

Board of Trustees Report—February 2015

Compiled by Kathy Gilbert, President, Cottagers' Council

The Board of Trustees met February 21 in Lansing. The business meeting began after devotions by Phil Fredrick. The following are highlights of the meeting that are pertinent to cottagers:

***Finances** The proposed 2015 budget was presented, discussed, and adopted. We continue to strive to bring our expenditures in line with income. This, however, is hampered by unexpected expenses. A recommendation was made that we have a ready reserve available to meet these. We continue to refine and reorder our financial practices so we have a better handle on what our true operating expenses are and make progress toward our goal of totally financing these expenses through income from camps, conferences, retreats, and assessments. Donations are a crucial part of our income stream and help us meet this goal.

The year-end campaign to raise money for camp scholarships received strong support. Through this campaign and summer chapel offerings, we hope to be able to meet all needs for financial assistance.

***Marketing** As mentioned in my last report, we have been totally excluded from the United Methodist Camp booklet for the Michigan area and are now on our own for marketing. Following is part of the marketing plan that has been enacted:

The new website is up and running and registrations are already starting to come in using the website. A mobile version of the website is in development at this time. Several strategies are targeting the Boyne area—a 1/8 page ad has been placed in the Boyne Area Visitor's Guide (print and digital), camp postcards were placed in the Boyne Area Chamber of Commerce building for guest distribution, a week of summer camp was donated to the silent auction held by the Boyne Area Chamber of Commerce, and LLCC will be participating in the Boyne Area Chamber Business Expo in April. We have also created a LinkedIn Lake Louise business page, and an online store for purchasing Lake Louise apparel is up and running, adding to our digital presence.

Print materials recently developed include a year-in-review newsletter that was sent to all those who received pledge campaign, and 2014 summer camp families and summer camp and retreat flyers were designed, printed and distributed to camp deans, churches, and other appropriate organizations. Additionally, summer camp and retreat postcards will be mailed out in spring to encouragement enrollment.

***Camps, Retreats, and Conferences** The board reviewed current plans for 2015 camps, retreats, and conferences. A strong beginning to camp registrations makes us hopeful for a banner year. Areas being explored for future development include outpost camps and the offering of youth academy targeting selected youth who possibly feel a call to ministry. New retreats scheduled for April (*Creating Live Encounters*) and October (*Courage and Renewal*) present Lake Louise as the location for serious continuing professional development clergy and church leaders. We are currently the only United Methodist camp offering such programs.

***Facilities** The renovation to the entranceway to the Retreat Center is now complete, and progress toward building new cabins continues. The Marshall and Marvin/Sharp cabins are almost completed, and construction of the Pankratz and Strong cabins will begin this summer.

***Forest Legacy Project** We're still waiting... The US Forestry Service required another appraisal for the Forest Legacy tract, and that appraisal was done February 11 and 12. That report was due to the Forestry Service before the end of February. When that appraisal is then turned over to the State of Michigan, we should receive an offer to purchase. Once we receive that offer we will move into the final stage of this long, drawn-out process. We hope to finally resolve all of this and receive the monies in 2015.

The Board of Trustees will next meet May 8 at Lake Louise.

Board of Trustees Report–August 2015

John Marshall, President, Cottagers' Council

The Board of Trustees met on August 14th at Lake Louise. President, **Phil Friedrich** called the meeting to order, welcomed fellow board members and guests and offered a devotion.

The Board thanked former Executive Director, **David Gladstone**, for his many contributions to both the camp and the lake, presented him with a framed relief woodcut of Lake Louise and offered him a position as Emeritus Trustee, a three-year position to begin in one year. David reflected on his time as Executive Director and will consider the position of Emeritus Trustee.

The Board elected former Cottagers' Council president, **Kathy Gilbert**, to a three-year term, as an at-large member of the Board of Trustees.

Employee Recognition: The Board recognized the outstanding contributions to the success of the Lake Louise Christian Community provided by its employees, including **Myke Sherman**, Operations Director since 2008, **Robert Brown**, Food Service Director since 2011, **Cheryl Millington**, Financial Director and Office Manager since 2013 and **Sarah Hescheles**, Program Development and Marketing Director since 2014.

Executive Director's Report: Executive Director, Jim Willford, indicated that he and his wife, Barbara, were appreciative of the warm welcome they received on their arrival at Lake Louise, and he said that he felt that he was off to a great start.

Camps, Retreats & Conferences: Program Development and Marketing Director, **Sarah Hescheles**, reported that there was a slight decline in the number of campers this year. She indicated that 1) this appears to be a trend among similar camps around the state and 2) Lake Louise was excluded from the church conference camping directory, thus hurting the camp's exposure. The lower camper numbers appeared to be associated with those camps that were primarily advertised in that directory. There was a discussion about the value of having more youth counselors, marketing to kids using social media, and the addition of more "fun" activities for kids.

Camp Facilities Update: Operations Director, **Myke Sherman**, took the Board members on a tour of the construction currently underway, including the outdoor reception area in front of the Retreat Center and the new cabin area. He indicated that donations have been received or committed for the remainder of the cabins, and construction is proceeding rapidly due to the significant efforts of camper volunteers. There was a discussion about the importance of recognizing the significant contributions of previous cabin donors as those cabins are razed to make room for the new cabins.

Finances: The LLCC profit and loss statement indicated a significant profit for the first half of 2015, primarily related to a windfall in forestry sales this year, accounted for by an unusually high price for lumber. It was noted that it is difficult to budget for future lumber sales because of several variables, including the size of forest tracts lumbered, the types of trees removed and the variability of the price of lumber.

Guest contributions - Fireworks: Cottager, **Marvin Vosberg**, expressed his concern about the impact that several days and nights of fireworks around the 4th of July has on cottagers, their families and pets. He indicated that these unanticipated explosions were particularly difficult for some military veterans on the lake, and he requested that they not be allowed. After a discussion, he indicated that fireworks displays, limited to the 4th of July, would be acceptable. The Board appreciated his input, will undertake some further fact-finding and will discuss this at a subsequent meeting.

Eurasian Milfoil: Board Vice-President, **Kirk Halsted**, described this year's chemical treatment of milfoil as a "huge success – a home run". He indicated that all of the treated areas appear to be dying, dead or gone! He reported that cottager scouts have found additional small patches of milfoil at other locations in the lake, including several patches at the east end of the lake and just outside the swimming area markers of the county park. 23 mats have been placed over these various milfoil patches. Also, there are 500 pounds of excess chemicals available for future use. He acknowledged this as a joint effort paid for by the Cottagers' Council, the LLCC Board of Trustees and the Baptist Camp.

Kirk also acknowledged the efforts of Cottagers' Council Vice-President, **Leslie Helwig**, in 1) developing an informational brochure about milfoil, that has been made available for distribution at the boat launch site and at the county park, 2) in preparing and presenting a PowerPoint presentation about milfoil to the Charlevoix County Parks Committee, 3) in organizing a boat tour of the lake for the Parks Committee, provided by cottagers, **Bob & Sue Korte**, for a close-up view of our milfoil problem and 4) in attending subsequent meetings of the Parks Committee to provide them with updates on the milfoil problem.

Forest Legacy Project: LLCC has received the \$900,000 Forest Legacy monies from the federal government. Approximately one-third will be made available to use, as needed, to complete the cabin and retreat center construction projects, and two-thirds have been placed in the endowment fund. The dedication celebration will be held on Friday, August 28th at 11:00 a.m. on the Green between the Halsted and McKay Lodges and cottagers are encouraged to attend.

The Board of Trustees will next meet for a Board retreat on October 18th & 19th at Lake Louise.

Board of Trustees Report – October 2015
John Marshall, President, Cottagers' Council

The Lake Louise Christian Community Board of Trustees met on October 18th & 19th at Lake Louise for its annual retreat. Following a wonderful Sunday evening dinner, provided by **Rob Brown** and his staff, Executive Director, **Jim Willford**, led the board through two exercises – the first involved the board members identifying those unique features of the Lake Louise Christian Community that they would want to preserve, ones that they would want to achieve in the future and ones that they would want to avoid or stop. Second, the board members worked in teams to share ideas regarding specific actions that could be taken to improve LLCC's financial picture, develop new programs, enhance the camp and community ministry and further support and build relationships with Lake Louise cottagers. The two exercises produced many good ideas and good discussion. It was noted that many of the ideas were identical to those generated by a similar exercise undertaken nine years previously.

The following day consisted of a business meeting.

Trustee President, **Phil Friedrich** called the meeting to order, welcomed fellow board members and offered devotions.

Executive Director's Report:

1. **Jim Willford** reported that an excellent working relationship has been established with **Fred Elmore**, Camp Kinawind Director, and that they recently met for the Camp Kinawind annual review.
2. The camp will be seeking a grant from the Charlevoix County Foundation for the development of a Tree Climbing Adventure Program at the camp. The funding would provide the required equipment, facilitator training and professional arborist services to get the program up and running.
3. The camp will submit an application for a permit from the DNR to place a loon nest and loon "stay away" buoys to identify the location of the loon nest on the lake next summer.
4. Lake Louise was very successful in making it possible for many campers to attend camp last summer through scholarship funds provided by cottagers, camper alumni, camper's families, churches, and other sources, and it looks forward to having a successful 2016 Summer Camp Scholarship Appeal, that should begin in the near future.
5. The camp has updated its intranet service at the Retreat Center. This will result in higher quality intranet access and the ability to control the time of camper and visitor use via a filtering switch.
6. The camp made a donation of \$786 to the Manna Project from the summer worship offering at the Tennant Chapel. The Manna Project is a local non-profit organization that helps feed the hungry throughout northern Michigan and helps support the Boyne Falls Food Pantry.
7. The fall fish fry was very successful and raised enough money to be able to donate \$649 to the Boyne Falls Food Pantry and \$649 to the LLCC Summer Camp Scholarship program.
8. The LLCC attorney, **Mr. Steve DuBois**, retired this fall, and his partner, **Mr. Paul Slough** has taken over as the new LLCC attorney.

Finances: LLCC Board Treasurer, **Doug Vogel**, and LLCC Financial Director and Office Manager, **Cheryl Millington**, provided a financial report. Highlights included:

1. Forest Legacy funds have been appropriately distributed to the endowment and building funds.
2. The forestry program netted the camp significant revenue this year. However, it is anticipated that the revenue from timber cutting in 2016 will be substantially less.
3. Other revenue, including the land fee from the sale of cottages, the golf outing, the two fish fries, camper fees, scholarship monies, retreat and guest & facility income yielded LLCC a net profit through the end of the third quarter.

Camps, Retreats & Conferences: The LLCC Program Development & Marketing Director, **Sarah Hescheles**, provided a summary of the past summer's camp & retreat programs. There were 444 campers this past year, down slightly from the previous year. Sarah distributed a copy of the newly designed brochure, with an integrated registration form, that describes the 2016 camp and retreat offerings. Next summer's camping program is being developed around the theme of perseverance and a "Perseverance Program Playbook" is being developed to help camp deans integrate that theme into their programs. She also described the camp's efforts to expand its digital presence through an updated LLCC website, at www.lakelouisecommunity.org, through expanded email marketing and through social media sites, including Google, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Camp Facilities Update: Operations Director, **Myke Sherman**, discussed several immediate needs of the camp, including 1) improvements to the Retreat Center, 2) equipment for the maintenance of LLCC roads at the camp and around the lake, and 3) equipment to resolve issues with underground electrical failures at the camp. The board subsequently approved funding for several improvements to the Retreat Center, including the replacement of all windows, the installation of individual guest room heating/cooling units and new refrigeration units for the kitchen. In addition, it approved the purchase of a new tractor that will allow the camp to be able to self-maintain all LLCC roads rather than have to outsource that activity, and the purchase of equipment that would aid in locating underground electrical failures at the camp.

Additional business:

1. The board had further discussions about the development of a policy regarding the use of **fireworks** at the lake, including state and local fireworks regulations, how best to communicate such a policy to cottagers and other lake users and how to enforce such a policy. The board hopes to have a courtesy fireworks regulation policy available for discussion at the next board meeting.
2. The board discussed various issues that have developed regarding the individual **sale of cottages** on the lake, including both realtors and prospective buyers not being adequately informed AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SALE NEGOTIATION about a) the unique nature of the Lake Louise community, b) the appropriate steps that need to be taken by prospective buyers to obtain LLCC approval of the sale, c) the nature of the land lease arrangement with the LLCC and d) details of the buy-in fee. The board will develop a written policy and a formal process for cottagers to follow when contemplating the sale of their cottage.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on January 23, 2016 in Lansing.