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Yacht Clubs Around the Lake

This summer the clubs around the lake have been dramatically affected by both the Covid-19 Virus as well as storm damage from severe storms in January. High lake levels exacerbated the effects of the storm surges destroying finger piers and even structural steel supports. (see story on pg 2 for South Shore Yacht Club).

In Indiana, Christine Hunt (rear Commodore) reports that most social activities have been cancelled. One party normally held at Hammond Yacht Club in September is still undetermined. No one has rented space for parties and the number of people allowed inside is limited.

Portage and Michigan city are both open, while New Buffalo has most of their docks under water. In the

meantime, people are using grills on the docks which are in constant use. Visiting other clubs can be more difficult when some of their slips are not currently available to use.

In Illinois, Rear Commodore Wade Schroder says that his club, Three Rivers, is partially open—bathrooms open but no parties, no kitchen, grills only for members, and bring your own utensils and food. Reduced seating for social distancing. There has been a reduction in dues to correspond to the reduced services. The club endured a flood early in the season which put the marina under 2.5 to 3 feet of water. The club house barely escaped flooding.

In place of regular boating, group boat rides and rafting are being used, but travel is limited with many marinas closed. Very few Loopers have gone through the locks this year because most of them have been closed for repairs by the Corps of Engineers this summer.

The owner of Three Rivers Marine services passed away this winter and Wade was asked to take over as Dock Master for the season, while a new staff is secured. Wade has kept up the repairs and finished docks that were under construction. He has brought in a half dozen new boats and worked with a land manager to do a marina wide clean up. Once the new owner is

in full control, Three Rivers will be in full renewal. Because of the lock closures that were needed to complete major repairs by the Corps of Engineers the pools of the Illinois River have been more or less isolated for most of the summer. With the pandemic events of this year there has been a reduction in travel of all types, but there are still some boaters who are using the waters as a source of recreation and a destination for outdoor activity. Interest in boating has remained high and boat sales have been relatively strong. Although some members have been lost, there has been a net gain in new members seen in some clubs.

Major Pollution Spill Lawsuit Progressing

Special points of interest:

- Yacht Clubs around the Lake
- Major Pollution Spill Lawsuit
- Major Repairs for South Shore Yacht Club
- Cruising Card Notice

Two large steel mills in Indiana, ArcelorMittal Burns Harbor, LLC, and USX Steel, have been found to have illegally discharged large amounts of cyanide, ammonia, and hexavalent chromium into the Little Calumet River which feeds into Burns Waterway and then into Lake Michigan. These chemicals are part of the steel making process and are supposed to be collected during plant operations. .

The cyanide spill poisoned about three thousand fish and some birds which died and floated into the Burns Waterway from the Little Calumet River. The incident led to a one week closure of four public

beaches, marinas and yacht clubs, one state park, one national park, and other public places. Vessel traffic at the Port of Indiana was also paused until the oil spill could be cleaned up. The plant also has a history of other ammonia liquor spills and oil spills dating from February of this year.

Dogan & Dogan law firm has addressed claims by over 100 plaintiffs to bring about a better discharge monitoring system to protect the public from future spills which went unreported for four days by the steel company.

LMYA has joined in sponsoring

this suit and made a major contribution to the fund to hire expert witnesses who can testify at the trial regarding the toxic effects of the discharged materials. Better monitoring systems should be developed to keep this problem from reoccurring. The LMYA feels that it is important for our association to take action to protect our lake and beaches from dangerous pollution and to encourage lawmakers to make changes to the existing system of “self-monitoring” which allow industries to escape detection on spills or cover up the results of their actions.

Major Repairs Needed for South Shore Yacht Club

South Shore Yacht Club in Milwaukee is still under repair, and will not have any slips available for members this summer. The severe storm that hit in mid January caused significant damage to all of the major piers and finger piers in the slip area. High water levels and high winds caused damage to the breakwater and once it was blown open, the yacht basin took a real beating. Most of the pallets that rested on the finger piers were destroyed or washed away, leaving the structural steel exposed. (See picture below). Dock boxes were dislodged and

sunken during the storm which became a navigational hazard. So far, FEMA has been approached to repair or rebuild the breakwater and is studying how much work they can approve. The breakwater was installed in the 1930's and is now breached in several places. New larger stones will be needed to repair the holes and add more height to the existing wall to prevent future storm damage such as we just saw. The Corps of Engineers and Milwaukee county are working to establish what needs to be done and how much it will cost.

South Shore has submitted a list of its losses, some of which will be covered by insurance, but not everything. The Corps has to approve the project and bring in contractors to do the actual work. At this time, it is not known when the reconstruction will actually begin, or the time frame needed. Meanwhile the members are starting to rebuild the horseshoe area for transient boat traffic. B dock will need new structural steel girders and some new pilings to put it back in service.

Wave boards are being removed from the docks as the water levels are now so high they are no longer necessary. They actually interfere with efforts to clear off the docks so that new pallets can be installed. On top of all these difficult problems, the members who want to work to build pallets and work on the docks are limited in their efforts by the Covid-19 restrictions that are still in place in Milwaukee County. Only a few are allowed at a time.



View of a large gap in the breakwater seen from the South Shore finger piers.

Notice: Cruising Cards

Cruising cards were distributed to all sustaining members at the end of June as one of the regular benefits of your membership in the LMYA. This year there are many yacht clubs and marinas that have fewer slips open due to storm damage, and many of their services are restricted due to COVID-19. Please check with these facilities in advance before making plans to visit them and see what space or services are currently available.

Our Post Office Box:

LMYA Secretary

P.O. Box 631

**Germantown,
WI**

53022



The Bridge for 2020

Commodore: Thomas Dogan
Vice Commodore: Matt Dogan
Secretary: Jim Mergener
Treasurer: Sally Mergener
Past Comm: Scott Robertson
Judge Advocate: Tom Dogan

State Rear Commodores:
WI: Jim Mergener
IL: Wade Schroder
MI/IN: Christine Hunt