



# Indian Lake Borough

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

April 22, 2012

## Mayor's Newsletter

Notwithstanding the spring snowstorm that is forecast, the summer months will soon be upon us. As we approach the summer season, a few reminders are appropriate so that we can all have an enjoyable but safe summer season.

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

As a result of the budget changes causing a shift to a part-time police force, our two former officers, Denise Miller and Shawn Hillegas, have resigned to pursue full-time opportunities elsewhere. We thank them for their service and wish them well. In response, the Borough has been interviewing a number of applicants and has hired one new officer while continuing to evaluate additional applicants. We anticipate placing at least two and potentially three part-time officers on our roster. As of this writing, Officer Mark Custer, from Central City, has been hired and will be introduced to residents at the Annual Town Hall Meeting on May 19<sup>th</sup>. He comes to us with past experience with the Seward Police Department. Please make him feel welcome as you see him on patrol.

On a separate note, the Borough has recently been offered the opportunity to bid on a Police vehicle offered by 7 Springs Borough who has furloughed its entire police force opting for private security. Our current cruiser is 8 years old (2004), which is several years beyond its useful and reliable life as a Police vehicle. We lost several weeks of coverage this past year because the cruiser was down for maintenance. Given our budget constraints, we have been understandably hesitant to purchase a new vehicle (anticipated cost is approximately \$32K) and are continuing to use our existing cruiser despite the fact that it has over 140K miles on it. The vehicle offered by 7 Springs is a 2008 Ford Expedition with only 62K miles. Notwithstanding Borough lettering, it is ready for service. The Borough Council authorized submission of a bid and we can only hope that we are the successful bidder. If so, this will provide us with a reliable vehicle for an additional 3-4 years at a substantial cost savings to the taxpayers.

Thanks to Marc Alaia and the Indian Lake Marina for storage of the Police Boat this past winter at no cost to the taxpayers. The Marina has also graciously provided docking space to the Borough at no cost. Be sure to thank Marc for his dedication to the Borough.

### **SPEEDING IN THE BOROUGH**

As the summer months approach and more of our part-time residents return to the Borough, speeding within the Borough creates a significant safety issue. As you know, many residents walk and bike on the Borough roadways. There is also increased road traffic. Because there are many blind curves, traveling beyond the speed limit creates a significant risk of a vehicle-pedestrian or a multi-vehicle accident. We can mitigate this risk in two ways. Those wishing to walk/bike are encouraged to use the hiking/biking trail in the Borough. Those driving within the Borough are asked to be especially mindful of their speed. The Police Department has been instructed to issue speeding citations without warning to any operator traveling at 10 mph or more over the posted limit. Please preclude the necessity for such action while at the same time helping to keep our roads safe by being mindful of your speed.

## **BOATING SAFETY**

As we approach boating season, a few reminders are appropriate. As I reviewed the PA Fish & Boat Commission regulations, I was surprised to learn that some adults, even those operating boats, need to have a Boating Safety Certificate. According to the PA Fish & Boat Commission web site:

*Boating Safety Education Certificates are required:*

- *To operate a personal watercraft*
- *For persons born on or after January 1, 1982, to operate boats powered by motors greater than 25 horsepower.*

*Approved permanent Boating Safety Education Certificates for Pennsylvania residents must be issued by the PA Fish & Boat Commission. Out of state boaters must have a certificate issued for a course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA).*

Therefore, anyone under the age of 30 years of age needs to have a Boating Safety Certificate to operate a power boat with a motor greater than 25 horsepower. As previously understood, all operators of a PWC (jetski) must have passed the Boating Safety Education Course. Additionally, make sure that you maintain sufficient personal floatation devices, a fire extinguisher, and a signaling whistle or horn on your boat. The Fish Commission, who also patrols the lake, regularly checks for these safety items.

A reminder of a few of our Lake-specific boating rules is appropriate as well.

1. The lake traffic pattern is COUNTER-CLOCKWISE.
2. All powerboats must remain at least 100 feet from the shoreline or any dock or watercraft. In the narrow areas of the lake, you may have to give way to boats towing skiers and tubes in order to maintain 100' of separation.
3. Jet Ski operators are reminded that operation of a Jet Ski within 100' of a boat, moving or not, is illegal. DO NOT "jump the wake" behind a moving boat.

I have asked the Police to ensure that no one's safety is compromised. Our goal is not to write citations but rather to ensure that the lake remains a safe recreational environment. Unfortunately, the police cannot be everywhere. Regardless, I hope that all boaters will operate responsibly so that enforcement is not necessary. Operating boats according to the boating regulations will ensure that ALL can have an enjoyable and safe boating season.

## **BOAT INSPECTIONS/INDIAN LAKE REGISTRATION STICKERS**

During the transition in our police force, you may have experienced difficulty in getting a response from the Police Department. In the interim, please direct all inquiries to the Borough office (754-8161). This is especially true for boat inspections. I apologize for any delay that you have experienced. If you need a boat inspected, please contact the Borough office. Where a member of the police department is not on duty, I and members of the Borough staff are completing the boat inspection forms necessary to get a boat registered for the first time on the lake.

All are reminded to take care of your boat registrations by mail as soon as possible. Registration forms have been mailed to all those who had boats registered on the lake last year. Please do not delay in taking care of submitting your registration application. Because we have limited office staff, we can no longer adequately service walk-in registrations. While you can personally drop off your application if you wish, those that want immediate processing will be charged a \$30 administrative fee. Council authorized the charging of the \$30 administrative fee for those who request walk-in immediate service to incentivize residents to mail in their applications so that they can be processed in a manner that does not shut down other necessary administrative functions.

Experience also has taught me that there are also some that will procrastinate and forget about their registrations until a holiday weekend. Please understand that our employees do not work on holiday weekends such as Memorial Day and 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekends and as a result, immediate service will not be available. Boating without a current registration is not a solution. While I hope it is not necessary for the Police to issue a \$300 citation to anyone because they did not obtain their boating registration, I have instructed them to do so without warning. Please be responsible and get your registration now. There is no point in delaying.

### **BUOYS AND FLOATING RAFTS**

A reminder is in order with respect to bouy's and floating rafts. The following is intended to remind all of the ordinance provisions relative to Buoy's and Floating rafts and to give anyone who is not in conformance with these standards the opportunity to take appropriate remedial measures as a means of mitigating the need for formal enforcement.

#### **BUOY'S**

According to the boating ordinance, a lakefront lot owner may install a buoy no more than 40' from the shoreline at a point perpendicular to the shoreline at the side property line. Before installing such a buoy, realize that a permit is also required from the PA Fish Commission. To the extent that a buoy is a "structure" as defined in the Zoning Ordinance, an encroachment permit issued by the zoning officer is also required. There are several buoy's throughout the lake that have been installed well beyond the 40' limit. These cause navigational hazards to boaters and diminish the usable area of the lake.

To the extent that those who have installed these buoy's did so in response to boaters that operate too close to the shoreline, it is hoped that the notice above coupled with increased enforcement will curb such unsafe activity.

#### **FLOATING RAFTS:**

It is noted that a number of residents have installed floating rafts/swim platforms beyond the shoreline in front of their property. While these structures are not defined in the Zoning Ordinance, to the extent that they are an encroachments, an encroachment permit is necessary (granted by the Zoning Officer). Understand also that the Zoning Ordinance grants a permissive use area of only 30' into the lake in the areas adjacent of the lake bordering any residential district (R-1/Park). Please contact the Borough Zoning Officer, Dean Snyder, to obtain the appropriate encroachment permit and remember that these floating rafts must be kept within 30' of the shoreline. Finally, if anchoring to the lake bottom (as opposed to tying them to something on the shoreline) you may additionally need a DEP Chapter 105 small project permit similar to a floating dock.

### **DAM REMEDIATION AND POTENTIAL LAKE DRAWDOWN**

As reported in the Borough Council President's newsletter, the Borough authorized the Borough Manager to submit an application for a lake drawdown for this fall. In response, an e-mail inquiry was forwarded to the Borough as to the reason for the drawdown. I thought I would share the question and answer so that all may be better informed. This issue will be discussed in more detail at the annual Town Hall Meeting in May, but for those that cannot attend, I hope this will clarify the issue for you.

**Q:** Do you know the rationale for drawing the lake down October 1 again this year...we really love the October weekends on the pontoon when the colors are peak and this is very disappointing to us...we

understood when the dam work was going on, is this more of that? We really look forward to Octobers on the water!!

**A:** There are two purposes associated with potentially lowering the height of the lake this year.

1. We have a recommendation of our aquatic engineer to perform a draw-down to assist with weed control. There will be a presentation by our engineer at the town meeting in May relative to this issue. In the meantime, contact Lynn Shimer, who is the member of Council in charge of the environmental committee, for updates on this issue.
2. Final Phase of the Dam Remediation Effort – work needs to be done in the area of the spillway to modify how water flows around the dam into the spillway area to permit sufficient flow so as to preclude having to raise the dam even higher. It is possible, however, that this work will not get completed this year. If not, and if our aquatic engineer advises against doing a drawdown two years in a row, the plan is to not do a drawdown this year.

Because of the permitting associated with a draw-down, we must apply now even if we end up not doing it. The Borough is notifying residents of the potential of a draw down now so they can make tentative plans for dock and seawall work (time is necessary to obtain appropriate DEP Chapter 105 permits). While possible that a drawdown may not occur this year, if one is necessary, it seems unfair to spring it on the residents at the last minute.

It is unfortunate that we are unable to be more definite, but there are a number of factors at play for which we simply do not have answers. For now, we are taking a “better safe than sorry” approach. Please feel free to reach out to Paul Cornez who is the member of Council most knowledgeable about the dam remediation efforts and status or Lynn Shimer who is in charge of the weed control effort.

### **LONG TERM DEBT**

As you likely know by now, the Borough has concluded conversion of our short-term line of credit that has financed our Dam remediation effort to a long-term principle and interest loan. Rather than focus on the details of the loans, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the members of Council, especially the new members, for exercising patience with this process.

We had hoped to finalize this effort earlier in the year; however, a loan offer by First Summit Bank with a substantially lower interest rate was proposed as an alternative to the offer we had from Somerset Trust. Because of the significant potential savings, Council acted prudently and demonstrated considerable patience in evaluating this option. Ultimately, First Summit was only able to commit to half of the loan amount needed with Somerset Trust agreeing to finance the remaining amount. Regardless, this solution ended up saving the taxpayers approximately \$600K in interest over the life of the loan and once the loan is closed, the Borough will begin making regular principle and interest payments on this debt.

In addition to the efforts of our Borough Council, considerable thanks is due to Somerset Trust who once again has demonstrated its commitment to Indian Lake Borough by remaining steadfast in its commitment to assisting the Borough throughout this process. We couldn't have gotten through this process without them.

/s/

Michael Miscoe

Mayor, Indian Lake Borough