

# Board of Trustees Report—January 2011

*Kathy Gilbert, President, Cottagers' Council*

The Board of Trustees met January 28<sup>th</sup> in Lansing and began with a devotion remembering Mary Ryckman, recently deceased board member, and her many contributions to Lake Louise. She is missed.

As you will recall, our November retreat focused on reviewing the Mission Statement and Core Values, Ministry Plan, and the Master Plan and Capital Campaign to determine progress, possible changes in priorities, and perhaps what should be added to keep LLCC on the path to achieving its goals. At this January board meeting, we concentrated solely on the Mission, Vision, and Core Values. We are in the process of updating them to say more succinctly what we are, our mission, and what we value. Thoughts were shared and a small committee will put them into draft form for us to review at our next board meeting.

Following are pertinent highlights of the board meeting:

- **The Forest Legacy Program** We will not hear anything about our 2009-2010 application until Congress adopts a 2011 budget. The application for 2010-2011 that we submitted was reviewed by a national panel in January. That panel's recommendation for the 2012 budget is confidential until the President's 2010 budget is made public this month. Given the current mood in Washington to cut budgets and prioritize spending, our expectations for funding are not as high as they were when we began our submissions, but we continue to be hopeful.
- **Development Plan (Capital Campaign), Phase 1** Halsted Lodge is completed and was occupied for the first time this past weekend. (Be sure to stop to see it—it's wonderful!) Plans are moving forward for breaking ground for McKay Lodge in early April as well as beginning construction this summer for Maryanna's Place.
- **Finances** Recent stock market rises continue to positively affect the financial health of LLCC. Revenue from retreats grew 22% in 2010. Some recent cancellations of retreats have caused a challenging start to retreat revenue for 2011, but we hope to make that revenue up in the months ahead as we continue to schedule (*see Marketing bullet*). Another financial challenge is receiving matching grants for donor contributions. Because regulations have tightened for businesses, etc. regarding contributions to religious and political organizations, we are not receiving some of the matching grants that we have in the past.
- **Marketing** Keeping our facilities in use year round with retreats, small conferences, and camps is key to our financial health. As Vaughn and Terry do outreach to further market what we offer, they are finding that many people are unaware that we are more than just a Methodist camp. Many people do not realize that we are also a retreat center and conference center, we operate year round, we are open to use by civic and business organizations, and that we are open to all denominations even though, of course, our main focus is Methodist. As one way to help us change this perception that is hindering use of our facilities, the board voted to change the wording only of our main entrance sign to better reflect what we are. We will also look at other ways to better market what we are.
- **Cottages and Loans** We are still in conversation with a local bank that has expressed some interest in financing leased property as some of the larger banks in this current economic crisis are not lending to leased property.

The Board of Trustees will meet next on April 15<sup>th</sup> at Lake Louise.

# Board of Trustees Report—April 2011

*Kathy Gilbert, President, Cottagers' Council*

---

The Board of Trustees held its meeting April 15<sup>th</sup> in the newly constructed Halsted Lodge at Lake Louise to fully experience the fruits of this new addition resulting from the Capital Campaign, Phase 1. It is a beautiful, inviting facility that is already receiving rave reviews from retreat groups!

The board spent the afternoon continuing our work begun in November reviewing the vision, mission, and core values statements as well as the ministry plan for LLCC. We reviewed the draft put forth by the vision, mission, and core values committee and offered suggestions for revision. Now that committee will take those suggestions into consideration and present a final form of the vision, mission, and core values to be voted on at the June meeting. In addition, we began work on updating the ministry plan. The ministry plan committee will put our thoughts into a draft plan for the board to review at its June meeting. Again, we are in the process of updating the vision, mission, core values and ministry plan to say more succinctly what we are, our mission, what we value, and how we plan to achieve our goals.

Following are pertinent highlights of the board meeting:

- **The Forest Legacy Program** If one has been following the budgeting process in Washington, it is easy for one to understand that our prospects for receiving funding in the near future through the Forest Legacy program are not looking positive. You'll recall from my last report we were waiting for the results of the national panel's recommendations of approved projects for 2010-2011. We now know that we did not make the list of the projects approved for Michigan. Vaughn will be meeting with representatives from the Little Traverse Conservancy and the DNR to determine next steps.
- **Marketing** Donations, camps, retreats, and conferences are key to our financial health, and it is imperative that we keep the use of our facilities as full as possible. As mentioned in my last report, many people do not realize that we are also a retreat center and conference center, we operate year round, we are open to use by civic and business organizations, and that we are open to all denominations even though, of course, our main focus is Methodist. In addition to changing the wording only of our main sign, banners will be posted near the sign communicating how our facilities can be used. Another important aspect of our marketing is an impressive new catalog of all the camps and retreats offerings (as well as brochures targeting key camps/retreats) that will be sent throughout the state to churches and conferences. As explained by Terry Gladstone, LLCC Program Director, LLCC has gone from basically a "renting" facility for retreats/camps to designing specific retreats/camps that can be marketed to a wider audience than just a specific church or conference. The catalog and brochures are designed and produced in the camp office.
- **Development Plan (Capital Campaign), Phase 1** We are a little more than halfway towards our 1.1 million dollar goal, and we are actively seeking donations to complete Phase 1. Ground has been broken for McKay Lodge and land cleared for construction of Maryanna's Place. A new sound system for Horner Lodge is also underway. Exciting things are happening!
- **Finances** Our finances are currently healthy, and it is important to increase revenue from camps, retreats, conferences, and donations to keep them that way. As mentioned before, because regulations have tightened for businesses, etc. regarding contributions to religious and political organizations, we are not receiving some of the matching grants that we have in the past.
- **Community Buy-In Fee** LLCC hired an appraiser to accurately assess the value of Lake Louise waterfront property at the request of cottagers and in light of declining values in the real estate market. The appraiser was very thorough, using three separate methodologies, reviewing values over three years, comparing Lake Louise values to waterfront properties elsewhere, taking into account the differences in valuation between Lake Louise frontage and waterfront properties elsewhere, and the market adjustments in such properties since 2008. Careful analysis led to a downward assessment of the value of Lake Louise frontage to \$1,700 per

running foot. The Board Trustees accepted that latest appraisal as the basis of the Community Buy-In Fee. A copy of the Community Buy-In Fee Policy can be requested from the office or can be viewed at Lake Louise's website at: [www.lakelouisecommunity.org](http://www.lakelouisecommunity.org)

- **Cottages and Loans** LLCC is in discussion with Bay View and two other associations that lease land for cottages to approach banks in the northern Michigan area regarding mortgages and financing.
- **Building Policy and Residential Regulations** These regulations have been updated and posted on the LLCC website ([www.lakelouisecommunity.org](http://www.lakelouisecommunity.org)). For clarity's sake, LLCC's long-standing policy on tree removal was included (*Lessees must have permission from the LLCC staff to remove any tree in excess of 6 inches at five feet above the ground and any tree of any size within 30 feet of the shoreline*) along with a section listing four sanctions for lessees who ignore the regulations. The first three sanctions are restated current county and township regulations, and the 4<sup>th</sup> sanction restates a clause from the residential lease and has been used by the Board in the past (*the Board and its agents have the right to place a lease and leaseholder on a probationary status for a specified period of time, or terminate a residential property lease.*)
- **Emerald Ash Borer and Forestry Issues** Unfortunately, the emerald ash borer has arrived at Lake Louise. Ash trees typically die within two years, and we are likely to lose 99% of all ash trees in our forest in the next 2-3 years. Therefore, our forester (Metcalf Forestry) will be going back in and marking all ash trees in the area already in the 2009 harvest (approximately 100 acres near Delta Plat) so they can harvest those trees before they die while they are still marketable. They will also be remarking the 2010 cut (not yet completed) and marking the 2011 to harvest the ash in that area. The 2010 and 2011 cuts will be within the range currently specified in our forest stewardship plan. A beech bark fungus has also infected beech trees on the northwest side of the lake. This fungus spreads slowly. The beech trees will be selectively harvested over the next few years. These trees easily regenerate /reseed themselves.

The Board of Trustees will meet next on June 10<sup>th</sup> at Lake Louise.

## Board of Trustees Report—June 2011

*Kathy Gilbert, President, Cottagers' Council*

The Board of Trustees held its meeting June 10<sup>th</sup> at Lake Louise. The board honored two members from the board who were retiring after the meeting: Dave Gladstone, president of the Board of Trustees, and Eric Stone, a representative of the West Michigan Conference. Between the two of them, they have given 18 years of service to LLCC. We are especially grateful to Dave for his leadership and guidance as president of the Board of Trustees. I have attached a biography of the new president of the Board of Trustees, Rev. Deb Johnson, at the end of this report. Deb will be preaching at the September 4<sup>th</sup> chapel service. I have enjoyed working closely with Deb this year on updating the vision, mission, and core values statements. Be sure to meet her when you can—she's a delightful, committed-to-Lake Louise person.

The board spent the afternoon further reviewing and then adopting updated vision, mission, and core values statements that reflect not only the original mission of LLCC, but how we serve and relate to the world today. (Vaughn will present these during his "State of the Lake" address at our first Cottagers' Council meeting on Saturday evening, June 25.) The board also spent part of the afternoon discussing updating the ministry plan to reflect the updated statements. A small committee will take suggestions made during our discussions and incorporate those into the plan, and present the plan for further review at the August meeting.

Following are other pertinent highlights of the board meeting:

- **The Forest Legacy Program** We will be reapplying one more time for this program in hopes that our application will be received favorably. We are redefining the area of our land so that we will only be submitting the western portion of our land that abuts land currently owned by the DNR. Apparently our previous applications were viewed by some on the reviewing committee as an attempt to protect the backyards of cottager property. We are hoping that "the third time's a charm." If this application does not make the cut, we will abandon the Forest Legacy Program for the near future.
- **Marketing** The new wording for the main sign that expresses the scope of what our facilities are used for is up, and posts for banners that further communicate the year-round opportunities available for using our facilities have been installed. Expect to see the banners, created by Tom Crowe, LLCC Assistant Director, soon. Terry Gladstone, LLCC Program Director, continues to market retreat opportunities and reach out to neighboring churches. A brunch was held last Sunday at the camp for visiting members of surrounding churches as well as those cottagers who attended. All of these marketing and outreach efforts are designed to communicate the spirit of LLC and, importantly, keep us financially healthy by filling our facilities.
- **Development Plan (Capital Campaign), Phase 1** McKay Lodge is well ahead of schedule with a scheduled completion date of October 1. Stop by to see it! Once again, cottager volunteers are donating their time to erecting the building (*the picture is of a few of the volunteers—from left to right, Carol Marvin, Hal Seaton, Bob May, and Chappy Marvin*). The land has been cleared for Maryanna's Place, an inviting, interactive playground. Construction will begin this summer with completion next year. Additionally, two porch swings in memory of Pauline Rupe will be installed near the waterfront as places for reflection and renewal.
- **Finances** Our finances are in good shape. Spring retreats made up for the winter cancellations.
- **Camps and Trails** Camper registrations are up, but it is too early to tell whether this will hold. However, we are currently one of two camps in Michigan that has increased registrations. Three of the older cabins



have been repurposed for camper activities such as arts and crafts and meeting places. In addition, trails have been marked along Pioneer Trail and going up Spirit Mountain for camper usage this summer. Some important points to note are (1) green eco-friendly paint was used on trees to mark the trails (2) trail signs follow the marking system of the Appalachian Trail and approved by the Sierra Club with vertical markings meaning continue straight ahead, and horizontal markings meaning hikers should turn (2) all campers on trails will be accompanied by a counselor and (3) letterboxes have been placed along the trails. "Letterboxing" is an intriguing pastime that combines map-reading skills and "treasure hunts" in beautiful surroundings. We've scanned an article about letterboxing and posted it on our website so you can read more about this intriguing hobby and perhaps become a participant! Also, there are maps available of the marked trails in the LLCC office for your use.

- **Cottages and Loans** LLCC is encouraged by the recent discussion with banks in northern Michigan area regarding mortgages and financing. Stay tuned...
- **Forestry Issues** The forestry crew has been marking the 2011 cut which will occur west of the lake in the fall. Harvesting of the ash trees will also occur in the fall. Red pine trees have been removed along Thumb Lake Road and some along Magee Road for a new electrical transmission line that will be installed by Great Lakes Energy.

The Board of Trustees will meet next on August 12<sup>th</sup> at Lake Louise.

***Statement from Rev. Deb Johnson, President of the Board of Trustees:***

I was one of the six children of our family to become a camper at Lake Louise after my 9<sup>th</sup> grade of high school. I don't remember the first time I saw the camp or the lake because my parents were often the drivers to take kids to camp. We were part of the South Community United Methodist Church near Cadillac. During high school I was a camper and retreator, and then during college, seminary, and following graduation I became a counselor and dean for over 15 years. It wasn't summer if I wasn't at Lake Louise for a week. During that time I served as pastor of Manton, Marne, Hudsonville, and Lansing Asbury United Methodist Churches. During my pastoral time in Lansing and now Sturgis, I have been nominated by the West Michigan Conference to the Lake Louise Board of Trustees. My first three years were an exciting time to join the board as we created new vision, mission, core values and chose a new executive director. I have loved the dreaming and implementing of that vision as we see Lake Louise grow into a year round sacred retreat center, camper sanctuary, cottager Sabbath place where everyone grows in faith as we build community. I look forward to serving the Board as the new President.

## Board of Trustees Report—August 2011

---

*Kathy Gilbert, President, Cottagers' Council*

The Board of Trustees met Friday, August 12, at Lake Louise. The board welcomed three new members: cottager Les Ryckman, cottager Doug Vogel (*also two-term treasurer of Cottagers' Council*), and George Covintree, pastor of the St. Matthew's United Methodist Church in Livonia, Michigan.

The board spent part of the morning and the majority of the afternoon reviewing an updated ministry plan and further refining it. Again, a small committee will take suggestions made during our discussions and incorporate those into the plan, and present the plan for further review at the November meeting.

Following are other pertinent highlights of the board meeting:

- **The Forest Legacy Program** 750 acres west of the lake have been submitted for our proposal for the Forest Legacy Program. We have received good feedback regarding our application. However, another project of significant acreage bordering Lake Superior will most likely be the first choice regarding acceptance of Michigan applications. We are putting the final touches on our application for its submission in August.
- **Milfoil** The board spent a significant amount of time discussing the spread of Eurasian milfoil in our lake. Cottagers will receive in-depth information about this (including a map of the infected areas and a picture of milfoil) at the Cottagers' Council meeting (August 13<sup>th</sup>) and in a letter to be mailed. It is imperative that boaters stay out of areas with milfoil. A buoy will be placed over the patch giving us the most concern at this time.
- **Finances** Our finances are in good shape.
- **Camps, Facilities, and Hires** New programming efforts paid off in the amount of increased camper registrations over the summer. Additionally, the amount of volunteers involved in Lake Louise's ministry increased. Program Director Terry Gladstone continues to explore future opportunities for providing vibrant programs for camps and retreats. A new sound system was installed in Horner Center, McKay Lodge construction continues on schedule, and plans are in the final stages for Marianna's Place for a children's playground surrounded by outdoor fitness stages for teens/adults. Robert Brown was hired to be the new Dining Services Coordinator and began work this past week.
- **Cottages and Loans** LLCC is continuing to explore possibilities for northern Michigan banks to finance leased property. We hope to have some news on this issue by the November Board of Trustees meeting.
- **Forestry Issues** The emerald ash borer has invaded our entire 2800 acres in less than three months. Harvesting of the ash trees will begin as soon as possible since we are already seeing signs of trees dying. Almost all timber harvesting this year will be for ash trees. Due to the dry summer, the beech bark fungus has not spread at the rate we expected.

The Board of Trustees will meet next for a board retreat on November 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at Lake Louise.

# Board of Trustees Report—November 2011

*Kathy Gilbert, President, Cottagers' Council*

The Board of Trustees met November 6th and 7th for its annual board retreat at Lake Louise. The majority of the retreat was spent further refining the Ministry Plan draft. The board hopes to adopt a final plan at its next meeting in January.

A short business meeting was held on Monday afternoon. Following are other pertinent highlights of the business aspect of the retreat:

- **The Forest Legacy Program** Our reapplication is complete and will be submitted by the end -of - November deadline. To give our project a fresh look, we renamed it the Gitcha-ninj Nebish Forest Project (the native Odawa name for Thumb Lake). We are now soliciting letters of support for our application, and, once again, we are keeping our fingers crossed that our project will be selected.
- **Finances** Our community remains financially strong, and your gifts and continued support remain an important part of our success story. .
- **Camps** Our camping program grew by 7% last year, an unheard of amount for any type of camping program in Michigan. We have had increases for five years in a row! Efforts by our camp deans, counselors, and LLCC staff have contributed to this track record. Special thanks go to Terry Gladstone and her creative efforts to entice more people to participate in camping and retreat opportunities. She will be sorely missed. An elementary camp is being added for 2012, and camp descriptions for all 2012 camps are now on the LLCC website.
- **Facilities** McKay Lodge is on schedule for completion for winter retreats. Some playground equipment has been assembled for Maryanna's place, and we expect the playground to be ready for summer use. A winding, inviting 500 foot concrete walkway with a poetic feel has been poured around the perimeter of the playground. Volunteer labor by cottagers and retreat work groups has been instrumental in the construction of both the lodge and playground. LLCC is writing a grant to help defray the cost of construction of the playground. The health center at the camp greatly needs to be updated to better serve campers and retreaters. Conversations regarding how to best accomplish this have begun to make this a healthy, user-friendly building.
- **Development Plan, Phase 1** We continue to seek donations to help with achieving the 1.1 million dollar goal of this campaign. Along with building new facilities, part of this campaign consists of updating our current facilities. Cottager contributions are most appreciated.
- **Cottages and Loans** GOOD NEWS! The Bank of Northern Michigan will work with our lease and lien agreements without revision. Now cottagers who qualify will be able to get loans on leased property on the lake.
- **Forestry Issues** Logging operations continue to remove ash trees from LLCC property.

The Board of Trustees will meet next in Lansing on Saturday, January 21, 2012.