

LAKE DAMON NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2024

Dear Readers,

The winter months are a bit slower for the board. We met for the last time this year in November to go over our budget for 2025. This issue of the newsletter will be dedicated to the budget from 2024 and what our annual dues go toward.

Every year, before the annual meeting, all stockholders receive a large packet with an even bigger spreadsheet that details *all* of the budget. I am guilty of not spending much time going over that document in past years, and thought it might be helpful to break down that spreadsheet to highlight what our money goes toward.

Wishing everyone a happy holiday!

Christine

LDC Committees

Lake: Mike Frost...chair
(413) 568-4176
molly.frost@gmail.com
Robert Gosselin
Steve Willis

Land: Carol Blanchard...chair
(413) 296-4212
cblanch93@verizon.net
Ethan Fenn
Sherrill Redmon
Janet Scully

Dam: Bruce Schwartz...Dam Master
(413) 531-4567
bhschwartzt@comcast.net
Matt Dirocco
Allyson Brown

Buildings: Aram Flores: VP and chair
(917) 756-5487
aramflores@icloud.com
Christine Willis
Marianne Hoag
Steve Stathis

Next Board Meeting

Saturday, January 11, 2025 at 10AM

Location: 10 Antin Road
and by Zoom

Please join us in person or by zoom!
Reach out to Robert at robert@gosselins.us
for the zoom link

Budget Recap 2024

These are the actual numbers from 2023/2024. I have separated our annual costs from the dam assessment and dam engineering costs to better show our “normal” operating costs.

Raising our annual dues to \$750 a year will help provide a cushion for our budget in years to come. This year we didn't have many costs associated with road + tree maintenance, or snow plowing, which allowed for a buffer.

My biggest take away from breaking down these numbers is that we pay a lot in taxes and insurance + we know that those numbers will probably only keep going up as our property values continue to rise.

THANK YOU to the board members who pay the bills, call the attorneys, balance our books, answer the emails and all the other silent/hidden work that it takes to keep our community running . It’s a lot of work and you probably don’t get thanked enough!

Money in.....\$46,193

Farmhouse Apartment Income..... \$12,293.00

Stockholder Annual Due.....\$33,900 (\$550 per camp)

Money out.....\$38,744

Admin Expenses.....\$11,534.23

Clerk Expenses.....\$440.86

Treasurer Expenses.....\$805.49

President Expenses.....\$139.08

Insurance\$8,748.80

Legal Fees.....\$1,400.00

Total Expenses for Buildings.....\$21,015.80

Farmhouse Maintenance	\$3,950.03
Farmhouse Property Manager.....	\$2,400.00
Farmhouse Utilities.....	\$807.32
Farmhouse Insurance.....	\$4,859.00
Property Taxes.....	\$5,598.99
Mill Utilities.....	\$117.29
Legal Fees.....	\$323.50 (\$11,676.16 in the last three years)

Total Expenses for Lake.....\$3,071.60

Porta Potty.....	\$1,031.56
Weed Control	\$1,243.04
Weekly Water Testing.....	\$797.00

Total Expenses for Land.....\$3,124.23

Field maintenance	\$1,440.00
Taxes	\$1,481.35
Road Maintenance.....	\$202.88 (can range up to 20K)
Snow Plowing.....	\$0 (can range up to \$500)
Tree Maintenance.....	\$0 (can range up to 5K)

******* Dam Assessment*******

We have collected.....	\$148,450.00
Dam expenses this year.....	\$26,625.00

A big black bear
strolls across
the road in June



Share your pictures with the
community!
You can email them to
cscatko@gmail.com



On October 1,
three gray fox
appeared together

A bobcat in March, on the
prowl for something to eat, and
earlier, thinking about looking
harder for a meal



All photos from Carol Blanchard's trail cam this time around. I would love to see some winter pictures from the pond as many of us don't get up there in the colder months!

The Wasp Report

By Mike Frost

Wasps have been stinging swimmers on the swim raft again this summer. It's not that they enjoy envenomating scantily clad humans, they are merely defending their nests concealed below the deck. Shareholder Dwight Baghdoyan has observed wasps exiting a 2" gap between the sideboards on his frequent visits to the raft, so he and I paddled out one muggy summer night and blasted two full canisters of high-end wasp-killer through the gaps, hoping to smother the mothers with toxic foam as they gently tended their nests full of larvae. A few days later the wasps were back, and they were pissed. No one volunteered to swim under the raft to do battle and Seal Team 6 didn't return my texts so we waited until after Labor Day when the raft was safely beached for our next assault, dubbed "Death From Above". This time Rich Peloquin joined us to remove deck boards to search and destroy the enemy Vespids. Unfortunately, three grown men armed with power tools were unable to remove even a single corroded screw.

On the last day of October I borrowed a flexible video endoscope from Rich and returned to have a peek under the deck. (If you've had the pleasure of a colonoscopy you are familiar with this delightful instrument.) I discovered numerous small mud-dauber nests, several medium sized paper wasp nests, and a couple of large dock spider exoskeletons which I assumed to be Halloween decorations, and no polyps. There was no sign of life at all as the weather had turned cold. Mud-daubers are solitary wasps that build cylindrical nest cells out of mud, which they diabolically stock with paralyzed spiders for their larvae to munch on. They are not typically aggressive and give only a mild sting. Paper wasps are social and build variably sized paper nests which don't provide much protection so they vigorously defend them with painful stings. Wasps don't reuse nests but will return year after year to favorable sites, like under our swim raft.

Armed with this information, a cordless stapler from Rich, and a roll of 8" fiberglass vent mesh from Home Depot ("excludes insects, birds and rodents; not yet rated for migrants"), Dwight and I returned on Nov. 17 to neatly cover the gaps in the raft. Now the wicked wasps will have to find a new breeding site next summer and swimmers can safely enjoy our venerable raft once again. Thank you to Dwight and Rich for helping to solve this problem.

On warm mid-summer afternoons you may observe dozens of smallish wasps cruising just above the beach, occasionally landing and comically kicking up sand with their hind legs. These are another type of solitary wasp, ingeniously named "Sand Wasps", *Bombix americana*, members of the family Bembicinae. They too are not aggressive and rarely sting, which is mild, more like a little bite. Adults feed on pollen and nectar from the wildflowers in the meadow, but feed their larvae a diet of flies: house flies, horse flies, and the dreaded deer flies. Each *Bombix* larva eats about a dozen flies during development. I don't like deer flies. I am decidedly pro-*Bombix*! Sand wasps are beneficial so we will not be trying to exterminate them. They are our friends.

Last Month's Nature Challenge:

When I stepped outside one evening to get a glimpse of the rising Harvest moon, I was serenaded by a lonely cricket chirping rhythmically nearby. In 15 seconds I counted eleven chirps.

Question #1: What was the gender of this insect?

Question #2: What was the ambient air temperature in degrees Fahrenheit?

Answers: The Cricket Conundrum

Amos Dolbear, a physicist at Tufts College, published a paper in 1897 stating the relationship between air temperature and the rate at which a cricket chirps.

The formula, known as Dolbear's Law, is $T=50+[(N-40)/4]$ where T is temperature in degrees Fahrenheit and N is the number of chirps in 60 seconds. A simplified version, found inscribed under a Snapple cap, is $T=N +38$ where N is # of chirps in 15 sec. Only males chirp and he chirped 11 times in 15 sec., so the answer is 50 or 49 degrees F.

In 1881, 16 years earlier, another Massachusetts scholar, Margarett W. Brooks published a paper in Popular Science Monthly titled "The Influence of Temperature On the Chirp of a Cricket", but was largely ignored and not cited in Dolbear's paper. So Margarett we forget, yet Amos gets famous. Now that's something to chirp about.

-Mike Frost