation buoys are essential for recreation boating safety and arguably the single most visible of LCIA's efforts. It is a tough job getting them in and out of the water before and after each boating season. Steve Honnila and his Viking Team got all the buoys in before this past boating season and they are now all pulled, cleaned and in storage. Super job by Steve – be sure to say thanks to him next time you see him.
- We made some progress on membership but still lots of opportunity in the year ahead. Phyllis Rusk does a great job keeping the drive for membership visible and active. Thanks Phyllis. That said - the strongest LCIA membership driver is your personal endorsement. You know how important our efforts are to the quality of life in LCI. Please sell your new neighbors or the next generation of your existing neighbors on that importance and becoming a member.

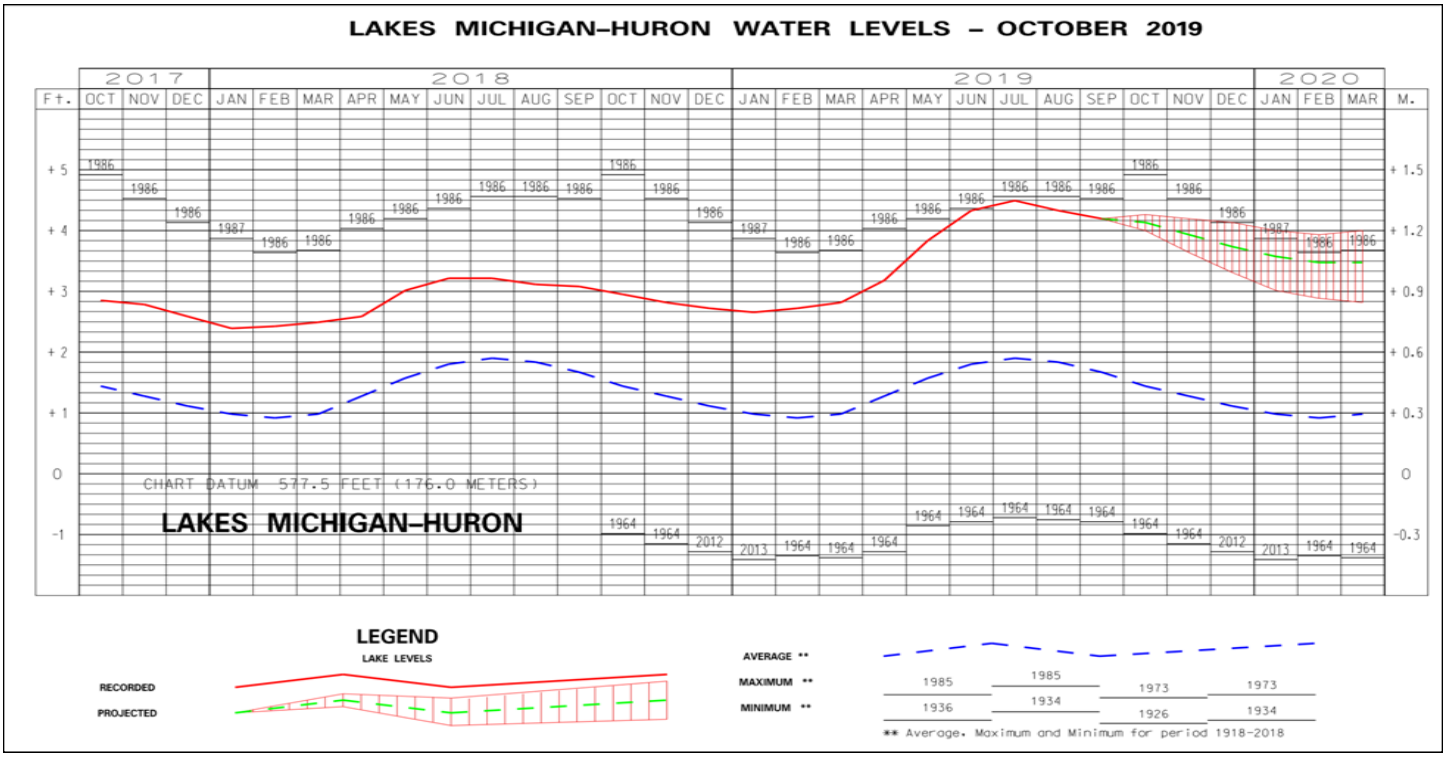
Speaking of the year ahead – most extended weather predictions call for average temperatures and above average precipitation. That could mean heavy wet snow – probably worth making a connection now with someone to take care of roof shoveling when and if needed. Remember that IF the ENTIRE area gets pounded like last year – we will communicate a general warning notice about heavy snow loads by an email to the membership and on the Facebook Page - but we won't be sending individual notifications to each property owner about snow load. If your place has an unusual roof snow load relative to others – you will get a personal notice.

The number one driver of our lake levels is precipitation, so the best bet is for high lake levels again next year. The Corp of Engineers only predicts lake levels 6 months out and their most likely prediction line runs just below the record high water for each month.

If you haven't been to LCI in the winter in a while – think about coming up for Snowsfest (Presidents Day Weekend) – lot more going on in the winter than you might think.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or comments.

keighleyja@gmail.com
906-484-2369.



Manager's Report

Mark Engle

Weather & Water Update

The Les Cheneaux area has experienced a very wet and windy autumn thus far. The ground has been saturated continuously for many weeks; it appears that the trend may continue according to weather service predictions. Our extended forecast is cooler temps with periods of rain/snow in the next 10 days.

The Chippewa County airport reported 17 wet days in the month of September for a total of 12.4" of precipitation. Rainfall in October at the airport has totaled 8".

The Corp of Engineers shows a 2" decline in Lake Huron's water level since last month. We are, however, 15" above the water level of one year ago and +32" above the long term average for October. The projection for November is another 2" drop.

The Les Cheneauxs continue to see major fluctuations of water levels on a daily basis. There are many floating objects and debris which are a hazard to navigation. If you are in the area and plan to travel by boat, be advised…..there is a lot of stuff to watch out for out there!

Windy conditions have caused widespread tree damage particularly dead and dying spruce trees affected by spruce budworm. Homeowners should continue to be aware of the condition of trees especially near buildings and electric/telephone service lines.

Aids to Navigation

Steve Honnila and the crew at Viking Boat Harbor have been busy pulling the LCIA aids to navigation for winter storage. Weather conditions have not been conducive for 'buoy tending' this year. Thanks to Steve for getting the job done.

The U.S. Coast Guard has also removed their buoys for the season. Boaters should use caution while traveling in the islands as the waterways look smooth and safe on the surface but with continuous ups and downs in water levels, dangers do exist. Do not take for granted that all is safe on the water and to emphasize again…..there are may deadheads, dock parts, trees and branches floating or slightly submerged.

Property Inspections

LCIA inspectors began bi-monthly property checks on September 15. Inspectors who travel by boat to outlying island locations are having some issues with docks under water or in bad condition. Our inspectors often have to deal with unusual circumstances; if you get a chance to meet them, a "thank you" helps them feel good about putting in the extra efforts to do the service.

Fish & Game

Michigan DNR Fisheries creel census clerks reported a

drop in fishing activity in the Les Cheneaux area for 2019. Weather conditions were a factor during late summer and fall. There were many days when fishing was virtually impossible.

MDNR Fisheries completed their 51st annual fish assessment study in the LCI in early October. The study results have not yet been released.

The local deer population seems to be down somewhat. The winter of 2019 certainly had a negative impact. Hopefully, deer and humans don't have to go through another winter like that again !!

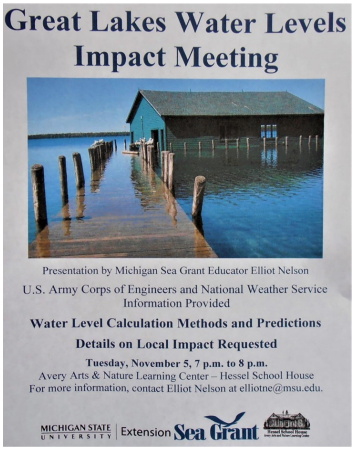
Double crested cormorant numbers were not overwhelming by most observations in the LCI. Of concern, however, has been the increase of the number of the fish eating birds nesting on Crow Island east of Cedarville. The increased number of nests on the small island seems to coincide with the drop in herring (Cisco) catches in spite of huge Mayfly hatches that typically attract the popular fish to our area. Cormorants rely on food sources within 4-5 miles of nesting sites; Crow Island sits in an area known as prime herring habitat.

LCIA Food Drive for Cedar Post Pantry

The LCIA purchased a new trailer this year, currently being used to collect non-perishable food items for the Cedar Post Pantry. The trailer is parked next to the Coldwell Banker office and will remain there for a few more weeks. The trailer will also be used to store LCIA's supply of life jackets that are given to graduates of the boating safety classes each year as well as other LCIA items. Previously, John & Jeri Griffin furnished their snowmobile trailer for the food drive. Thank you to the Griffins for their help over the years.

A special thank you to Mary Baker who has been diligently emptying the food trailer and delivering items to the Cedar Post Pantry. Mary reports LCIA members have been exceptionally generous this year with food donations. She stated she has delivered over 60 bags of groceries to the pantry and the donations have been very much appreciated !

Thank you !!



The public is invited to a meeting focusing on the impact of Great Lakes water levels Wednesday, November 5, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., at Hessel School House. Elliot Nelson, instructor for Michigan Sea Grant and MSU Extension, will convey details provided by the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the National Weather Service. He will address how water levels are calculated, future predictions, and briefly touch on a project entitled Great Lakes One Waters (GLOW), a program that promotes resilience in infrastructure, economics, and recreation, in the face of extreme weather events.

Members of the public interested in the impact of Great Lakes water levels are encouraged to attend. Mr. Nelson will spend approximately 35 minutes presenting facts on why lake levels change, long-term processes, and community impacts. Following the presentation, he will seek information from attendees on how water levels have impacted them. For more information, contact Elliot Nelson at elliotne@msu.edu.

LCIA Board of Directors Meeting Dates for 2020
(All LCIA Members Welcome !!)

Friday, May 29, 9:00 a.m.
Thursday, July 2, 9:00 a.m.
Friday, September 4, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room - Cedar Cove Assisted Living

Annual Meeting
Thursday, August 6, 4:00 p.m.
Commons Room, Les Cheneaux Community School

Annual Dinner
Thursday, August 6, 5:30 p.m., Clark Township Community Center

Water Safety & Youth Certification Committee ~
Dave Robertson, Chair

Current Committee members: Dave Robertson, chair; John Griffin; David and Lindsey Morrison;

The primary function of the Committee is to coordinate the Water/Youth Boating Certification Classes each summer. The classes were conceived of in the late 1990s by LCIA Past President Trip Abnee [at the time his daughters were approaching independent boating age]. He enlisted Marine Deputy Tom Sherlund to teach the class. The materials for the class are Coast Guard videos and a booklet from the Michigan DNR: "A Course on Responsible Boating". The class is given twice each summer [around July 4 and Boat Show week], in two 3-hour evening sessions. There is no charge for the class, which is supported by LCIA. While intended primarily for youth, boaters of all ages are welcome to attend and learn. The class is open to the community, regardless of LCIA membership.

In summer 2019, the classes were held on the following dates at the Great Lakes Boat Building School:

July 9 & 10 - 6:00-9:00pm – _25__ youths + _3_ adults = __28_ total

August 6 & 7- 6:00-9:00pm – _21__ youths + 3 adults = _24__ total

TOTAL FOR 2019: _46 youths + __6___ adults = __52__ total

Each student who completes the course is presented with a PFD emblazoned with the LCIA logo and an LCIA certificate. The PFDs are paid for by the Trip Abnee Boating Safety Memorial Fund. Trip's wife, Nina, created the fund in his memory, knowing how important water and boating safety was to him. On behalf of the LCIA, the Committee thanks Nina and all other donors to the Fund.

The Committee made a larger than necessary purchase of PFDs in 2019, to take advantage of volume pricing. The Committee must make a purchase to cover the 2019 classes. The Fund, technically part of Les Cheneaux Community Foundation [donations are tax-deductible], remains solvent.

The Committee thanks Great Lakes Boat Building School, our new, convenient, and comfortable venue, for the use of its class room without charge; and especially Deputy Tom Sherlund for his time and expertise in teaching the class.

Happy Boating in the Les Cheneaux.

Respectfully submitted, Dave Robertson, Chair

Past Presidents Committee ~
Dave Robertson, Chair

The Past Presidents Committee met in executive session on August 5, 2019.

Attending were [from top] George Covington, Jack Edwards, Mary Baker, John Griffin, Ed Rusk, Jan Abnee Williams [please stand up], Diane Patrick and Dave Robertson, joined by spouses. We were ably assisted, as always, by Esther and Mark Engle. We solved many pressing problems of the world and had a good time, but we couldn't convince the lake to recede so everybody's docks aren't underwater!

Dave Robertson, Immediate Past President