



LAKETOWN NEWS

Summer 2011
Volume 24, No. 3

www.laketowntwp.org
Published Quarterly for the residents of Laketown Township

Laketown Calendar

August

- 3 - Board Workshop, 4:00 p.m.
- 3 - Planning Commission
- 10 - Township Board
- 17 - Parks and Recreation
- 24 - DDA
- 29 - ZBA

September

- 5 - Office Closed for Labor Day
- 7 - Board Workshop, 4:00 p.m.
- 7 - Planning Commission
- 14 - Township Board
- 15 - Summer Deferment Due
- 21 - Parks and Recreation
- 26 - ZBA
- 28 - DDA

October

- 4 - Immunization Clinic at Township Office^
- 5 - Board Workshop, 4:00 p.m.
- 5 - Planning Commission
- 11 - Immunization Clinic at Township Office^
- 12 - Township Board
- 19 - Parks and Recreation
- 26 - ZBA
- 31 - DDA

all meetings at 7:00 p.m. at the township hall unless otherwise noted

^see article for details

Laketown Township Office
4338 Beeline Road
Holland, Michigan 49423
Phone: 616-335-3050
Fax: 616-335-5459

Office hours:
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

From the desk of.....

Terry Hofmeyer, Laketown Township Supervisor

Summertime and the Livin' Is (Not So) Easy

Back when I was growing up - we're talking the 1940s and early '50s - life was pretty easy. We played "sand-lot" softball, went fishing at the pier and generally just played around and enjoyed ourselves. In contrast, I see my grandchildren in very structured activities and needing to adhere to very stringent schedules - all very necessary if their hopes and dreams are to participate in the major sports or activities in high school. They're learning the fundamentals but it sometimes just doesn't - to me - appear to be fun. My suggestion or solution is to make sure that they remain exposed to some fun things! Family vacations where cousins learn to play, share meals, bunk together and learn that sharing chores can be fun. Family always remains important!! Our 4th of July weekend consisted of some thirteen family and friends ranging in age from eleven to ninety-one. My mother, at a healthy and energetic ninety-one years, again won at "Rummy-Cube", a game requiring concentration and great numbers sense. Way to go Mom!

The summer of 2011 continues to be a challenge for both Laketown Township and our surrounding municipalities. We are faced with tough economic times, declining revenues and continued demand for services. Our neighbors to the south, Saugatuck Township, Douglas and Saugatuck are studying the feasibility of a joint venture to consolidate their three communities and, whatever the outcome, it will be a difficult decision! As I write this in early July, Saugatuck Township appears to be on the brink of a resolution to the possible development of the former Denison property at the mouth of the Kalamazoo River. The possible sale of a portion of the property to the State Park would bring this proposed project to the boundary of Laketown Township. No doubt this all remains a tough decision and I would encourage everyone -

no matter what their position - to once again unite and proceed to keep our special little spot in West Michigan truly unique to both our residents and visitors.

Earlier this year Laketown Township participated with ninety persons from the two cities and seven townships in the "Macatawa Area". A decision has been made to continue with meetings to determine if there are additional areas where we can jointly collaborate more and share services to provide an economic and viable model for other Michigan communities. One of the long range goals is to create an even better environment conducive to economic growth. Many of us already share or jointly provide necessary and needed public services. Can or should we do more? Very likely yes - but - can we do it without losing our identity? I like our "small town" identity and the way that our residents are ready and able to "pitch-in" and volunteer to make Laketown Township a place that we are all proud to call home. The greater Holland/Zeeland area is a wonderful area that has been blessed by nature and economic viability and we are the envy of many, many other communities across Michigan and in the nation. If we can make it better, I'm all for it. I'd like to think that whatever the outcome in this joint study and venture that we could all see the benefits, to both the total area as well as Laketown Township.

I thoroughly enjoy our community, our Township, our annual meetings, our volunteers who give of their talents as well as their resources - and - for all of that I say "Thank You"! It is indeed a pleasure to serve as your Supervisor. As always, please feel free to contact me with your concerns, ideas and suggestions at terry@laketowntwp.org.



Be sure to visit the Laketown Township website. Updates are currently in progress. The site is home to useful information and links about living, working and playing in Laketown Township.

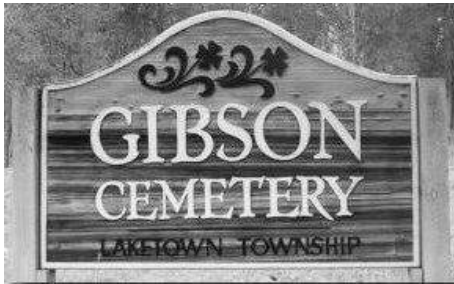
www.laketowntownship.org

Clerk's Corner ... *Wendy Van Huis, Clerk and Mary*

Gibson Cemetery Clean-Up

Gibson cemetery has never been a "manicured" cemetery. We value the unique and personal displays shown by those who cherish and honor the memories of their loved ones. However, we are ushering in the fall season with a clean-up which will include the removal of any faded artificial flowers and worn mementoes.

We ask that family members tend to any faded flowers and worn mementoes before September 1st at which time they will be removed by cemetery staff. Thank you for helping respect the grounds and natural beauty of our cemetery.



See You At The Pool... *Lisa Phillips, Executive Director*

Holland Aquatic Center Now Offers Saturday Evening Private Parties

The Holland Aquatic Center is now available for private party rentals every Saturday evening from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Private rentals are an excellent option for family gatherings, church or school group outings and any group of 50 - 250 people looking for fun, family-oriented activities.

Many rental options are available including features like our Splash Zone, Zip Line, Water Slide and Aqua Challenge. In addition to the pool area we offer a large party room which seats up to 100 guests, as well as a full kitchen.

Remember, the Aquatic Center is an indoor facility so there's no need to worry about weather conditions when planning your event. Prices vary based on residency and your desired pool set up. Two weeks advance reservation is required. Call (616) 393-7595 for availability!



County Commissioner Report ... *Terry Burns*

It has been a year since my last report on the Allegan County Jail. The millage was defeated in August 2010 forcing it once again to the back burner. However, the schematic plans have been scaled way back, and we should be able to move forward in the latter part of the year. The funding for this project will come from the Tax Revolving Fund, and the Budget Stabilization Fund. Those funds are replaced every year from interest and receipts that the County receives through other revenue sources. The County should be able to bid on this project in November or December.

In late June, the County Board of Commissioners decided not to pass a resolution to continue with the County Planning Commission. Results from a survey of all 24 Townships in the County showed that the County Planning Commission was in fact a redundant advisory board with no authority to pass or reject plans from county townships. While I did sit on the County Planning

Commission I still voted against continuing with the commission due to that fact. The vote was 6 no and 5 yes to retain the Commission.

Last month the County passed an ordinance to establish an Economic Development Department. We are currently taking applications for that membership. This Board will consist of 11 members.

The budget is in the process of being put together, and we will have a balanced budget. I am proud to tell you that the County has been very frugal in its stewardship of handling the public's money.



Smile! Your Home Is On Camera!

Laketown Township will be taking photos of homes in the township to update our database. If you see someone stop and take a photo of your house, don't panic, it's just your township assessor.



Save The Date

The Laketown Township office will host an Influenza and Pneumonia Immunization Clinic on Tuesday, October 4 and Tuesday, October 11, 2011 from 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Holland Hospital Home Health Services will be on-site to administer the vaccines.

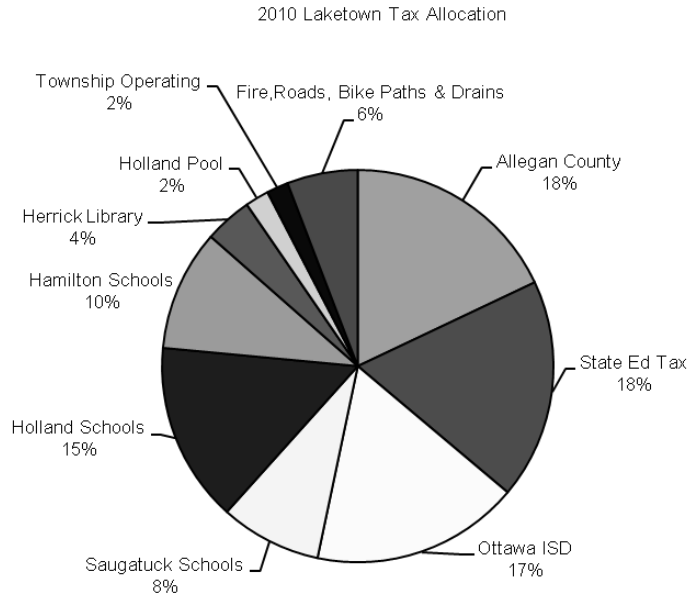
From The Assessor ... by Paul Smith

As the township assessor, I often field questions regarding tax dollars and where the money is spent. Please refer to the pie chart. As you can see, most of your taxes (68%) go to fund the schools. The 2 mills for fire, roads, bike paths and drains have been in place since the mid 1970s and are renewed every two years by a vote of the people. As the name implies, this covers roadwork, bike paths, the township portion of drain maintenance and fire department expenses.

Township Operating revenue pays for all wages (other than the firefighters), insurance, police, park and cemetery maintenance, building maintenance, utilities, legal fees and the other expenses associated with running an office.

Other sources of revenue include state revenue sharing payments, franchise fees (cable for example), fees for service (building permit fees for example) and various grants from both the state and federal governments.

Full copies of the budget are available at the Laketown Township office if you are interested in more detail.



Principal Residence Exemption Makes A Big Difference On Your Tax Bill

As you can see from the table, the Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) makes a big difference in your tax bill. Please be sure you are receiving it if you qualify. Also, recent legislation enables you to continue to get the PRE on a home that you are not living in if the home is for sale and is not rented. As always, please call Paul Smith at (616) 335-3050 with any questions.

Taxing Jurisdiction	Non-PRE Rate	PRE Rate
Laketown (Hamilton Schools)	46.2589	28.2589
Fillmore (Hamilton Schools)	48.7565	30.2252
Heath (Hamilton Schools)	47.7813	29.7813
Holland City (Hamilton Schools)	57.0216	39.0216
Manlius (Hamilton Schools)	48.4295	30.4295
Saugatuck Twp. (Hamilton Schools)	47.6315	29.6315
Saugatuck City (Saugatuck Schools)	55.5841	38.7249
Park Twp (Holland Schools)	46.5768	28.5768

Comparison Of Area 2010 Millage Rates



**Keep The Township Bike Path Beautiful.
Pick Up After Your Pet !**



Treasurer's Trove

... by Laketown Township Treasurer, Gary Dewey



I have lived in Laketown Township since 1975 and have served township residents since 1992 on the township board. My appreciation for the beauty of the township and the residents of the township continues to grow. We have an incredibly beautiful township with residents who appreciate nature and the quietness of the township. As I take my weekly bike rides through the township and talk to residents I marvel at how blessed we are to live in Laketown.

While we all enjoy the summer, it's also time to pay Summer taxes. Summer tax bills were mailed the first week of July and payment is due on September 14th. The tax bills may look slightly different to you. Previously, we produced the tax bills in-house, but after researching different production options we were able to outsource the bills saving a significant amount of money.

As a reminder, postmarks are not accepted as payment date. For your convenience, there is a locked drop box at the front entry of the township hall.

Hamilton school taxes are only collected in the winter as requested by the School Board. Therefore, residents in this district will have a much larger winter bill.

Remember, Laketown taxes may be paid online or by phone using credit cards. Electronic check payments are also accepted online. Additional fees apply to all electronic payments. Please visit the township website www.laketowntwp.org for further details.

Also, remember that some residents may be eligible to defer their tax payments or qualify for a Hardship Exemption. Deferments must be applied for each season and each year. Hardship Exemptions must be applied for each year. Additional information and forms are available at the township office or at www.michigan.gov/treasury. Please call the township office at (616) 335-3050 with any questions.

Please enjoy the remainder of the summer with family and friends in the township and wherever you might be. Life goes by too quickly and we need to rejoice in every moment of every day.

See You In The Parks

... by Linda Howell

Laketown Township has a written Recreation Plan that details its park system along with parks and recreation opportunities within the Township. The Recreation Plan is a required piece for our grant applications. Every five years, the Parks Commission revisits and updates the Plan. We update a wide range of information from the number of Township residents to the status of our parks to the length of our bike trails. One of the important pieces of information is the list of priorities and planned projects. We encourage you to look at the current Five Year Plan which is posted on the Township's website under the Parks tab. Let us know if there are specific projects you value and want moved up on the project list or if there is a new project you feel should be added to the list. You can send your comments to the Parks email which is Parks@LaketownTwp.org or you can mail

comments to the Township Office. We appreciate your input since our goal is to have the parks and activities that you want.

On a fun note, this year Huyser Farm will host the second Blueberry Jam on July 31, 2011 from 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Tickets are available at the door for \$5. Children under 12 are free. This year the West Michigan Mountain Bike Association (WMMBA) is joining the event as a sponsor. The WMMBA is the group that so generously has volunteered to rebuild and improve the bike trail at Shore Acres Park and also is planning on rebuilding the old BMX track into a pump track. It should be a good time with good music, friends, and food. Bring your lawn chairs and sun screen – and a bucket for picking blueberries.

Laketown Beach Parking Violations Are On The Increase

Laketown Township reminds all residents that there are a limited number of parking spaces available at Laketown Beach. Vehicles parked in an unauthorized spot will be ticketed. Fines from the township deputy are \$25. Traffic tickets from the Allegan County Sheriff's department and Michigan State Police are \$50. There has been a significant increase in violations and tickets issued this summer.

By parking in valid parking spots, you help keep the parking area safe for everyone as well as allow emergency access to the beach.



From the Fire Department

... by Fire Chief, Cal Haverdink

The heat of summer is upon us, and with that comes swimming and water activities. For this summer issue I would like to address some of the things residents can do to help insure water safety both indoors and outside.

The greatest water safety assurance in swimming pools and spas comes from adopting and practicing as many water safety steps as possible. Adding that extra safety step in and around water can make all the difference. Proven water safety steps can be organized into three categories. They are as follows:

- Behavioral – actions that relate to personal responsibility and action.
- Knowledge based – actions that relate to skills such as swimming, CPR and related water safety activities.
- Equipment – actions that relate to barriers such as fences and safety equipment such as compliant drain covers.

Using the three steps listed above, the following list outlines the water safety steps that you can and should take to help keep everyone safe.

Behavioral: staying close, being alert, and watching children in and around the pool/water

- Never leave a child unattended in a pool or spa and always watch your child when they are in or near a pool or spa.
- Teach children basic water safety tips.
- Avoid entrapment by keeping children away from pool drains, pipes and other openings.
- Have a phone close by at all times when you or your family is using a pool or spa. Teach your children about how/when to dial 911.
- If a child is missing, look for them in the pool or spa first.
- Share safety instructions with family, friends and neighbors.

Knowledge – based: learning and practicing water safety skills.

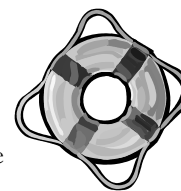
- Learn how to swim!
- Learn to perform CPR on children and adults; update those skills regularly.
- Understand the basics of life-saving so that you can assist in a pool emergency.



Equipment: having the appropriate equipment.

- Install a four foot high fence around the perimeter of the pool and spa and use self-closing and self-latching gates. Make sure neighbors or community pools have the same safety equipment.
- If your house serves as the fourth side of a fence around a pool, install a pool alarm and use it all the time!
- Ensure any pool and spa you use has compliant drain covers; ask if you are not sure.
- Maintain pool and spa covers in good working order.
- Have life saving equipment such as life rings or floats available for easy use. (U.S. Coast Guard Approved)

To close out this article I would like to remind residents that even though you may not have a swimming pool or spa, there is a drowning potential in every home. These concerns are mainly for children under the age of 5.



- About two-thirds of the drowning deaths in the home, not including pools, occur in bathtubs. Some of these deaths happened when children were in a bath seat or ring.
- NEVER leave a baby alone in a bathtub even for a second. Always keep baby in arm's reach.
- NEVER leave young children alone or with young siblings in a bathtub even if you are using a bath seat or ring. Children can drown quickly and silently.
- 5-gallon buckets, often used for household chores, pose a serious threat to toddlers. Their tall, straight sides combined with their stability make it nearly impossible for top-heavy infants to free themselves when they fall in headfirst.
- Be sure all containers that contain liquids are emptied immediately after use. Do not leave empty containers in yards or around the house where they may accumulate water and attract young children.
- Toilets are often overlooked as a drowning hazard in the home. The typical scenario involves a child under 3-years old falling headfirst into the toilet. Keep the toilet lid down, and keep young children out of the bathroom when unsupervised. Consider placing a latch on the bathroom door out of reach of young children.

Continued on page 6...

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- Spas and Hot Tubs pose another drowning hazard. A solar cover can allow babies to slip into the water while the cover appears to stay in place, hiding the child. Always secure the safety cover on your spa or hot tub.
- Childhood drowning deaths occur in other containers that may contain liquids. These include items such as coolers, sinks, fish tanks and landscape ponds.
- **MAKE SURE YOU KNOW CPR**
– **IT CAN BE A LIFESAVER!**



Children and adults enjoy the annual 4th of July Pancake Breakfast at the Graafschap Fire station.

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Laketown Township Directory
Township Office - 616.335.3050
Township Board
Supervisor - Terry Hofmeyer
Treasurer - Gary Dewey
Clerk - Wendy Van Huis
Trustee - Bob Scanlan
Trustee - Ed Stelstra
Planning Commission Chair - Bob Cook
Zoning Board of Appeals Chair - David Weishaar
Parks and Recreation Chair - Linda Howell
Township Staff
Manager - Al Meshkin
Assessor - Paul Smith
Administrative Assistants: Kathy Stoike, Mary Gurnik, Charlene Fields, Diane Ybarra, Staci Veldt
Building Inspector - Al Ellingsen - 269.236.5788 or 616.395.1152
Mechanical Inspector - Bob Modreske 616.477.4940
Electrical Inspector - Gordon Bosch - 616.396.1448
Plumbing Inspector - Gary Raak - 616.399.6924
County Commissioner - Terry Burns - 616.335.2525
State Representative - Rep. Bob Gencski - 517.373.0836
State Senator - Sen. Rick Jones - 517.373.3447
U.S. Congressman - Bill Huizenga - 616.748.1234
Allegan County Directory
Animal Control - 269. 673.0519
Central Dispatch - 269. 673.3899
Clerk - 269. 673.0450
Drain Commissioner - 269. 673.0440
Health Department - 269. 673.5411
Register of Deeds - 269. 673.0390
Road Commission - 269. 673.2184
Senior Services & Veterans Services - 877. 673.5333
Treasurer - 269. 673.0260
Streets Lights - contact Consumers Energy 800. 477.5050 or email at customer@consumers.energy.com