



Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box 173  
Stoughton, WI 53589-0173  
**September 2011**

## President's Message ~ Bob Arndt

### Some Observations on Lake Property Taxes

Everyone would like to see their property taxes reduced. Here is the good news. It appears to me that I have come up with a simple way to reduce the taxes on your property. But first, a little history, especially for those who have been on the lake for less than 6 years. Between 2003 and 2005, Lake Kegonsa property values increased dramatically. Local government (Town of Dunn and Town of Pleasant Springs) and their assessors noted this and raised assessments dramatically. The chart on the following page compares the taxes paid on three pieces of property in the Town of Dunn over the past 11 years (that were not sold). As can be seen, the taxes on these lake properties rose substantially more than the farm property (zoned G1 G4 G5). The vacant lot is adjacent to the other lake property in the example. Most of the increase in the lake property in these examples can be attributed to the increased taxes on the land. The first two parcels are very representative and were selected because they started at nearly the same tax level. The next three of each yielded similar results.

So how do you decrease the taxes on your lake property? Actually, this is the bad news. You have to sell your house! If you sell your property in the Towns of Dunn or Pleasant Springs your assessment will be adjusted to the sale price in almost all cases. And yes, the odds are you will sell below the tax assessment value. The 25 Lake Kegonsa properties sold since January 1, 2009, have sold at an average of 90% (Dunn) or 87% (Pleasant Springs) of their assessed values at the time of the sale. *(This does not include any foreclosures.)* So, unfortunately, you will not reap any of the benefits. And what about non-lake sales. During the same period (2009-2011), the 63 non-lake properties that sold for over \$200,000 sold for an average of 112% (Dunn) and 106% (Pleasant Springs) of assessed value. Simply put, on average, a lake house in the Town of Dunn with a tax assessments of \$400,000 appears likely to sell for \$348,000 while a house off the lake with the same assessment is likely to sell for \$424,000. The same comparison for the Town of Pleasant Springs yields values of \$360,000 on the lake and \$448,000 off the lake.

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For More About FOLKS, Visit Our  
Website at [WWW.Kegonsa.org](http://WWW.Kegonsa.org)

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## Results From Our August 29, 2011 Member Survey

We had almost a 70% response rate to our survey, which is outstanding. Thanks to all who participated. Here is a summary of the results.

**Question #1** "FOLKS is collecting information about the water level on Lake Kegonsa. Please tell us how the water level was at your property around the day of this survey, August 29, 2011."

- Level is fine for our purposes 21%
- Level is ok, but could be a little higher-42%
- Water level is so low it is causing problems getting our boat on/off lift, or causing other issues-38%

Comment from FOLKS: The lake has been pretty much at the same level throughout the year until the first of September. For Lake Kegonsa the summer minimum is 843.00 feet and the summer maximum is 843.50. The lake has been near the minimum for most of the summer. As of the date of this survey the lake was just above summer minimum. But, even at this level 38% of our members were experiencing problems with the level of the lake.

**Question #2** Do you have any other comments about the water level?

There were 98 additional comments attached to this question. Many were positive about the consistent level of the lake this year, but the comments varied. We are going to use the address information members provided in the survey to try to determine which areas of the lake experience more problems associated with low lake levels. This information will be sent to the Yahara Lakes Advisory Group.

**Question #3** "Aquatic plant growth this year seems to vary depending on the location on the lake. How have the weeds been near your property this year?"

- There have been virtually no weeds-10%
- There have been few weeds until the last few weeks-22%
- There have been some weeds all year long-31%
- There have been a lot of weeds this year-27%
- There have been a lot of weeds near our property, but the weed cutting machines have removed most of them-4%

Comment from FOLKS: This is another reason that we asked for members addresses. Comments on the survey indicate that weed problems vary considerably depending on the location. Comments also suggest that these problem areas move around the lake from year to year. We will look into ways to collect objective data on a yearly basis. Cut weeds floating ashore continue to be a problem for some and this will also be addressed.

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## Results From Our August 29, 2011 Member Survey (Continued from Page 2)

**Question # 4** "We are considering allowing folks members to pay their dues using a credit card through PayPal. You would not have to have a PayPal account and only PayPal would see your card number. Is this something you would be interested in using, if it were available?"

- Yes 44%
- No 51%

Comment from FOLKS: Because of the high percentage of members who might want to use this service we will be adding Paypal as a payment option.

**Question #5** "We are considering having a Carp-O-Rama tournament next year. The idea would be to spear, or shoot carp with a bow and arrow. The fish would be weighed and prizes would be awarded based on weight. Removing carp from the lake would be beneficial and this could be a fun event. Is this something you would consider participating in?"

- Yes-42%
- No-53%

Comment from FOLKS: We definitely have enough interest to continue to evaluate the possibility of having an event like this. Many who would not participate did support the idea. And, yes, a Carp-O-Rama would include a way to dispose of the collected carp. We will also provide information about the advantages of reducing the carp population.

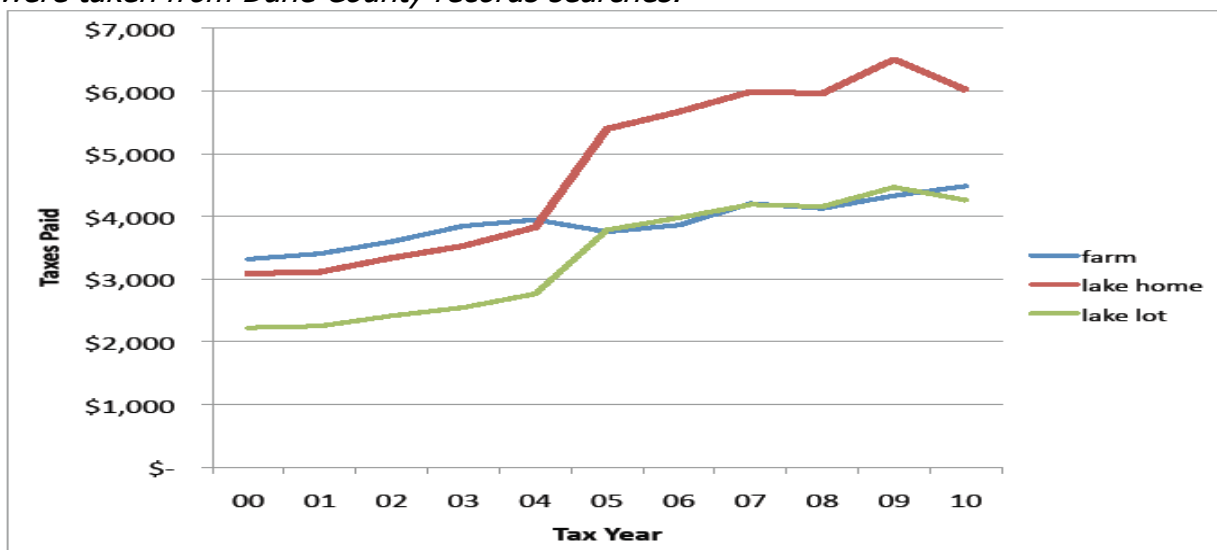
Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. FOLKS Board of Directors

## President's Message (Continued from Page 1)

Maybe something to talk about...

P.S. I got a little excited this summer when I saw my 2011 assessment dropped 2.5%. Now I am a little depressed since I saw the assessment on the off-the-lake parcel I used in the chart dropped 5.4%. I have to try to get some sleep.

*All data were taken from Dane County records searches.*



## UPDATE ON PIER REGISTRATION 7/1/2011

### **If you have sent in your registration forms, but have not heard anything back from the DNR:**

- We have been in contact with the DNR and they have suggested that if you filed your registration forms prior to 4/1/2011 and have not heard back from them to follow these guidelines:
  - Put a cover letter together explaining that you had submitted the forms prior to the 4/1/2001 deadline, but have not received an acceptance notification.
  - Mail this letter along with a copy of the forms that you originally sent in to them.
  - You don't have to include the pictures again
- If you prefer, you could scan the completed Registration Form and email it to [DNRPIers@wi.gov](mailto:DNRPIers@wi.gov)

Please send an email to [peterF@kegonsa.org](mailto:peterF@kegonsa.org) letting us know that you have resubmitted your registration forms. FOLKS would like to know how many people had to do this.

### **If you didn't submit the Registration Form before you have another chance to do it because the grandfathering deadline has been extended. The process has also been simplified a little. (Pictures and legal description are no longer required.)**

**You now have until April 1, 2012 to get this done. If you didn't do it before there is no reason to wait.**

In the summer of 2008 new legislation concerning the placement of piers went into effect. It created a registration system to grandfather piers placed before Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> 2004.

Q. Why is this important to me?

A. Because if you don't take advantage of this one time grandfathering opportunity you will fall under the new set of rules for piers, which for example limits the loading platform width to only 6 feet. It also limits the number of watercraft to two for every 50 feet of shoreline. By completing this simple application you can probably maintain your current pier and number of watercraft.

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**\*\*\*\*There is a very helpful website at <http://dnr.wi.gov/waterways/recreation/piers.html> that will ask a series of simple questions to help you determine which category you fall into and how to access the various forms. You should go there first.**

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Assistance for FOLKS members

We recognize that you might have questions. If you are a member of FOLKS please feel free to send any questions about this process to me at [peterf@kegonsa.org](mailto:peterf@kegonsa.org) and I will work with you to get the forms filled out properly.

With a little effort we can all feel confident that our piers meet the new regulations and are registered. This could be very important to you in the years ahead.

Peter Foy  
FOLKS Board Member [PeterF@Kegonsa.org](mailto:PeterF@Kegonsa.org)

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## UPDATE ON PIER REGISTRATION 7/1/2011 (Continued From Page 4)

Lake Kegonsa is located in an Area of Special Natural Resource Interest (ASNRI), so there are basically four different categories:

1. Your pier meets the exempt status, which means you don't have to do anything. There is no permit, registration, or fee required. To meet the exempt status your pier must meet the following requirements:
  - Width-Maximum width of 6 ft. If you have a loading platform over 6 ft, you do not meet the exemption. The loading platform is usually on the end of the pier and the width includes the stem section that it is attached to.
  - Length-The length needed to moor your boat, use a boat lift, or reach a 3 foot water depth, which ever is greater.
  - Location-Does not interfere with the rights of other riparian owners
  - Number of boats-Two for the first 50 feet and one for every additional 50 feet. If your lot is 75 feet you are still restricted to two boats. This includes Personal Watercraft (PWC).
2. If your pier is not exempt, but the pier had been installed before Feb 6, 2004 you can go ahead and enjoy your pier again this summer, just don't expand or modify the pier you had before 2004. Most piers that are not exempt are eligible to be grandfathered through a onetime free registration process. To be able to register for the grandfathered status your pier must meet the following requirements:
  - Have been placed on, or before Feb 6, 2004. This could have been placed by the prior owner of the property.
  - Have a main stem (portion connecting to land) that is a maximum 8 feet wide.
  - Have a loading platform at the end of the pier that is a maximum of 200 square feet or a maximum of 300 square feet if it's 10 feet wide, or less. The 200 square feet will cover loading platforms that are typically at the end of piers, with a bench, etc. The 300 square feet will be primarily for piers that have additional sections for access to watercraft.
  - Not interfere with the rights of other riparian owners.

**All existing piers that meet these criteria must be registered with the DNR by April 1, 2012.**

**Some instructions for completing the registration Form 3500-114 are included at the end of this article. This form can be found at**

**[http://dnr.wi.gov/waterways/permit\\_apps/Pier\\_Registration\\_Form.pdf](http://dnr.wi.gov/waterways/permit_apps/Pier_Registration_Form.pdf)**

Of course, if you want to be sure you won't need to register your pier, you can also choose to modify your pier so that it meets the exempt status identified in point 1 above.

3. If you have a pier that was placed prior to Feb 6, 2004 that does not meet the grandfather requirements you have 3 options: 1) Downsize or modify your pier to meet the grandfathering criteria AND THEN register your pier. (Remember if you modify your loading platform to be between 200 and 300 square feet it CANNOT be more than 10 feet wide). 2) Modify your pier to meet the pier planner AND THEN DO NOTHING. 3) Apply for an individual permit for NO FEE. This process can be found at: [http://dnr.wi.gov/waterways/permit\\_apps/pack07b.pdf](http://dnr.wi.gov/waterways/permit_apps/pack07b.pdf) The individual permit application is (Form #3500-053H, PDF 39KB)

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## UPDATE ON PIER REGISTRATION 7/1/2011 (Continued From Page 5)

4. If your pier was put in the water after February 6, 2004 it must meet the size limits outlined in the Pier Planner (Pub FH017-March 2009) This can be found at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/waterways/recreation/piers/html>, or you can seek an individual permit with a \$500 fee with state review.

### **Instructions for completing the Pier, Dock or Wharf Registration Form 3500-114**

Section 1- Landowner Information-This is basic information about the landowner

Section 2-Autorized Representative Contact Information, if necessary

Section 3-Pier, Dock or Wharf Location

- Waterbody-Lake Kegonsa
- Area of Special Natural Resource Interest-AnswerYes, for Lake Kegonsa
- Property address-Address where pier is located
- Municipality-Town

Section 4- Pier, Dock or Wharf Placement Date-Best guess as to when dock was placed for the first time.

Section 5- Pier Dock or Wharf Design-Fill in total feet of shoreline and number of boat slips. Also include a sample drawing along with the requested information. Remember the Loading Platform includes the Main Stem Section, where the platform first exceeds 8 ft. Do not include this section again in the Main Stem length calculation.

Section 6- Certification and Permission-Fill in Name, Phone number, Sign and date.

The address where you mail the form is on the front page of Form 3500-114. Or, you can scan the completed Registration Form and email it to: [DNRPiers@wi.gov](mailto:DNRPiers@wi.gov)

### **Procedure if you want to record your pier registration with the Register of Deeds**

This shouldn't be necessary, but you might want to do this, even though it is not required.

- To get registration permanently tied to your property for future owners
- Might be additional protection if DNR changes its rules again years from now
- Complete Form 3500-114A, which can be found at:  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/waterways/recreation/piers.html>
  - **This is similar to Form 3500-114, except that it requires a legal description of your property. (The easiest thing to do is probably just cut the legal description off a copy of your tax bill)**
- Submit this Form 3500-114A to the DNR along with Form 3500-114. **DON'T SIGN IT.**

The two forms must be sent in together, so even if you aren't sure you are going to want to get this on your deed you might want to complete it and send it in, so that you can decide later if you want to complete the process.

- The DNR will complete the bottom of the second page saying that your registration was accepted and it will return it to you.
- You would then sign it in front of an attorney, or Notary Public
- Submit the completed form 3500-114A to:  
Register of Deeds  
Dane County Register of Deeds  
City County Building  
210 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd  
Madison, WI 53703
- Include a check for \$30. If the fee isn't included form will be returned.

## **FOLKS OFFICERS 2011**

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FOLKS monthly board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month and the public is welcome to attend. Next Meeting October 12, 2011, 5:30 - 7:00 PM.

Halverson's Supper Club, 1965 Barber Drive, Stoughton, WI 53589

**Send news of interest to FOLKS to:  
P.O. Box 173  
Stoughton, WI 53589 or  
DaveL@kegonsa.org**

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**Return Service Requested**

**FOLKS Business Members**

Anchorbank, SSB	877-4108
Coldwell Banker Success Realtor	873-7731
Crown Point Resort	873-7833
Dean Thomas Homes, Inc	873-1935
Jim's Tree Service	838-8188
Kegonsa Cove	838-6494
Mike Jensen Taxidermy	838-4862
Quam's Motor Sports	873-3366
Springer's	205-9300
Stark Company Realtors - Marjie Hanssen (205-3003) and Tony Hill (205-3030)	
Stoughton Country Club	873-7861
The UPS Store	877-2679
Web-Net	alan@web-net.us
Brown's Boats and Bait	873-6770
The Utschig Group of Chiropractic Clinics	274-2266
Schroeder & Associates	873-8232