

Gem Lakes' Ponderings – April 2010



From the Editor

Temperatures are on the rise. We see more people out walking. Trees and flowers are blooming. We feel drawn to clean and do yard work. Spring is a period of rebirth and fresh starts. This issue of the newsletter has the theme of fresh starts throughout. I have even changed the newsletter's name as a fresh start. The old title of *Gem Lakes Chatter* seemed to portray idle, meaningless communication. I have no ambitions of winning a Pulitzer for this effort but would like to add value with its content. This issue has twice the content of the last *Chatter*.

My family and I have lived in Gem Lakes for one and one half years. We have felt welcome here from the start and are proud to call ourselves residents of Gem Lakes. I believe that the Gem Lakes' Recreation Association is a large part of this neighborhood spirit. The neighborhood watch and GLOW play an important role as well. You can have a positive impact by working with these groups. Just getting out, walking the neighborhood, and using the recreation area adds to this community spirit. Please continue to do so.

I have learned a great deal from my first year on the GLRA Board. I am most impressed with how much the board is able to accomplish with the dues. The facilities and events are second to none. I am amazed at Oktoberfest and Memorial Day attendance. Our community spirit is alive and well. I have not been as impressed with attendance at work days and Annual Meetings, though. This could indicate that the association membership is satisfied with what we are doing, or that they do not feel that their voices count. This year's Annual Meeting will include a survey to help us decide how you want us to move forward. This is YOUR association. Your dues fund it, and we exist to serve you. Please show up, complete the survey, and let us know your opinions.

Four Board members will be elected at the Annual Meeting. Please consider volunteering to join. We especially need nominees for the position of Treasurer. This is another opportunity for you to contribute to this fresh start.

The Association has added events through the year that we believe benefit its members. This issue of the newsletter and the web site detail these new efforts. We will continue to expand with your input. Please keep in mind that our charter limits us to a Recreational group. We are not a Homeowners' Association.

I hope that this newsletter offers inspiration to let your voice be heard. Now would be a good time to stuff this newsletter in your pocket and head to the lake for a good read. While you are at it, grab the fishing pole as well.

Upcoming Major Events

- May 1 – Fishing Rodeo**
- April 17 – GLRA Monthly Meeting**
- April 19 – GLRA Annual Meeting**
- May 29 – Memorial Day Picnic**
- July 4 (Sunday) – Potluck Supper**
- October 23 – Oktoberfest**



Oktoberfest 2009

Second Annual Fishing Rodeo

We are pleased to announce our second annual fishing rodeo to take place on Saturday, May 1st from 10:00am until 2:00pm. This year, we are trying to work with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to assist with this event.

All interested are to bring their own fishing gear, including chairs if needed, and meet at the registration table set up by the pavilion to ensure you get your ticket, since we will be drawing for door prizes at the end of the event. The majority of the fishing will take place from the bank of the dam facing the swimming lake.

Gem Lakes' Recreation Association will be providing the fishing bait and soft drinks, and we plan to cook hot dogs on our new BBQ Pit. Please remember to leave your area cleaner than when you came if possible. Call Bill Mathison (643-3035) or Buddy Brinkley (642-0281) for more details.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Hello to all of our Gem Lakes residents! This newsletter brings us to the close of another fiscal year for the Gem Lakes Recreation Association (GLRA). As I stated in the past, one of the board's priorities is to make improvements to the recreation area

such that all Gem Lakes' residents and their families continue to say, "We love living in Gem Lakes." Not only will each family enjoy the events and fellowship the board offers each year, each resident will experience the appreciation value to their own property.

I continue to be asked "Why are we paying annual dues when I don't even use the recreation facilities and why are the dues increased at such hard times?" The fact is, for one, you don't realize what you are missing until you attend some of our terrific events. In addition, your property value is increasing with every improvement the Gem Lakes' Recreation Board implements utilizing your dues. Also, each resident should have a thorough understanding of our Gem Lakes' Recreation Area Bylaws. Within these bylaws, amended & approved by the Gem Lakes' residents, section IX explains about the dues assessment methodology. Every five years, the Gem Lakes' Board must make a calculation based upon the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the current dues amount. This calculation was made and validated for this past year's dues which increased to the current amount. Remember, any changes to the bylaws must be made by the majority of residents at our upcoming annual meeting. The bylaws can also be found on our website.

Speaking of improvements and accomplishments for the recreation area, here are some that come to mind for this past fiscal year and planned for the near future:

- The interior of both restrooms have been primed and painted – a big thanks goes out to Brian Marozas for a job well done.
- In early April, our first annual Fishing Rodeo was a huge success (see photos on our website www.gemlakes.org).
- One of the best Memorial Day Picnics to date (see photos on our website www.gemlakes.org).
- Our first annual July 4th Potluck Supper was such a huge success, it has now become our new annual event (see photos on our website www.gemlakes.org).
- One of the best Oktoberfests to date (see photos on our website www.gemlakes.org).
- Lower Dam clearing in November 2009.
- Annual Christmas Gathering (rained out).
- Plans are to upgrade/replace the existing lower lake overflow dam system this year. A viable contractor search is currently underway.

The GLRA Board Members are preparing for our annual meeting scheduled for Monday April 19th starting at 7:00 P.M. at the pavilion. As always, we really need the residents to attend since this is your meeting to meet the board members, receive GLRA status for the past and for the future, but most importantly, voice your opinions, issues, and ideas.

This year, we need a volunteer to take over the Treasurer's position as an officer on the board. After a great year as the board's treasurer, Mrs. Karen Skiff will be leaving this position. We need to fill this vacancy as soon as possible. If you know anyone who might be interested in this position or anyone wanting to join our board as a member, please contact Karen or a board member as soon as possible.

The board wants to extend a very big thank you to Karen since she has done an exemplary job overhauling our previous system and providing us with the latest technology. All of our hats are off to Karen Skiff for a job well done!!

The Memorial Day Picnic will be held on Saturday, May 29rd starting at noon, so mark your calendars for one of our biggest events of the year. Remember to sign in at the registration table to be eligible for the door prize drawings.

We hope that most of you can make our upcoming Bingo and Movie Nights at the pavilion; they have been fun for the whole family. Watch for the calendar dates for both events on our website www.gemlakes.org.

This year's Oktoberfest has been scheduled for Saturday October 23rd starting at 5 pm. Please mark your calendars since we've once again reserved Rudy and his oompa band "The Channelheimers."

I'm hoping that the GLRA Board has given and will continue to give you and your family a reason to say, "we love living in Gem Lakes".

Sincerely,
Your President & Neighbor,
Gary Marozas



Lower Dam clearing project November 2009

The Return of Bingo and Movie Night!

Make sure that you continue to check our website and inside the main neighborhood entrances for the ever-popular signs indicating upcoming events at the recreation area. We hope to begin Bingo and Movie Nights as soon as the weather permits. Great family bingo fun followed by friendly movies projected on a big screen with free popcorn have become a seasonal favorite by the lake. Bring your lawn chairs, blankets and pillows and come meet you neighbors for some good old fashioned family entertainment.

Great news from the Treasurer's desk!

We have collected \$81,618.65 in dues so far this year. We have exceeded our budget this year by \$6,118.65. Thank you to all the homeowners who have paid their dues! The current bank balance is \$14,149.95 with another \$21,853.77 in the money market account. Remaining budgeted expenses as of March 12, 2010 for this fiscal year are \$9,724.64. Remember if you have not paid your dues, you cannot reserve or use recreation association property.

We do still have 32 homeowners (about 5.8% of total homeowners) who are delinquent in paying dues. Balance of outstanding accounts is \$12,322.84. This number is down from 55 homeowners on April 30, 2008 who had a balance of \$18,662. We have been working very hard with them to get the balances paid, including taking legal action.

Dues invoices for the next fiscal year May 2010 to April 2011 will go out the first week in May. Watch your mailbox for the invoice. You will again be able to pay on the website using PayPal and the early payment discount of \$6.80 still applies if you pay by June 30. If you have any questions about your current balance or are unsure if you owe anything, please call me at 643-0190.

On a personal note, it has been my pleasure serving this community as your treasurer, but I will be leaving the board at the end of April. Thank you to the rest of the Board and Evelyn for supporting me the last two years.

Sincerely,
Karen Skiff
Treasurer

Recreation Manager's Corner

Spring is here and it won't be long until the lake is open for the summer! The lifeguards are lined up and ready to go. Thank you to those residents who continue to use the recreation area daily & let me know if problems arise. I hope that you can make plans to attend the Fishing Rodeo, upcoming movie & bingo nights, and the Memorial Day picnic. We are also planning the 4th of July Potluck Supper again this year. Please watch for signs advertising the events. See you at the lake!



Oktoberfest 2009

Howdy folks,

Happy Spring! After a very long winter and a delightful little snow storm, it's nice to finally have warm weather again. And it's time to get ready for the Gem Lakes' Memorial Day Picnic and the annual GLRA Spring Olympics! This year's Memorial Day picnic will feature the Annual Gem Lakes' Boat race. So bring your canoes, kayaks, paddle boats, rafts and whatever else you have that floats. Your boat must be "human powered" by you and your crew. Water balloons and super soakers are legal!

We'll also feature Beach Volleyball, Frisbee Golf, Tug of War, and the world's only Double Elimination Egg Toss complete with practice round.

And the games just wouldn't be the same without the greased watermelon free-for-all. So far, we haven't completely killed anyone with this event, which is limited to folks who are at least 12 years old. For the younger crowd, we'll have the "Dive for Treasure and Trinkets" competition in the shallow end of the swimming area.

Prizes this year are everybody's favorites: cash, cash, and more cash!

By the way, I'm always open to new ideas for the games. If you have a suggestion, just give me a call or shoot me an email.

I look forward to seeing all of you at this year's picnic!

- Buddy Brinkley

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Your current board has had some excellent and really unprecedented success at collecting the association's annual dues. That is what the "good" is about. We have a record low number of unpaid accounts. This effort has been spearheaded by our outgoing Treasurer, Karen Skiff, and has resulted in the GLRA exceeding our budgeted dues by over \$5,000!

The "bad" comes from the fact there are still over 32 homeowners that have unpaid dues, down from 55 in 2008! This represents a reduction of over 40% in less than two years. However, there are still 18 homeowners that are delinquent for the current year. We hope that will be able to persevere and continue to convert these folks to paid status.

The "ugly" stems from the fact that GLRA bylaws dictate that we pursue legal action against delinquent accounts. Unfortunately there are 4 accounts in this status. These accounts are in such significant arrears that legal action was the only remaining recourse and we have already received favorable results in the majority of these cases and are optimistic on obtaining judgments against the remainder.

GLRA Board Members & Officers

Gary Marozas (President) 642-5026
Bob Mell (Vice President) 642-8423
Allen Taylor (Secretary/Newsletter) 221-8580
Karen Skiff (Treasurer) 643-0190
Bill Mathison 643-3035
Buddy Brinkley 642-0281
Vickie Murray 643-3456
Rick Samundsen 335-2109
Johnny Spears (Recreation Manager) 502-1458
Susanna King (Webmaster) 649-6168