

# Lake Chaffee Chatter

Official newsletter of your Lake Chaffee Improvement Association, Inc.

October 2009

And remember to visit our website: <http://www.LakeChaffee.org>

## Weeds Be Gone

It's only natural that this issue mention our lake weeds once or twice... Weed abundance this year (as well as the weather) impaired the enjoyment most of us derive from simply looking at the water much less our ability to boat, fish and swim.

Over the years, many solutions have been discussed but few actually tried – until this year.

In August residents in the northeast corner of the lake in conjunction with Ralph Graziola, used a LAKE ROTOTILLER (<http://youtube.com/watch?v=Rzc3aH0Kpjo>) to literally rip a 4-foot wide swath of weeds out of the lake bottom. In use it was filled with pea-gravel, lowered to the bottom, then dragged behind a boat. Adjacent lakefront owners then raked up the floating weeds when they drifted shoreward.

At the same time, residents in the southwest corner engaged the Blackmer family (Circle Drive) to cut their lake weeds with a LAKE WEED MOWER, rake the floating cuttings to shore and haul the stuff away. Also creating a 4-foot wide swath, Blackmer's device cut the water weeds as much as 5-feet below the surface (most neighbors were happy with just the top 2-feet gone). The mower attached to a boat just like a trolling motor, the marine battery connected and the 4'-wide cutter bar lowered to the desired depth. (<http://youtube.com/watch?v=B1JzXcOB8pQ>).

## The Lake Chaffee Fleet

Unlike Loch Ness, Lake Chaffee isn't home to monster waterlife. What we do see, however, is an ever-evolving fleet of watercraft. Among this year's most notable is the "Gill Getter" acquired by Ralph Graziola (Lakeview Dr.). Until the weeds made passage impossible, the Graziola's and their guests had become a familiar evening sight, easily running up and down the lake powered by its 82-pound (thrust), 24-volt electric drive (<http://gillgetter.com>).



## Fanta-Sea Islands?

In late June and early July you may have noticed a couple extra "islands" beyond the dock at 29 Shorefront.

In anticipation of hosting her nephew's graduation party and the entire E.O. Smith football team, Kari Olson purchased pro-grade inflatables on-line (<http://www.goaviva.com/>) and anchored them just like any of the dozen or so swim rafts that usually appear around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. One was for the younger kids – another for the burly graduates. The **Orbit Katapult**, **Glider** and **Floating Trampoline** may have set a new standard for water toys at Lake Chaffee.



**PLEASE RESPECT THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS**  
Boats, docks, swimming/diving rafts and inflatables like those shown above are personal, *not* public, property.  
Don't assume it's OK – **ASK FOR PERMISSION**

The Cons of . . .

**Seasonal Lake Drawdown**

By Diana Murray – Environmental Chair

*During each August Budget Meeting, the membership votes on the question of IF, WHEN and HOW MUCH to lower the lake. This year's membership decision was to lower the lake by four feet beginning on Columbus Day. As a follow-up to the May newsletter article on the "pros" of seasonal lake draw-down, let's look at the opposing point of view.*

By lowering the level of the lake we can disturb the aquatic ecosystem. The benthic or bottom dwelling species of invertebrates which provide nutrition for the fish, water fowl and amphibians may be displaced by less desirable species. The resultant reduction of aquatic plant life could also be considered undesirable due to the loss of the food and habitat for the various species of creatures named above. These same animals experience a reduction in aerated physical space to occupy and may experience die off.



With the exposure of large areas of sediment, undesirable shoreline vegetation may distribute seeds into this fertile area. The most common invasive border plants are cattails and rush. The frost resistant undesirable aquatic plants like the variety of pondweed we have in abundance can also propagate. Some literature suggests that draw-downs be consigned to every other or third year to limit the intrusion of these border plants. Another negative effect of draw-down is the potential for loss of hibernating amphibians and reptiles.

Draw-down can have similar effects upon the habitat of connected wetlands. Loss of aesthetic appeal and erosion of shoreline property may also be noted. Before refill the opportunities for recreational use like fishing and boating can be limited. There is also a potential for damage to docks, outlet structures and retaining walls from hard freezes.

In some areas, draw-down may contribute to larger algae blooms after refill. The time it takes for the lake to recoup the water loss can vary from climate to climate. Our area can usually expect to regain most of the water lost by spring with rainfall and snow melt completing refill.

The negative effects on the areas downstream can reduce flood storage capacities, create erosion of lower waterways and possibly effect water treatment facilities.

There seem to be good reasons for and against seasonal lake draw-down.

Also see "Lake Chaffee Dam Valve Project".

**Your Neighbor's Business**

*Unseen, unheard, yet our Lake Chaffee community is home to more than a dozen businesses permitted under LCIA's Home Occupation Ordinance and Ashford zoning regulations. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> of a series of articles about these invisible enterprises, officially referred to as "home occupations", that are the livelihood of many of our neighbors.*

No signs hint at its presence. From the outside, nobody would ever know that 62 Westford Drive is home to a thriving 20 year-old business.

Trained as a paralegal, our neighbor Brenda Chisholm isn't really sure how she became an entrepreneur.



State-licensed and an ACCESS participant, Brenda provides home daycare for up to 6 full-time and 3 part-time children between the ages of 6 weeks and 9 years. That means changing diapers, hours at the bus stop and providing breakfast, lunch and snack for many hungry mouths. But, she notes, "If you get a good group of kids together, it's really fun..."

Brenda, husband Ed and their children have resided at Lake Chaffee since 1987, first on Amidon Drive and then on Westford Drive. Brenda and Ed are active in association projects, activities and are members of the LCIA Board of Directors.

**Beach Improvements & Maintenance**

By Sandra Moquin – Beach Chair

Greetings members, I hope all of you had a swell summer. I would like to improve the main beach next year and would like to give you an idea of what items cost.



Sand for the beach runs approximately \$280.00 for 17 yards which is one truck load. Signs for the fence are running about \$65.00 plus tax/ each. We are in dire need of new buoys however, I have not yet received a quote for them. If anyone knows where they can be purchased for a good price; please feel free to call me at 487-3619.

Update: The dock and the buoys will be removed within the next 2 weeks.

Raking can be done any time by any one. No permission is **required**. **All you need is a rake and some friends to help.**

If you like, call me and I'll be glad to bring down some coffee.

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Lake Chaffee  
**Dam Valve Project**

By Ralph Sherman, Ad Hoc Dam Committee Chair

During last year's lake lowering (November 2009), Mike Malone and Rich Rodrigue reported that the valve used to control the release of water from the lake into Chaffee Brook was broken and on the verge of failing. In the short term this means that using the valve to lower the lake again risks failure of the valve in the OPEN position, draining the lake well below typical target levels of 2, 3, or 4 feet.

There is also risk that untouched, the valve will continue to deteriorate and still fail, draining the lake like a bathtub – as things like this go...probably at the most inopportune time.

A number of solutions, both long and short term, have been discussed. Some funding, set aside for dam-related emergencies over the course of many years, is available.

At the August Budget Meeting (see minutes to the 8/16/09 meeting), the membership voted to (1) investigate cost, design and availability of more permanent and manageable solutions

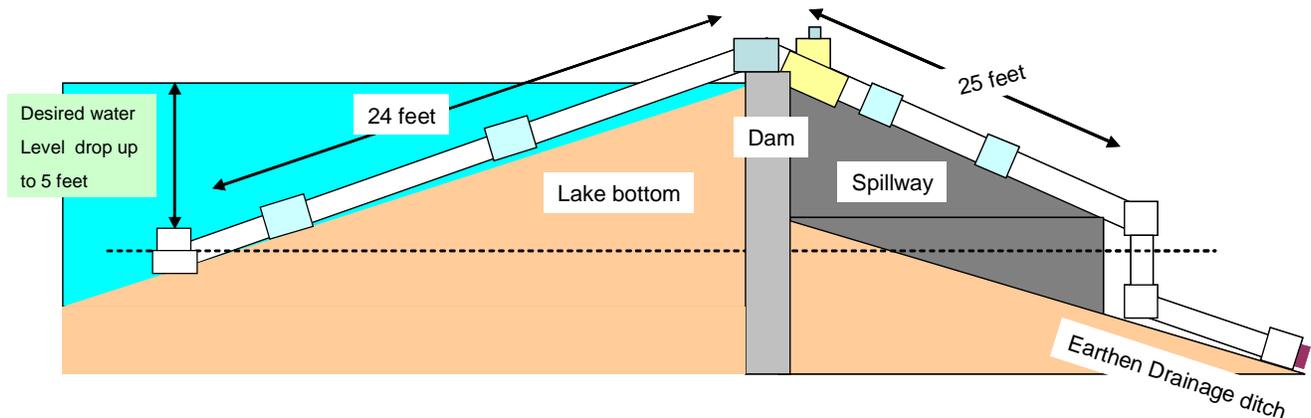
and, (2) for THIS YEAR, lower the lake water level by four feet starting on Columbus day using a temporary siphon process (pictured below).

The board has requested that I, as chair of the *ad hoc* Dam Valve Project, ensure that the lake lowering commences on schedule using a siphon or similar temporary solution and, more importantly, draft and plan and obtain cost estimates for the long-term fix.

If you have time or experience to share with the cause, please contact me, Ralph Sherman, by phone at 429-2623 or by E-mail at [rsher0001@hotmail.com](mailto:rsher0001@hotmail.com).



Above: Spillway at our dam from the lake side.. Below: siphone plan.



In order to get to the desired 5 feet depth the lake side pipe must be 24 feet in length from the top of the dam

In order to attain 5 foot desire drainage spillway pipe must extend down

Design includes being able to secure the pipes together for easy assembly and storage

Dam opening is 109" wide

Spillway length is @24 feet and drops off to an earthen drainage area below

Spillway board thickness is 2x4 (2.25")

Current drain pipe is 9.5" diameter, to replicate near approximate speed of drainage 3 or 4 siphons would be needed

Not to scale



**Around the Lake**  
**Weeds and Fish**

By Bob Layton, Newsletter Chair & Webmaster

I doubt if any will argue that this year’s lake weed crop is the worst in memory. Between an early ice melt-off, crystal clear water and an ever-decreasing lake depth, conditions were perfect for a bumper crop: plenty of sunlight and a fertile ooze of organics at the bottom.

In August my electric trolling motor burned out during a futile effort to go from one end of the lake to the other. Rowing back through the weed patch (that should have been Lake Chaffee), I took little solace in recalling that July’s Extension Service survey revealed “...no exotic invasive species...”

On the other hand, did this year’s weeds contribute to producing some of the largest bass seen here in a long, long time (one caught in early September reportedly weighed in at 6.3 pounds, witnessed by members of two families but not certified with a photo)? If indeed larger, was it because as the weeds thickened, the number of fishermen (and their patience level) declined? Was it because of the association’s long-practiced autumn lake-lowering? And is it just coincidence that last year, we stocked adult bass and bluegill for the first time in more than five years? Or was this year’s good fishing just a rumor?

Upper left: Employees of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station survey the lake weeds at Lake Chaffee in July (special exemption granted for 1-time use of gasoline engine during survey). Upper right: Kyle Magowan & Steven Blackmer (Circle Drive) removing floating weeds at Layton’s (Lakeview) in August. Lower right: Taylor Jenkins, grandaughter of Mark & Denise Krom (Lakeview) with her 18” bass pulled in on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

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## Bits & Pieces

On behalf of the LCIA Board of Directors

### Lake Chaffee Hall and Bingo

- We need volunteers to help work in the kitchen and on the bingo floor on Saturday nights. The more people that volunteer the less work that you have to do!
- Kay Warren has asked that everyone avoid car parking at Chaffee Hall on Saturdays from 4 to 10 pm. We need what space we have available for the bingo players and workers.
- Bingo workers are volunteers. They give up their Saturday nights, month after month, to help pay for our lake and our roads. Treat them with respect. Personally, I'm in awe of those who do.

### Home Occupation Permits

- Gary & Linda Smith have applied for a Home Occupation Permit
- Linda makes lotions & soaps, selling her product at the farmer's market
- Gary is a licensed massage therapist.

### Beaches, Boat Launches & Islands

- When using any of our association beaches, islands or boating facilities, PLEASE
- NO glass containers.—
- Remove all of the stuff you arrive with – the islands, beaches and boat launch do NOT have garbage pickup.

### Stuff Rolls Down Hill . . . .

- Over use of fertilizers helps perpetuate weed growth and algae blooms.
- Use of phosphate-free detergent is one thing we can all do to reduce lake weeds and algae
- De-icing chemicals end up in our lake;
- Insecticides, fungicides, herbicides...you know where they end up as well
- Please remember that when our kids are in the lake, they're playing in whatever we spread over, sprayed on or flushed down a few weeks before
- At best, putting turtles, fish and boats from other bodies of water into Lake Chaffee will have minimal impact. **AT WORST**, it could result in the lake being choked with invasive plants like Crystal Lake (August 5, 2009 Journal Inquirer) and the current fishery lost to disease, starvation or new predators.

### Newsletter Savings & E-mail Addresses

- Want your next issue of Lake Chaffee Chatter in color? Just agree to receive future newsletters via E-Mail. Email us: [laytons@lakechaffee.org](mailto:laytons@lakechaffee.org), provide your e-mail address, name, street address and say "YES, E-mail my newsletter"
- Each paper copy of this newsletter, delivered to your mailbox, costing your Lake Association about 85¢. If you don't care about the color, help us save a buck for use on other things (like fixing the dam). Email us: [laytons@lakechaffee.org](mailto:laytons@lakechaffee.org), provide your e-mail address, name, street address and say "YES, E-mail my newsletter"

- OK...even if you want to continue receiving the paper version, send us your E-mail address so that the directory on our website is up-to-date. In the future, we will send our membership meeting notices via e-mail as well as by snail-mail.
- AND every year, the May issue of the newsletter incorporates the dates, times and agendas for all three summer membership meetings. If you're NOT receiving your copy, let us know. All newsletters are also available in the archives section of our website: <http://www.LakeChaffee.org>.

### Roads

- Your lake association board of directors asks you to ensure that the tress and shrubs in your yard do not restrict visibility or access by passing vehicles. Don't let an overgrown forsythia or rhododendron (or whatever) lead to a tragedy.

### Soaring With Eagles

The photo below was taken on about 4:30 on August 30th from the yard at 147 Lakeview looking eastward across the cove toward Amidon Drive.

We saw a large bird with white head come from the north end of the lake, landing on the branch of a tree in Peter & Cathy Gidman's yard (9 Amidon Dr.). While we futzed around looking for binoculars and then a camera, it proceeded to eat whatever had been in it's talons and remained here for a good ten minutes.

The eagle was more than 400 feet away; photo hastily taken with a Sony digital camera with 15X optical telephoto.



**Please – if you see interesting wildlife, particularly animals that seem rare in these parts, send us a picture and tell us about it.**

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