

DEEP CREEK DISPATCH

Fall, 2005

Newsletter of the
Property Owners' Association
of Deep Creek Lake, Incorporated

President's Message

It was the summer of 1969 that my wife Beth and I first had the privilege of visiting Deep Creek Lake and Garrett County. Our friends Paul and Karen Ricker, whom we had just met upon moving to Pittsburgh from Minnesota, took us on a camping trip to Deep Creek Lake State Park. Paul remembered camping at the state park when he was a Boy Scout in Bethesda, MD, in the mid 1950's and thought we'd enjoy the lake and woods.

Well, the rest is history. We fell in love with Deep Creek Lake at first sight and through a steady and exciting series of events we became property owners and ultimately full time residents and small business owners. Our three children, all grown and with families of their own, treasure the times when they return to the Lake for a visit.

Your board has asked me to serve as president of our organization as we continue to be an advocate for the preservation and perpetuation of the values that are important to property owners of the Deep Creek Lake and surrounding Garrett County. The Honorable Fred Thayer, who has just concluded his term as president, has served our organization with the highest degree of service and achievement. His shoes are big ones to fill, but with your help we will continue our high level of service to you, our membership.

As our area continues to grow, several issues face us that require our attention and involvement. They include: ERM's Report and *Recommendations Regarding Deep Creek Watershed Growth and Planning Study*, sewer system expansion, U.S. 219 bypass, *Deep Creek Lake Boating and Commercial Use Carrying Capacity Study*, wind turbines, and Deep Creek Lake Policy and Review Board issues. Visit our web site www.DeepCreekLakePOA.com for more information.

I am very excited about the present and future of Deep Creek Lake and Garrett County. I have wit-

nessed and experienced strong understanding and co-operation among diverse interest groups. I have seen them work together to resolve issues and strive for the common good of Garrett County. We can have growth and development and maintain our desirable quality of life with planning, discernment and compassion.

As your president, my goal is to serve you at the best of my ability. Please contact any board member or me to express your concerns, voice your opinions, or volunteer your time and talents to make Deep Creek Lake and Garrett County a better place to live.

Scott Johnson, POA President

Gypsy Moths

At a recent meeting of the Garrett County Commissioners, Bob Tichenor, chief of forest pest management of the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), reported that they are seeing a large increase in gypsy moth egg clusters in the county. Normally a gypsy moth egg sack contains approximately 400 eggs but this year the sacks are containing twice to three times as many. The moths normally lay their eggs at the end of July and they hatch as caterpillars the following April.

Mr. Tichenor asked for the county's assistance in funding a survey to determine what areas within Garrett County are most affected so that the Maryland MDA can establish a spraying program that will be conducted in May 2006. The commissioners agreed that the issue is one of great importance to the county and agreed to fund the study. Citizens are requested to report gypsy moth sightings to the MDA's Cumberland office (301) 777-3601. Additional information on gypsy moths including photographs can be found by entering "gypsy moth" in the search box on the MDA website www.mda.state.md.us.

POA August 20th Meeting — Bears

One of the highlights of the August 20th POA General Meeting, was a presentation by Harry Speicher who is the Maryland DNR's Bear Biologist. Harry provided a great deal of information and many interesting and helpful facts about Garrett County's bears. We are located in the best bear habitat in Maryland and while a study currently underway will provide a more accurate number by next spring, Harry estimates that there are about 500 bears in the Garrett/Allegany County area. Bear sows have a range of about 15 square miles while males have a larger range of 25 to 50 square miles. Bears are extremely lazy, but are very intelligent and their prime motivation is to find an easy food source. If a bear can find a bird feeder or a garbage can where they can dine, they select this rather than foraging for acorns all night. Bears are very good at passing their knowledge of food sources on to their offspring.

An average number of cubs for a sow is three and sows give birth every other year. A sow has an average lifespan of 20 to 25 years. Bears have a very keen sense of smell and good eyesight. In general, black bears are not aggressive, but because they are large and powerful they can be dangerous. Bears that are comfortable being around people may not run away when you encounter them and pose an increased threat. It is important to keep trash containers and bird feeders inaccessible to bears to keep them away from your property. If you encounter a bear, it may make a loud huffing noise or swat at the ground indicating that it feels threatened. It may also lower its head, shake its ears, and on occasion may charge toward you, particularly when cubs are involved. Harry advised that if you encounter a bear that demonstrates signs of feeling threatened, the best course of action is to give the bear an escape path. You do not want to turn and run. You want to stand up and make yourself as big as possible. Speak to the bear in a loud and calm voice and back off the way you walked up on the bear.

Bird feeders attract bears so it is best to not feed birds except in the winter. During the other seasons the birds can get sufficient food easily. Hummingbird feeders are especially attractive with their sugar water. Bears are excellent climbers and can easily climb onto decks. Pet food is another major target of bears even if it is on a deck or in a garage or shed. Black bears are not true hibernators, which is an energy driven behavior and not weather driven. As long as bears are getting enough food in the winter they do not need to hibernate. In general, sows with yearlings will go into a den in November and males generally den in mid-December. In 2004 Maryland had its first black bear hunt in 51 years and another hunt was conducted from October 24-27, 2005

during which 40 bears were killed. The allowable success rate is set and carefully controlled and the hunt is stopped when the target range is achieved (the 2005 target range was 40 to 55 bears). The goal of the hunt is to stabilize the bear population in the area.

Harry provided attendees with a booklet titled "Learning to Live with Black Bears" and two other handouts "Black Bear Fact Sheet" and "What To Do if You Encounter a Black Bear". If you have any questions or want to report or discuss specific issues, contact Harry or any of the other qualified personnel at the DNR's Mt. Nebo office on (301) 334-4255.

Sewage System (Flush) Tax

The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fee (also known informally as the flush tax) was signed into law by Maryland's Governor in May 2004. The fee was assessed statewide in 2005 to sewage system users as well as to those on private septic systems. Residents on public sewer systems are billed \$2.50 per month, while a lump \$30 annual fee is collected from each home served by an onsite system. The bills to septic system users in Garrett County were mailed in October 2005.

Much of the \$77 million generated annually by this fee will be used to upgrade Maryland's wastewater treatment plants with enhanced technology to remove nutrients, namely phosphorus and nitrogen, from the plants' discharge and prevent it from entering the Bay. Nitrogen pollution is the largest problem facing the Bay, destroying habitat for plants and animals including underwater grasses, crabs, and oysters. Sixty percent of the funds collected from septic system users will be returned as grants to septic owners to upgrade their systems with pollution-reduction technology.

Brascan Power Company Meeting

On September 20, 2005, a meeting was held with management from Brascan Power Company, the new owners of the Deep Creek Lake Dam (Brascan purchased the dam and 442.8 acres of land from Reliant Energy on May 12, 2005 for \$7.5 million). Those in attendance from Garrett County included the Maryland DNR Acting Lake Manager Carolyn Matthews and two other DNR employees, representatives of the Deep Creek Lake Policy and Review Board, and three POA Board Members. Many subjects involving lake management were discussed including lake water levels and the rule bands, whitewater release schedules, and fishing water requirements. The message from Brascan was that they

want to maintain the status quo and operate the dam consistent with historical precedents. This is good news to all involved parties and we will continue to monitor their performance in maintaining the lake level within the rule bands.

Winter Thoughts

The early snow on October 24th reminds us that winter preparations are necessary for vacation homeowners. The extensive power outage in Garrett County made life difficult but fortunately the outside temperatures remained at or above freezing during the night and rose to the high thirties during the day. Had this electrical outage come in January or February, broken pipes and other freezing damage would have occurred in unoccupied homes where the water system had not been drained. It is wise for all part time residents to winterize their homes with the understanding that the electricity can go off and the resulting damage can be significant. Even full time residents need to have a plan to keep the interior heated when the furnace, boiler, or electric heaters don't work because the electricity is off.

Propane safety is important all year but special attention needs to be paid during the cold months when many residents use propane for heating. An odor is added to the propane gas in your tank so that you can smell it if it escapes because of a leak in the system or if an appliance malfunctions. However, some people are unable to detect the odor, or colds and congestion have diminished their sense of smell, or the propane sometimes can lose its odor after months of not being used. Propane gas is extremely flammable and can result in an explosion if an ignition source is present (ignition sources include static electricity). Propane gas is heavier than air so you should sniff all around an appliance including near the floor before lighting. If you use propane gas in your home, it is important to be alert to the hazards.

If you heat your Deep Creek Lake home during the winter, costs will be much higher this year particularly if you use heating oil, natural gas, or propane. It wasn't long ago when electric heat was thought of as expensive but for this year the expected 6% increase in electric costs will be far below that of other types of heat which may be in the 30% to 60% range.

Windmills (PSC Hearing)

On September 29th, the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) held a public hearing to provide an opportunity for citizens to express their opinions on the proposed wind energy project on top of Backbone Mountain. About 100 people attended the meeting to present state-

ments to the Commission with opinions on both sides of the issue being expressed. The commission's role is to decide if a Certificate of Public Need and Convenience should be issued. This certificate is necessary for Synergics Wind Energy LLC of Annapolis to proceed with the project. In addition to the public meeting, the PSC has previously held four evidentiary hearings at which the parties involved can present testimony and call witnesses to support their position. Additional evidentiary hearings will be held in Baltimore and a decision will follow, perhaps by year-end.

Miscellaneous Items of Interest

As most of you know, Holy Cross was sold last year to a group of Garrett County individuals who have subsequently laid out a subdivision plat of 30 lots to be sold. The Reserve At Holy Cross sold their first lot in June and as of mid-October, 20 of the 30 lots had been sold. The sales prices have ranged from \$450,000 for the least expensive of the lake access lots to \$1,150,000 for the most expensive of the lake front lots.

A home in Pergin Farm has been listed for sale at \$4.1 million, which is almost twice the previous record listing price for a single-family residential property at Deep Creek Lake. The home is located on 2.15 acres with 400 feet of lakefront and includes a separate two-bedroom guesthouse and a tennis court on the property.

Swan Boat Returns

Many of you probably noticed the return of the swan boat last summer thanks to Mark Madson and family from Thousand Acres (and Pittsburgh) and craftsmen Ervin and Ben Sweitzer of Grantsville. The original swan boat was designed and built by Noel Obenshain (known to all as Obie) and launched July 1, 1964. From that time until the swan boat was "retired" in 1991 because of aging, the boat carried over 7,000 passengers. Several years ago after an extensive search of the lake area, Mark and his son Mac found the swan boat but its condition was very bad and beyond repair. At that point the decision was made to build a new swan boat using the original as the pattern along with photographs, drawings, and notes from Obie who had died in 1994.

For anyone who wants to know more of the history of the original swan boat or the building of the new swan boat, there is an excellent article by Dan Whetzel in the Spring/Summer 2005 issue of **Mountain Discoveries** (a free publication distributed many places in Garrett County). Also there is a delightful recent article in **The Republican** by Joan Crawford titled "Of Swans and Obie" on page C-3 in the September 15, 2005 edition.

POA Board Members

Lou Battistella, Secretary '07 301-387-2094
 Lbatt859@aol.com

Michael Belmonte '06 301-387-6371

Louise Conjura '07 301-387-5857
 lconjura@gcnetmail.net

Dale Copeland '06 301-533-0469
 pattyanddale@verizon.net

Troy Ellington '08 301-387-9232
 troyellington@mindspring.com

Katheryn Gemberling '07 301-384-2850
 VP Planning kgember@aol.com

Scott Johnson, President '06 301-387-8547
 scott.johnson@coldwellbanker.com

Jonathan Kessler '06 301-387-6229
 Smiley@smileysfunzone.com

Ed King '08 301-387-5702
 ed.king@longandfoster.com

Marge Mahood '07 301-387-5885
 mahood@gcnetmail.net

W. Tom Myers, Treasurer '08 301-387-9162
 tom@mountaineerlog.com

Bill Nickles, VP Membership .. '06 301-387-2506
 BillNickles@hotmail.net

Carole Perez '08 301-387-5406
 clperez@mindspring.com

Ted Rissell '08 301-387-6463
 tedriss@earthlink.net


Robert Sutton '08 301-387-4957
 rasutton@nautico.net

Fred Thayer '07 301-387-9439
 fthayer@mindspring.com

Roger Titus, Senior VP '07 301-365-2930
 judge_roger_titus@mdd.us.courts.gov

Barry Weinberg '06
 weinutr@verizon.net

Property Owner's Association of
 Deep Creek Lake, Inc.
 P. O. Box 816, McHenry, MD 21541

**DEEP
 CREEK
 DISPATCH** 

PRESORTED
 FIRST-CLASS MAIL
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Terra Alta, WV
 Permit 101