



The Oak Leaf

www.oakwoodlakes.us

August 2004

Steak by the Lake Recovery Celebration

Saturday, September 11th, 3pm

Cost \$10.00 per person

Kids under 5 Free!

Enjoy the music of the US1 Band!

Moon bounce for the kids!

The price includes steaks, clams, soft drinks and entertainment
BYOB and a salad or a dessert to share.

Please RSVP by Tuesday September 7th to:
Alison Simpson 654-1576

SUMMER PICNIC



DAM, LAKE AND BEACH REPORT

Our lake survived the 1000 year flood unlike many others. For that we can be thankful. Unfortunately our new dam sustained significant damage that will require substantial costly repairs. We have evaluated our options and feel that the best alternative is to seek a low interest loan through the Small Business Administration (SBA) under the disaster relief program. A SBA inspector has visited our dam for the benefit of our application and we expect to hear within the next few days if we are approved for the loan. We have requested \$100,000. The term would be over a 20 to 30 year period at 2.87% interest if approved. If this loan is not approved we will have to prepare an application for the loans available through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) for dams. This will take a much longer period of time for approval and will delay the repairs for at least 6 months to 1 year or more if we are approved. Our engineer is working on the plans for the repair to be submitted to NJDEP as soon as possible. We have been directed by the NJDEP to lower our lake until the dam is repaired. Specifically, we need to keep the lake below the spillway deck so that water will not overflow the deck area that has been damaged. This means that the lake will be about 12 inches below normal through this period.

The lake itself does not appear to have been seriously affected except for the various debris scattered and accumulated in various areas. The water moved with such current that there was little evidence of any significant siltation. In fact, the lake bottom mud in many areas was removed down to a sandy bottom with the mud as many of us are aware being deposited on our driveways and properties. It is too soon to determine if there has been any negative effect on the fish population but time will tell. The beach area needs repair mostly concerning erosion on sand in several areas. We will address this as soon as possible with the use of heavy equipment. Lake testing at the beach has indicated acceptable bacteriological results for the past 3 weeks including the week of August 22. We are not planning to have any life guard coverage for the remainder of the year. Several trustees including Jerry Oyen and

JUNE 2004

Mary Ann Brookes as well as several residents including Alan Budde put in countless hours and efforts power washing the shed and tennis courts from the muddy mess. Also a lot of effort was spent on retrieving lost community items from the creek below the dam. We did loose several picnic tables that we could not find or retrieve. These have been replaced.

Let's try to keep a positive attitude towards the recovery from this disaster. We were far more fortunate in many ways than our neighboring lake communities who may be without any lake for years. A total of 12 dams failed above our lake with all of that water impacting Oakwood Lakes. With some good fortune we may have our lake back to normal by Spring of next year.

Rich Schneidereit, OLCA Trustee

REPAIRING THE DAM

The Importance of Our Fees

Several years ago, Oakwood Lakes spent almost \$270,000 to repair our Oliphant Mill Dam. The project was essentially a replacement. As a result, ours was one of the few dams not destroyed during the flood. But it has been damaged and once again will need to be repaired. That brings us to Oakwood's fees.

Those who were here during the late 1990's will remember the struggle of trying to raise the money for the dam, to keep our lake and protect both our property values and our way of life. Since our deeds do not contain the legal obligation to pay fees, Oakwood is dependent on the moral obligation of our residents to contribute their fair share to the community that benefits all of our property values and our recreational facilities.

We have 36 acres of property that need to be maintained, including the dam, taxes, insurance, painting, grass cutting, fish restocking, tennis court and beach maintenance, etc. A lot of the work is done by volunteers, but equipment and supplies need to be purchased. Our annual fee income is around \$23,000 and we purposely structure the fees to maintain only a

moderate reserve, currently around \$42,000. Each year, we tackle one or two special projects, such as this year's new entrance signs.

History of the Certificate Program

After agonizing exploration of many options to get the dam repaired and keep our treasury viable, including special tax assessments, in 1997 we modified our by-laws to institute the certificate program, modeled after a Medford Lakes plan. Accordingly, residents who keep their fees up to date maintain their certificates active status and allow it to be transferred to a new owner. For a new certificate, the cost is \$1500. We try hard to get the transaction on the settlement table at sale time, sending letters to sellers and realtors and title companies, but sometimes, especially in private sales, a new owner gets surprised. We are more than willing to work with the new owners on payment arrangements over a few years.

The Tiered Fee Structure

We always had two levels of fees, providing a lower senior citizen rate. However, some residents were concerned because they didn't use any of the services. They didn't boat or fish, play tennis or use the beach. Enter the "basic rate," designed to cover the community costs not including life-guards, tennis court maintenance, restocking of fish, etc. So now we have the Full Service rate of \$150, the Basic Fee of \$110 and the Senior Fee of \$75. Our fees are the lowest in the area.

Dam Repairs

As you can see from the numbers, accumulating \$270,000 for the dam would have taken almost 12 years even if we had no other expenses. Most of our residents contributed to the special dam fund drive we had, but the funds were still significantly short of the total needed. We were very fortunate to have been able to obtain state grant money of \$200,000. That isn't going to happen this time around. All of the agencies have made it clear that there simply isn't money available other than loans, which must, of course, be repaid.

Bottom Line

It's important for us as a community

to keep our treasury healthy, to be able to maintain our property values by living up to the lake community expectations of ourselves and potential buyers. If each of the 270 residences in Oakwood Lakes contributes its fair share, we have no problem doing that, including paying back the loan required to repair our dam.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

There was destruction and loss of possessions, but thankfully the flood of July 12 did not cause any loss of life. While many of us were left with major clean up jobs and some with necessary rebuilding of their devastated homes, it was uplifting to experience the outpouring of concern and offers of help throughout the subsequent weeks.

Also noticed was the work put in by various residents to restore the mud-inundated Homeowners Association property (tennis courts, beach and picnic areas). Special thanks to Jerry Oyen of Pine Trail who tirelessly put himself on duty removing all that mud.

Nancy Easterly

Cedar Trail

Oakwood Lakes
would like to thank:

Medford Township Police

Medford Township
Public Works

The Red Cross

Local Church Groups

Family, Friends and
Neighbors

For all their support during
and after the flood



The Oak Leaf

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Community Association
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Medford, NJ 08055

PRSR STD
POSTAGE PAID
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Permit No. 161

Your Oakwood Trustees

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David Volpe 953-5904

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Deb Margulies 953-0899

Alison Simpson 654-1576

Please feel free to contact any of your trustees for information and comments.

Call Vivian Gayol or e-mail at: vgayol@comcast.net about information, advertisements and announcements for the newsletter.

Oakwood Lakes Committees

Property Committee

Jerry Oyen, Chairman
654-7788

Playground Committee

Scott Taylor, Chairman
953-3285

Yard Sale Committee

Kathy Dempsey, Chairman
953-5767

Newsletter

Vivian Gayol, Editor
953-0279

Green Thumbs Garden Committee

June Fisher, Chairperson
714-0518

Social Events:

Summer Picnic

Chairperson - Open

Steak By The Lake

Chairperson - Open

WELCOME

We would like to welcome our new neighbors to Oakwood Lakes:

Michael and Lin Rubright
2 Holly Drive

Michael and Laurel Ross
53 Oakwood Drive

And a new addition:

Remi Walter
born 8/11/04
to parents:

Xavier and Danielle Walter

REMINDER

If you are not current with your fees and have a dock on Oakwood Lakes Homeowners Association Property (the lake bed), you must remove it.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Steak by the Lake September 11
Yard Sale October 16