

GRAND BEND
YACHT CLUB

Soundings

Spring

<http://www.gbyc.ca>

Shallows and Miseries

Communities Across Lake Michigan and Lake Huron Come Together to Restore Lake Levels

by Douglas Heuck

For 51 straight summers, I have travelled to Michigan's Upper Peninsula to sail, fish, swim and enjoy the beautiful waters of the Les Cheneaux Islands. There have been high water years, when we built catwalks above our docks, and low water years when our docks towered above the boats tied to them. Now, however, we face something we've never seen – shockingly low water that leaves us unable to reach those docks at all. Increasingly large sections of area are simply drying up, and we fear for the future of communities like ours across Lake Huron, Lake Michigan and Georgian Bay.



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It used to be that the scientifically inclined among us would explain that the water levels followed general cycles. But whatever patterns existed for the 10,000 years since glaciers created the Great Lakes began to change in 1910 when the U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers began dredging a deeper commercial shipping channel at Port Huron. The Corps. dredged again in 1933, deepening the channel to 22 feet, and in 1962 the Corps. dredged a third time, cutting through the natural sand and gravel bar at the sound end of Lake Huron that acted as a natural barrier restricting outflow from the lake.

The 1962 dredging deepened the channel flowing out of Lake Huron and into the St. Clair River to 27 feet. Unfortunately, however, it also set off a disastrous process that has essentially pulled the plug on Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. The dredging disturbed the bottom so much that the passage has eroded beyond anyone's expectations. It is now up to 70 feet deep, and estimates indicate that an extra 10 billion gallons of fresh water leak from Lake Huron every day.

These unintended effects have resulted in a broad array of crises and irreversible damage across the "middle" Great Lakes, which are more than 30 inches below historic averages and deteriorating rapidly. Since July alone, water levels in the Les Cheneaux Islands have dropped 18 inches to the lowest levels ever recorded.

So what?



London Power & Sail Squadron

April 2013
23rd - Marine Radio.
23rd - Pleasure
Craft Radar

May 2013
9th - Pleasure Craft Operator's
Card Seminar

Soundings **Apr 25, 2013**
submission deadline for the
May issue!



Taken together, Lake Michigan and Lake Huron represent the largest recreational asset in the Midwest, and perhaps in America. While there is no figure on the dollar amount that Lake Michigan and Lake Huron tourism brings to the federal government and to the four states – Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan – that surround the two lakes, it is difficult to overestimate the economic importance of the lakes to the region and the nation.

In a magazine article, it's impossible to describe the aggregate impact of this building environmental and economic disaster on the 15 million people who live in the cities and communities along the 5,467 miles of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron shoreline. However, we can get a glimpse by looking at the tiny community I visit each summer. Home to about 2,200 year-round residents, population roughly triples in the summer, as visitors come from across the nation to enjoy the 36 islands and the protected bays and channels. The waters and islands of Les Cheneaux provide the economic foundation for the little towns of Cedarville and Hessel in Clark Township, Michigan.

That foundation, however, is crumbling. Historically low water and the resulting unprecedented penetration of sunlight have led to a proliferation of invasive weeds. The combination is choking the area's bays and channels and threatening all water-related recreation. Island residents can no longer reach their docks; cruising boats must bypass the islands; and vast areas of our bays and channels can no longer be navigated for any purpose.

If current conditions persist and trends continue, an inexorable logic of economic collapse will accelerate: Property values will plummet; tax bases will evaporate; jobs will disappear; and high percentages of local residents and summer residents alike will leave the area.

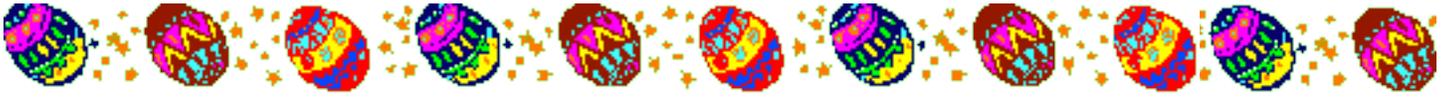
Lake levels are overseen by The International Joint Commission; its Upper Great Lakes Study Board has recommended "doing nothing." The IJC Commissioners have yet to decide whether to accept this recommendation, but large numbers of citizens spoke at their summer hearings, imploring the Commissioners to "Restore Our Water."

The thousands of people organizing across the nation and in Canada believe that that the costs of the "do nothing" approach prove that it is untenable. Those costs are already in the billions of dollars, as ships carry loads that are 25 percent less. Marinas, harbors and communities across the lakes face huge dredging costs. And the likelihood is great that financial institutions will simply cease to lend for dredging -- a strategy that has no successful end in sight.

What can be done?

The Corps of Engineers recognized the inherent dangers of its dredging and in the early 1960s designed a series of sills (compensating structures) that could reduce the flow of water from the lakes. The 1970s, however, brought a period of cold winters with heavy snow and increased lake ice. Lake levels rose and before the erosion began, the project to construct the sills was abandoned. Those compensating sills were part of a bi-national agreement and a condition of the 1962 dredging; and that agreement has not been withdrawn – only the funding for the sills.





When lake levels began to dramatically drop in the late 1990s, the Georgian Bay Association in Ontario, began an extensive study of the cause. Their work has continued, unabated and as a result many other groups have joined the effort. These groups commissioned two extensive and well-respected engineering studies, which confirm that the dredging and subsequent erosion has caused the levels of Lakes Huron and Michigan to drop significantly. The studies further conclude that building compensating structures, such as the sills, would gradually increase water levels in Lakes Huron and Michigan by at least 10 inches with minimal and temporary downstream impact of two-three inches. Another major benefit of this would be stabilization of the St Clair Riverbed.

In the past five months, new reports about the shrinking lakes are appearing with increasing regularity, as recognition of this environmental and economic crisis spreads.

The Canadian groups -- now along with rapidly growing numbers of Americans -- are presenting information to the International Joint Commission and the Army Corps of Engineers in an effort to persuade them of the wisdom in re-authorizing sill construction. The Canadian groups also are enlisting the support of their Federal and Provincial Governments. We need to do the same with Congress and our State governments.

Whether you live on or visit the Great Lakes, whether you have a business that depends on the lakes, or whether you are simply aware of the increasing value of fresh water to our nation, I encourage you to become part of the growing effort to preserve one of our planet's most unique and precious resources -- the Great Lakes.

(If you are interested in getting involved, please visit RestoreOurWater.com)

Douglas Heuck, of Pittsburgh, Pa., is a summer resident of Michigan's Upper Peninsula

Aral Sea

The tragedy of the Aral Sea disappearance is one of the most convincing and vivid cases against unbalanced activities undertaken by the human society neglecting sustainable development, which are so numerous in the creative and simultaneously destructive latter half of the 20th century. During this period the humanity not only activities undertaken by the human society neglecting sustainable development, which are so numerous in the creative and simultaneously destructive latter half of the 20th century. During this period the humanity not only had the unprecedented achievements in engineering development, but also damaged nature more than ever. Such a predatory outrage upon the planet was caused by the impetuous technological revolution, which at that time had been declared as a watershed of the human history, until the most advanced people found that very grave environmental consequences were hidden behind its frontage.

Click to watch UTube: Video [Dying of the Aral Sea 2000-2011](#)





2013 Executive Board



**Commodore &
Past Commodore:
Billy Ive**



**Rear Commodore/
Race Chairman:
Dan Muller**



**Treasurer:
Michael Potocki**



**Vice
Commodore/
Social
Position not
filled**

**Information Officer:
Harry Harris**



**Wharfinger:
Bernadette Cramer**



On Saturday, May 4, Launch Day, all members launching need to be present at 08:00 a.m. sharp!

GBYC is a made up of volunteers that many hands make for light work. There are always cradles to move and help will be required on the two crane teams.

Team #1 works with the large crane putting the boats in the water. Team #2 co-ordinates with the smaller crane preparing the boats and the membership for putting the standing rigging on the boats.



Members before that weekend, should mark their cradles in a non-permanent way (possibly using bright green or orange tape) with their slip numbers (listing to be posted/emailed) so they are large enough to be visible by the crane operators and both of the crane teams.

Please be prepared with a minimum of 25'-30' bow and stern lines for your boat. You'll also need dock lines and bumpers for your boat once it is in the water.

Observe where the crane straps are when you're being lifted into the water. Put stickers on the sides of your hull where the straps were located for future use on Haul Out day.

If you're having your mast installed, insure that the mast is ready to go into the boat. Please be ready in regards to all the above points. When the cranes are slowed down, it costs the club and the entire membership extra money that might result in higher costs next year for lift-in and haul-out. Members assist each other in all phases of Launch Day. Don't hesitate to pitch in and/or help a fellow member.

Members are reminded that no boats are allowed in Grand Bend Yacht Club slips that have outstanding receivables. Any member who has not paid all dockage fees and late payment fee (s) by April 30, will not be allowed to launch or to take a GBYC slip until payments are received.

Feel free to ask questions or suggest improvements to these Launch Instructions.

Ray Rogolino,
Launch Organizer



**All Slip assignments
are subject to change**

Commodore's Message

Members, Associates and Friends of GBYC:

Greetings to all for 2013, a year that promises to bring a whole new look to the club. Water, but not having enough of it, sees us facing a situation that possibly no one dealt with before. Your Executive have been working behind the scenes since haul-out 2012 trying to look at solutions and the "what if's" As it stands, we are going ahead with launch, and have set out all our regularly scheduled events. Boom school applications have started to come in, and we are hoping for another successful year. The club property will require the normal spring maintenance, and due to water levels we will be lowering some of the docks. To this end we will require our \$50.00 work day volunteers for two days--the first day requiring a small number to start on the docks. We will endeavour to keep the lines of communication open to the members, and we wish you all a great season.



Bounty Sinking

COAST GUARD BEGINS PROBE INTO TALL SHIP'S FATAL SINKING

A U.S. Coast Guard hearing opens Tuesday to investigate the October sinking of the replica ship HMS Bounty off Cape Hatteras and the deaths of her captain and a crew member as the vessel fought unsuccessfully to outmaneuver Hurricane Sandy.

At issue in the hearings are the actions of the ship's captain, Robin Walbridge, who chose to head out to sea despite the approach of Sandy, one of the largest storms in decades to hit the U.S. East Coast.

The reproduction *HMS Bounty* was built for the 1962 filming of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, the story of the seizure in 1789 of the British ship from Captain William Bligh in the South Pacific.

The Bounty was taking on water when it went down in 30-foot waves and hurricane-force winds about 90 miles off Cape Hatteras on October 29. Fourteen people were saved in a dramatic Coast Guard rescue. The body of crew member Claudene Christian, 42, was picked up later; Walbridge, 63, was never found and is presumed drowned.

Gurnal Scott of member station WUNC reports that Tuesday "will begin eight days of hearing testimony to find out why the ship sank. Testimony will come from surviving crew members and those at the port where the Bounty departed from as well as Coast Guard rescuers."

Click to read the rest of the article which heavily criticizes the judgement of Walbridge, the Bounty's captain,



The HMS Bounty replica sails past the Chicago skyline in July 2003.



Wharfinger Update

By Bernadette Cramer

April 2013

So I think it is really Spring.
The Tundra Swans are back!



There is considerable uncertainty and angst about the coming sailing season. Here's an update:

We have applied for a "dredging permit", which will coincide with the efforts of the Municipality in the river. We will not likely be able to remove more than 'silt and debris' from our slips, but given our current soundings and water predictions we should be all right. I don't think I'm being optimistic for our average boaters.



George Dutka's photographic submissions March 26

The Municipality appears committed to keeping the channel mouth open with the new 'sand sucker' they have purchased, and have some Federal funding for spot dredging along the river. We will need to be diligent with the Municipality to ensure the 'sand sucking' happens appropriately and timely to ensure a useable and safe harbour mouth.



Although we have not received approval for our "dredging" yet, I have every expectation permission is forthcoming to do what's allowable. The Cruising Club already did some dredging--they had no ice this year.

We did allocate some important dates:

Saturday April 27 @ 9 am

Work Day Part 1

We planned a workday to lower docks on the West end of our slips, to enable people to access their boats!
We need ten or so folks to assist, no life jackets needed!

Saturday May 4, 2013

Launch Day

Subject to change, depending on dredging.

Saturday May 11, 2013

Work Day Part 2

The regular chores we normally do. Yes, Ole, that includes painting!

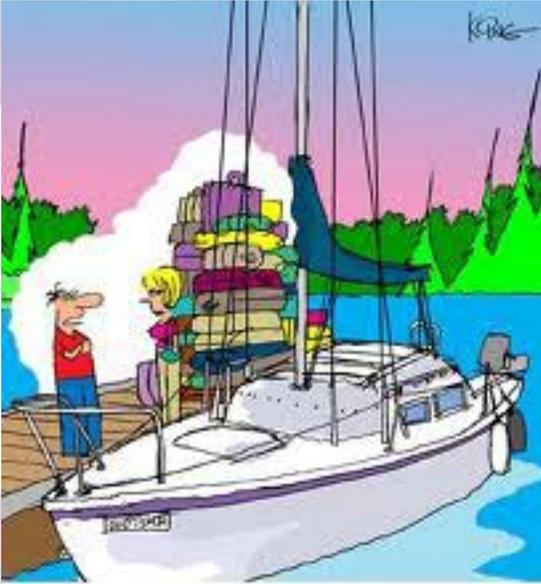
Slip assignments concentrate more on depth and length this year than beam. Flexibility is needed for changes after launch. Soundings will again take place just prior to launch for surity.

Refunds for dockage fees apply when your boat can't float.

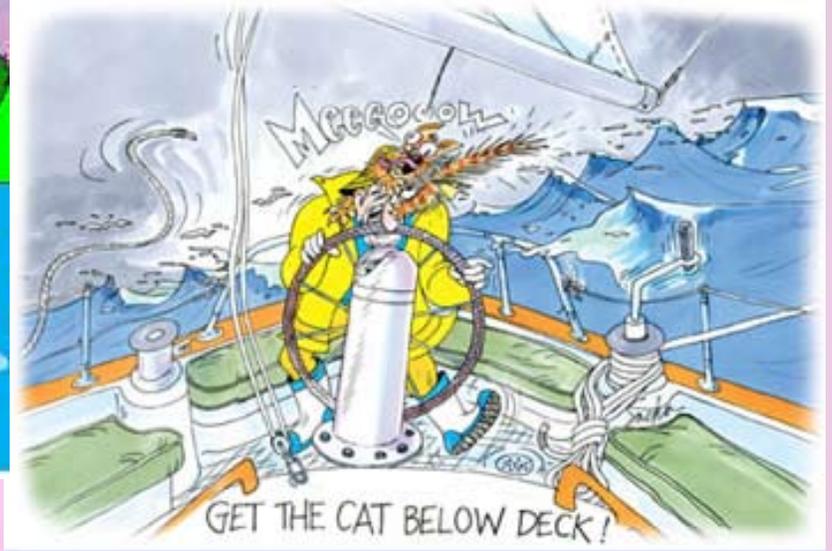




Fun Pics



"Yes, I do think you overpacked!"





2013 Events Calendar

Saturday, Apr 27: 9am **Work Day Part 1**

Saturday, May 4 8am **Launch Day**. (dredging dependent!)

Saturday May 11 9am **Work Day Part 2**



Saturday May 18, **Commodore's Brunch and Sail Past**
Dave Bannister photograph

Sunday May 19, **Victoria Day Regatta, Day 1**

Monday May 20, **Victoria Day Regatta, Day 2**



Saturday May 25, **Port Franks, Race 1**
Dave Bannister photograph



Sunday June 2, **Spring Series Race, Day 1**

Sunday June 9, **Spring Series Race, Day 2**

Sunday June 16, **Spring Series Race, Day 3**



Saturday June 22, **Grand Bend 30**

Graham Males photograph



Sunday June 30 **Canada Day Party**,
Monday, July 1, **Village Fireworks Display**

Canada Day





Solo Sailor

Jeanne Socrates rounds Cape Horn 'in glassy sea

This week, in the dark of almost midnight, Jeanne Socrates, 70-year-old solo sailor extraordinaire, successfully rounded Cape Horn in her 38ft yacht Nereida in almost calm conditions and changed course to begin her crossing of the South Atlantic, at the very end of Day 78 of her third attempt at a nonstop, unassisted, solo circumnavigation.



Dockage Challenge

Which line should be secured first when entering a dock with pilings:



Bow

Spring

or Stern line

Watch to see which is correct and an explanation as to why the particular line is secured first.

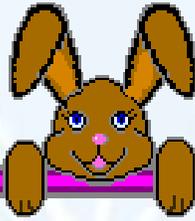
Grave Concerns



over water levels:

Bridge to Picnic Island at Honey Harbour, Georgian Bay, Ontario, December 2012. Normally there would be well over two feet or 71cm of ice and water under the bridge in the December low

Greetings



*“Just Found Out
Easter Bunnies
Can't Lay Eggs!”*

*Happy
Easter*

