

# Lake Views

*The newsletter of the Yahara Lakes Association*

March • 2011

## A Message from YLA's 2011 President, Dick Adler

At the YLA January Board meeting, the Board of Directors elected new officers to lead the association for 2011. The 2011 officers are Dick Adler, President; Chuck Gates, President Elect; Carol Gillen, Secretary; and Mike Gerner, Treasurer. Louisa Enz, Past President will also serve in a leadership role.



In December of this year, Eileen Bruskewitz resigned from the board and YLA would like to thank her for her eight years of dedicated service.

The YLA 2011 strategic plan is dedicated to representing lake property owners and advocating for the vitality of the chain of lakes for the enjoyment of all citizens.

Yahara Lakes Association will continue to focus on water quality, lake level management and flooding, weed cutting, invasive species and aquatic life management, storm water and infiltration management, and water safety and enforcement. Again this year, the board will continue to be active with legislation and regulation that affects the Yahara chain of lakes.

All members are cordially invited to hear more about YLA activities at the annual meeting planned for June 21 at the Blackhawk Country Club. This is an ideal time to get together with other lakeshore property owners and discuss how we are protecting our wonderful and valuable Yahara chain of lakes. It will be a fun time so mark your calendars and bring along your neighbors. Hope to see you in June.

*Dick was elected to the YLA Board in 2007 and has lived on Squaw Bay of Lake Monona for 19 years. He joined American Family right out of college and had a 43 year career before his retirement.*

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## "Lake Views" Coming Via Email

Thanks to all the YLA members who have sent us their emails. Out of 473 members, we now have email for 362 of you. So, we need a few more of you to contact our office at [yla@mailbag.com](mailto:yla@mailbag.com) to give us your email address. We don't want you to miss out on any future lake news or events.

We will be sending out "Lake Views" by both paper and email for this and the May issues. After May, only members who tell us they do not have access to email will continue to receive information through the regular mail. We greatly appreciate your help with this transition.

## YLA Addresses Flooding Problems

By Chuck Dykman

On February 7th, YLA Board members, Mike Gerner, Chuck Dykman and Joe Tisserand met with Dane County Executive, Kathleen Falk, her Chief of Staff, Topf Wells, and Kevin Connors, Administrative Director with the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department, to discuss two concerns.

The first was the effect of the Stoughton dam on Monona, Waubesa and Kegonsa lake levels. YLA wanted the county to lower the Stoughton dam water level this winter to determine whether the 3 lakes would drop by an identical amount. Last summer, the Stoughton dam operator lowered the dam, but YLA believes that weed growth in the river affected the results.

The second issue is the interpretation of the DNR operating order on when Lake Kegonsa is brought to "summer low" level. Mr. Connor interprets the order as requiring the filling process to be completed by the first spring run off after March 1. YLA interprets the order as requiring the filling process to begin with the first spring run off after March 1. YLA believes that the effect of Dane County's interpretation of the DNR order increases the possibility of flooding after spring rains.

YLA will continue to work with the county on the interpretation of the operating order, and methods to alleviate flooding and lake quality.

# Details of Lake Property Numbering System

By Sue Jones, Dane County  
Lakes and Watershed Commission Staff

The Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission and the Dane County Sheriff's Department, working with the Dane County Land Information Office and Dane County Public Safety Communications, have created a lake property numbering system to provide a more rapid response to emergencies and enhance the personal safety of everyone who uses the lakes.

Each lakeshore property on Lakes Mendota, Monona, Waubesa and Kegonsa has been assigned a unique "lake address." The Mendota addresses begin with the letter "A"; Monona with "B"; Waubesa "C"; and Kegonsa "D". These numbers have been cross-referenced in the 911-computer system with the property street address.

This is an entirely voluntary program. As of fall 2009, just over 30% of the properties in the Yahara River chain of lakes have posted lake property numbering signs. The highest rate of participation is on Lake Kegonsa, where almost 40% of the properties have been posted.

With this system in place, a boater in distress can report his or her location by cell phone using the nearest lake property "address" as a reference point. Similarly, a landowner who observes an emergency on the water can dial 911 and the dispatcher will be able to translate the street address to a water location. For an emergency in a lakefront home, the nearest response may be the Sheriff's recreation patrol.

An added benefit to lakeshore residents is the easier location of their home and the homes of their friends on the water.

If you aren't already participating in this voluntary program, watch for a mailing this spring from the Office of Lakes and Watersheds. That letter will indicate your property's lake property number and tell you where to purchase a sign and letters/numbers. Most of the sign purchase locations are in your town or local municipality.

Any questions about this program should be

## Mark Your Calendars April 1<sup>st</sup> is the Deadline for Pier Registration

By Chuck Dykman

Just a reminder before the ice is off the lake and we are back to soft water boating. Most riparian piers will not require grandfathering. But, if you have any of the following, you will need to submit an application to the DNR to grandfather your pier no later than April 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Water depth more than 3 feet at the lake end of your pier
- More than 2 boat hoists for the first 50 feet of lake frontage
- Deck width and size more than 8 feet wide or 300 square feet

If you have any questions whether your pier is in compliance with the regulations, you can:

- Use the DNR website <http://dnr.wi.gov/>
- Read the Wisconsin Statute 30.12 (1k) or
- Review the article, "Grandfathering your Pier, How and When" in the December 2010 YLA newsletter, available on the YLA website [www.yaharalakes.org](http://www.yaharalakes.org)

The forms you need to file can be found on the DNR website.

# YLA Membership Drive

YLA represents lake property owners and advocates for the vitality of the lakes, so everyone can enjoy them. In 2010, the association gained new members after a board membership drive. But we need your help to get out the word about YLA. Talk with your neighbors and invite them to join. A membership form is available on the YLA website or you can obtain one by calling the YLA office at 848-9008.

This year, the YLA member who brings in the most new members will be recognized at the annual meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup> and receive a \$50 gift certificate. Don't forget to put your name on the form as the person who recruited the members. We hope you are the one who is recognized at the annual meeting.

## University of Wisconsin's National Science Foundation Grant and YLA Involvement

UW professors from natural and social sciences, engineering, zoology, and limnology, and who are also associated with the Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies, have received a 5-year National Science Foundation Grant of nearly \$5 million. The grant will study the links between the water system and other factors including land and human use, climate change and development. The study will focus on the Yahara watershed and Madison's lakes. There will be an integrated approach combining scientific modeling, field data collection, public input, outreach and education. More information about the grant can be found on <http://www.news.wisc.edu/18823>

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, YLA board members Chuck Dykman, Sal Troia and Doug Bach met with Professor Chris Kucharik, who spearheaded the grant, and Gregg Mitman, Director of the Nelson Institute to discuss YLA involvement in the outreach part of the grant. YLA is waiting for an official commitment from the investigators.

## The "1<sup>st</sup>" Lake

By Ray Potempa, YLA Board Member

When Dane County was initially surveyed in the 1800's, the surveyors named the Yahara Lakes starting from the southern most lake as "1<sup>st</sup>" lake and preceded northward with 2, 3, and 4. Later, the Legislature renamed the Yahara Lakes to their current names with "1<sup>st</sup>" lake becoming Lake Kegonsa. Many Madisonians are still unfamiliar with this lake and its size, but it is only about 70 acres smaller than Monona.

With Lake Kegonsa being split in half by the Town of Dunn and the Town of Pleasant Springs, and residents being associated either with McFarland or Stoughton, the sense of community was lost. In 1987, a group of residents searching for some lake identity formed a voluntary lake association with the purpose of maintaining and/or improving conditions of the lake and its recreational value. The name selected was the Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society, Inc., or better know as "FOLKS".

Historically, FOLKS membership averages about 350 households or approximately 60% of the lake-shore properties. Some of its activities over the years have been:

- Securing lake planning grant money to study the effectiveness of the Door Creek Wetland which was instrumental in supporting Dane County's establishment of the Door Creek Wetland Protection Area.
- Supporting agricultural runoff abatement projects around the Lake
- Constructing and placing approximately 300 "fish cribs" in the Lake to support fishing activities
- Sponsoring voluntary boat inspections and annual boat safety classes
- Providing funding for picnic and playground equipment in County and Town parks.

Annually, four newsletters keeps the membership informed on current activities with frequent emailed "Lake Alerts" on time sensitive lake issues.

Recognizing Lake Kegonsa as part of a much larger waterway, FOLKS has maintained representation on the Yahara Lakes Association's Board for many years and has been active with DNR and Dane County on lake issues. Please see [www.kegonsa.org](http://www.kegonsa.org) for more information on Lake Kegonsa.

*Ray has served on the YLA Board since 2003 and has lived on Lake Kegonsa since 1984. Ray was instrumental in starting FOLKS.*

# Getting to Know Your YLA Board Member

By Carol Gillen

Mike Gerner and his family have lived on Lake Mendota in the town of Westport since 1988. Mike was drawn to lake living since he and his family spent summers on Big Cedar Lake. He has been an avid water skier most of his life, and he continues to get together with his “old guys water skiing group” during the summer. Mike is a CPA and recently retired from a career with Grant Thornton.

Mike had concerns about reduced lake access due to flooding and decreased water quality. He wanted to be part of a group that could make changes in the area lakes and sought election to the Yahara Lakes Association board. Since his election in 2004, Mike has been a very active board member, serving as Vice President in 2006, President in 2007, and Treasurer since 2008. Mike was also a member of the 2008 YLA Lake Conference Subcommittee that put together the speakers and topics for that conference.

Lake water quality and lake level management are of high interest and importance to Mike. Shortly after becoming a YLA board member, he wrote a position paper on the factors affecting lake flooding and water quality. He believes that agricultural runoff is one of the key factors affecting water quality and has worked with the county toward improving controls and permits.

Mike’s vision for the lakes is to implement a prioritized action plan with funding options to improve water quality. He feels that he and YLA have been effective in getting out the message on lake priorities by sponsoring a lake conference, co-sponsoring the Nelson Institute lecture series, and maintaining direct contacts with Dane county, the city of Madison and the Department of Natural Resources.

Over the last few years, Mike has developed charts on water levels and outflows in the Yahara

chain of lakes. He has used that data to discuss strategies with county representatives on managing winter/summer levels and the effects of the Stoughton dam on lake levels. He has been one of the key YLA board members working in this area.

The YLA is fortunate to have Mike as a board member. He generously gives his time and expertise to represent riparian interests and improve the Yahara chain of lakes.

## Currents

If you have events, news, ideas, or websites to share with your fellow YLA members, please contact Carol Gillen at [ca.gillen@charter.net](mailto:ca.gillen@charter.net) or 692-0925.

\*\*\*A lake blog is now posting bi-weekly information about Yahara lake level management strategies and information. The blog was developed at the request of a number of Dane County Supervisors to better communicate with constituents. Please go to <http://lake-levels.blogspot.com/> to see the current listings. More information on lake levels can be found at: <http://countyofdane.com/lwr/landconservation/lakelevelpg.aspx>

\*\*\*The YLA website [www.yaharalakes.org](http://www.yaharalakes.org) is good site to access updated lake level information and links to lake related sites.

\*\*\*The 2011 Wisconsin Lakes Convention, “Speaking for the Lakes” will be held April 12-14 at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay. If you or your neighbors would like to go, please see details about registration at: [www.wisconsin-lakes.com](http://www.wisconsin-lakes.com)

\*\*\*The Nolan Centennial Project is a developing a master plan for the John Nolen corridor. Tim Metcalf, Chair, has put together a community task force to develop ideas. The project website is [www.nolencentennialproject.org](http://www.nolencentennialproject.org).



## NEWSLETTER

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**Yahara Lakes Association, Ltd. is a non-profit organization of over 700 members dedicated to representing Lake property owners and advocating for the vitality of the Yahara chain of lakes so that all citizens may enjoy them.**

### **2011 YAHARA LAKES ASSOCIATION, LTD. BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Membership Committee  
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*Call 848-9008 if you would like to become involved in any of the above-listed committees, or if you have concerns you would like a committee to address.*