



Portage Lake Association, P.O. Box 493 Onekama, Mi 49675

President's Letter for April 2012 by Al Taylor

Spring has come early to the Onekama area, with warm, almost summer weather reaching us in March. Outdoor activity has increased with yard work, walking, fishing and bike riding and even a kayak or two spotted on Portage Lake. Lawn mowers were buzzing and so were the bees as trees started to blossom at the end of March. We also had several black bear sightings and reports of some damage in March as well. PLA activities have also picked up as we get busy for three of our major events of the year. Between 500 - 800 hours of volunteer time will be spent in the next several months on these events and all of the proceeds and benefits from these activities will be invested into the community. Volunteers are busy planning our Annual Fundraiser that is set for June 23rd, 2012 at Little River Casino Resort. This event promises a delicious dinner, great prizes and good company for the evening, so mark your calendars. More information will be available in the May Newsletter.

The petunias are ordered and work teams are being organized for the annual Petunia Planting and summer care program in downtown Onekama. We have one of the most spectacular displays of flowers in the county and you can help with a donation of money and/or time. A donation envelope is included in this mailing for your donations. For volunteering your time for planting or the summer care program, contact Tammy Messner at tammy.h@charter.net

The ever popular Monday Night Concerts in the Village Park are set for 2012. You will find a program card included in this mailing. We have some returning favorites as well as some new artists as we work to increase the variety of music during the series. We are rotating some of the local bands in the program so you may see some old favorites missing for this year, but they will be back. Mark your calendars, and bring your family, friends and neighbors to the park for eight enjoyable evenings of music and entertainment starting July 2nd. All concerts are free to the public, with donations welcome to help defray the costs.

Portage Lake Association Ballot for CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2012

Below you will find the nominees for the 2012 Citizen of the Year award from the PLA. Please vote for one candidate and send the form to the address or email your vote as directed at the end of this letter. A couple of nominees were not eligible for this year's award due to the fact that they have been previously named as PLA Citizen of the Year. We also had two people decline nomination for personal reasons. Here are this year's nominees in alphabetical order:

Bob Blackmore – Bob is the Onekama Village President. He has shown leadership and concern for the citizens of the Village of Onekama. He has devoted time and effort beyond what is called for in his position to “make Onekama a better place to live”. Bob is a listener and tries to see both sides of an issue. His accomplishments in the village and in cooperative efforts with the township have been significant with the creation of a Joint Master Plan for the community, a Joint Planning Commission and a Joint Parks and Recreation Committee. Onekama has been positively impacted by his leadership, and the whole community is better for his efforts.

Howard Hughes – Howard is a long time resident of the Onekama area. He was on the Village Zoning Board of Appeals. He is co-leader of the joint Village and Township Parks and Recreation Committee. He has helped organize and plan the annual Arbor Day tree planting at the North Point Park and continues to be active with this after 4 years of participation. Howard is on the Park Tree Committee which takes an active role in caring for the trees in all of the area parks. He is a charter member of the Portage Lake Watershed Forever group. He has been active in the yearly Petunia Planting and summer care program in the village. Howard is active in the village and township government affairs, and he has been involved in the Master Plan for Onekama.

Lee LeFleur – A successful retired businessman from Manistee and now residing in Onekama, Lee has been an active volunteer in the PLA serving as Fundraiser Chairman and Vice President in the last 2 years. He led the most successful fundraiser in PLA history. Lee has brought many new ideas into the PLA to improve fundraising as well as positive branding of the PLA and the Onekama area. He has been active in the Arbor Day plantings and has been very supportive of many local charities. He is truly an ambassador for the Onekama community.

Bret Mathieu – Bret is a longtime resident of Onekama, and a business owner with a contracting/building company in the village. He has been active in the volunteer fire department, having worked in two different departments over the years. He is currently Deputy Fire Chief in the Onekama Volunteer Fire Department. He is a very dedicated volunteer in the community, supporting the PLA and other organizations. Bret is very active in assisting residents, always ready to lend a helping hand to those in need. He is involved in supporting the Onekama Consolidated School system through the athletic boosters, and the annual yearbook program ads. He is currently involved in providing volunteer help, tools and equipment to remove the old tennis courts from the Village Park to make room for planned improvements.

Chuck May – Chuck is a leader on the Harbor Commission of Portage Lake and has spent untold hours in promoting Portage Lake as well as harbors all over Michigan and in the Great Lakes area. He has spent extensive time and effort to improve the condition of lakes, harbors and the Great Lakes. He is a representative on the multi-state Great Lakes Small Harbor Coalition. He is tireless in his support of sport fishing in the Great Lakes and making improvements to the sport. Chuck has recently been named Boat US Person of the Year for his work. His recent activities include getting Congress to use the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to provide ongoing funding for harbor dredging, which is important to all coastal locations on Lake Michigan.

Allen Taylor – Al is fairly new to our community, but he has worked tirelessly to improve it. He is President of the PLA, Chairman of the Fundraiser Committee and serves on the Concert in the Parks Committee. He is very active with the Onekama Consolidated Schools and was instrumental in creating the K-3rd grade volunteer program and also assisted the school board with long term strategic planning. Al serves on the Portage Lake Watershed Council, the executive board of United Way of Manistee County, represents Manistee County on the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy Board of Directors and has been a representative in the Onekama Area Explore the Shores Program. Al is also on the joint Onekama Village and Township Planning Commission and serves on the Disincorporation Commission representing the township.

Please vote for one candidate for PLA Citizen of the Year Award. Return your ballot to PLA Citizen of the Year, PO Box 493, Onekama, MI 49675 or email to mpunches@charter.net

I Vote for _____ as PLA Citizen of the year for 2012

Winner will be announced at the PLA Fundraiser Dinner and Auction on June 23rd, 2012