



# Big Star Lake Party Line

Fall 2024

## Presidents Corner:

As many of you know, Bob Tiggelman is stepping down as president after many years of tireless service to BSLA. Since Bob has such big shoes to fill, the role of president will be a dual role for the next year. Lew Gorbach and Tom Seeley will assume the role of Co-Presidents. Lew's previous roll as Vice President will be assumed by Kris White. Returning officers include Treasurer Mike Sullivan and Judy Alphenhaar as Secretary.

**A bit about us: Lew Gorbach;** My wife Jan and I have been on Big Star Lake since February 2008. Our family has been enjoying Lake life at our cottage on Big Star Lake. It has been an honor & privilege to be on the BSLA Board and be responsible for our annual fireworks show. I believe in our mission to preserve and maintain the ecological integrity of Big Star Lake (our most valuable resource/asset). We are looking forward to our new roles and look forward to many great years ahead on Big Star Lake.

**Tom Seeley;** Nancy and I are new to lake life. We've been enjoying Big Star Lake since June 2019. Our family has enjoyed all the area has to offer. Hunting, fishing and boating. I've been a board member the past 3 years and look forward to continuing our pledge to support a healthy lake for all to enjoy.

**Kris White;** I have been enjoying Big Star Lake since the early 1970's with my family, first as renters and then as my parents purchased a cottage in 1976 – and are still there today. I purchased my first cottage in 1999 and now have settled into our “forever family cottage” on Minising Point. We love all things BSL – watersports, wildlife, swimming, the list goes on! Our entire family loves Big Star Lake, and I am honored to be part of the board whose primary mission is to ensure this beautiful asset is well cared for and here for generations to come. We are also happy to support fun activities for our families and friends to enjoy and to make memories.

We are always looking for new members to join the board. If you are interested in becoming a board member of your lake association, please contact any board member.



Pictured: L to R: Tom Seeley, Fire Chief Doug Wolgamott, Lew Gorbach. Donation presentation from BSLA.



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For More information and Event Updates check out our Website  
[www.bigstarlake.com](http://www.bigstarlake.com)

# BIG STAR LAKE ASSOCIATION

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# 2024 Big Star Lake Fishing Contest

*Judy Alphenaar*

Did you know that the annual Big Star Lake fishing contest also includes trophies awarded for catching the biggest frog and turtle? Turtles are a very important component of the Big Star Lake ecosystem and the painted turtle is one of the most common and colorful species of turtles found in the lake.

The top shell of a turtle is called a carapace and the bottom shell is called the plastron. Turtles use their shells to hide from predators. Painted turtles are easily recognized by bright yellow stripes on their neck and throat, patches of red on its limbs, black and red edges, and yellow crossbands on its carapace. The male painted turtle is smaller than the female which grows to about five or six inches long.

Painted turtles eat water plants, insects, and worms. Turtles in Michigan usually lay their eggs in late May or early June. The female Painted Turtle uses its hind legs to create a nest in sandy soil. She lays a clutch of between six and twelve eggs. Under the heat of the sun, the eggs hatch in two to three months. They grow to full size in about five to seven years.

You can find Painted Turtles on Big Star Lake during the summer months in or near the water often spending time sunning on docks, rafts, logs, rocks, or floating water plants.

This summer we had a record-breaking number of over 90 entries to the Big Star Lake fishing contest! Please keep in mind that the BSL Association expects all who participate in the contest to comply with all Michigan DNR rules and regulations regarding fishing licenses, minimum/maximum length, maximum daily catch count and open season for each species. We encourage all ages and experience levels to take part in the fun and practice catch and release especially with frogs and turtles.



Check out the 2024 winners to find out who won the trophies and maybe you can make the trophy list next summer!

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## 2024 Fall Big Star Lake Road Clean Up

Did you know that one wonderful way to celebrate the vibrant seasons of Spring and Fall at Big Star Lake is by grabbing an orange trash bag and a sturdy pair of gloves?

Join us for the annual Big Star Lake Spring and Fall road cleanup, where you and your family, friends, and neighbors can dedicate just one hour to volunteer outdoors. Together, we can beautify the picturesque, tree-lined road that encircles the lake.



A heartfelt shout-out goes to the dedicated volunteers who return year after year to participate in this meaningful activity. The Fall 2024 road cleanup was a tremendous success, thanks to you! Your willingness to invest your time and effort into keeping Big Star Lake's road clean and visually appealing is immensely appreciated.

Make sure to mark your calendars for the upcoming Spring road cleanup in 2025, scheduled from Saturday, May 17 through Monday, May 26. We look forward to seeing you there, making a positive impact on our beloved community!



# Congratulations to the 2024 Big Star Lake Fishing Contest Winners!

## Ages 0 – 5

	Species	Length
Mason Hesselink	Bluegill, Sunfish, Pumpkinseed	7.5 inches
Caleb Harms	Largemouth Bass	18 inches
Maaike Kelder	Perch	9 inches
Reagan Bush	Smallmouth Bass	17 inches

## Ages 6 – 11

	Species	Length
Porter Westhuis	Bluegill, Sunfish, Pumpkinseed	9.75 inches
Patrick Baldrige	Bluegill, Sunfish, Pumpkinseed	9.75 inches
Carter Jacques	Crappie, Speckled Bass, Speck	12.75 inches
Jack Harms	Frog	10 inches
Jack Harms	Largemouth Bass	23 inches
Porter Westhuis	Perch	12 inches
Gavin Hesselink	Rock Bass	10 inches
Gavin Hesselink	Smallmouth Bass	20 inches
Nolan Orazem	Turtle	8.5 inches
Porter Westhuis	Walleye	23 inches

## Ages 12 – 15

	Species	Length
Bryson Orazem	Bluegill, Sunfish, Pumpkinseed	9.5 inches
Bryson Orazem	Crappie, Speckled Bass, Speck	12.5 inches
Bryson Orazem	Frog	10.5 inches
Jay Kleinheksel	Largemouth Bass	21.5 inches
Bryson Orazem	Perch	9 inches
Bryson Orazem	Rock Bass	12.5 inches
Rowan Phillips	Smallmouth Bass	20.5 inches
Bryson Orazem	Turtle	5.5 inches
Rowan Phillips	Walleye	26 inches

## Ages 16 – Adult

	Species	Length
Megan Pryzbyz	Bluegill, Sunfish, Pumpkinseed	11.125 inches
Carl Wierenga	Crappie, Speckled Bass, Speck	12.5 inches
Deak Thornton	Largemouth Bass	21.5 inches
James Bruggink	Perch	11.25 inches
Carl Wierenga	Pike	32 inches
John Gorter	Smallmouth Bass	20 inches
Bob Daining	Walleye	27 inches



# Membership

Kris White

Many thanks to all of you who continue to support the BSLA through your membership. Many of you have shared frustration that roughly half of property owners are members of the association. We as a board are also concerned that more property owners don't feel a sense of urgency and action to participate in our association whose primary purpose is to protect this amazing natural resource that we all enjoy. Our mission is to ensure the lake and watershed is healthy, vibrant and a source of enjoyment for generations to come. We cannot think of a much better investment in the minimal member fee of \$50, to ensure this mission is met.

What we know- is that all over the country, participation in associations are on the decline. Studies show that people report that they are "just too busy", and that the work "is someone else's job". We believe that our mission is compelling, and that all property owners should have a vested interest not only in the lake, but ensuring some of the treasured traditions, such as the fireworks, road run and fishing contest continue to be available to all.

Several years ago, when membership had reached an all-time low, the board went door to door, to talk to our BSL neighbors- to educate about the association and invite/encourage participation. We did see a gain in our membership following this activity to our current 50% level.

So now, we are asking you for help. We will announce some new strategies for getting the word out in hopes of bringing all property owners into the association, but your feedback and ideas would be greatly appreciated. If you have thoughts or ideas, I would invite you to reach out to me directly and share your thoughts at [kkswhite@comcast.net](mailto:kkswhite@comcast.net). Again, thank you for your support. We as board members serve because we cherish our time at the lake and want to ensure we do all we can to ensure BSL remains the amazing resource that it is.



## Poker Run 2024

Mike Van Dyken

Last year's Poker Run was another huge success. The weather cooperated and there were a lot of participants. We were able to use the proceeds to make a donation to the Lake County Fire Department and Tall Oaks Camp.



Thank you to the dock hosts; the event can't happen without all of you!

Thanks again to our friends at Tall Oaks Camp for letting us use their beachfront for the event. We wouldn't be able to do the Poker Run without their support.

Next year's date will be announced in spring newsletter.

We are currently looking for dock hosts for next year. Please email me at [firefighter1828@yahoo.com](mailto:firefighter1828@yahoo.com) if you are interested.



# Big Star Lake Fire Works 2025



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## PLEASE NOTE:

We do not have a confirmed date from Great Lakes Fireworks Pyrotechnics. I have requested July 4, 2025 or July 5. When we have a confirmed date we will notify the membership.

The Fireworks will be put on by Great Lakes Fireworks from West Branch Michigan. Memorial shells are available for a minimum donation of \$250, which is a tax deductible donation made out to BSLA. Memorial shells will be acknowledged on our website. All donations & Sponsorships are Greatly appreciated for this Exciting Community Event. If you are interested in becoming a Sponsor and or a donor please contact me at 616-638-0488 or e-mail me at [gorbachlew@yahoo.com](mailto:gorbachlew@yahoo.com). The BSLA annual fireworks is just one of the many fine events your association provides. Pictures and comments are always welcome.

Sincerely yours,  
Lew Gorbach  
[gorbachlew@yahoo.com](mailto:gorbachlew@yahoo.com)

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## Music on the Lake

*Tom Seeley*

Once again we had a great concert on the water! Our new band, **Dewsouth** played a nice mix of country and rock n roll both old and new.

Once again a big "Thank You" to **Tall Oaks Campground** for providing beach space on the water to have this great event.

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## 2024 Road Race

*Gary Bissonette*

We had a great group of runners this year with 167 running in the 5K and a record 32 (16 last year) runners in the 15K.

Unfortunately, during the race there was an accident with one of the runners. Although we understand she has recovered, it has led us to reconsider safety around this event. Safety is of utmost concern for the BSLA Board and as a result we are working with local officials and law enforcement to evaluate this event including road closures, among other things. As soon as a full evaluation is complete, options reviewed and the board has had an opportunity to review recommendations and decisions made, they will be communicated to all members.

We appreciate the concerns and are aware this is a favorite event for many of our members. We are committed to finding a way to enhancing safety so that it is an event that can continue to be enjoyed by all for years to come. Again, congratulations to all the runners and stay safe.



# Government Report

Larry Treece

Greetings to all BSLA members.

Thank you for your membership and those who serve on the Board. We try to do our best and realize that to lead into the future we must learn TODAY....we keep that in mind as not everyone will always agree on issues but we keep the pathway open to solutions and discussions.

Thank you for your support and donations of time and other items as the years go by. When I write these articles I always think of the many relationships that go into the "Governmental" section of this organization from Lansing to Lake County. The Sheriff Department, Marine Division, Fire Rescue, Life EMS, Road Commission, County Commissioners, Restorative Lake Sciences, Township Trustees and so many others. Just thank you for listening and trying to help us work together to improve safety, fun and living around our Lake.

First thing I want to report as of this writing, I do NOT know when the Cell Tower will be up and running. My guess is before Thanksgiving as fiber optic should be run by then. I know the current Township Supervisor, Uncle Don, would like to have it before he leaves office. Many of you know that Bob Mateja won the primary in August and he is all about getting that tower running. I want to thank Bobs opponent, Chris Gross, as well for her interest in Township issues and serving Lake Township.

Things have been pretty quiet at the township as the summer winds down. It was a busy summer around here, don't you think. Plenty of building and improvements around the lake. I do know that our Board Presidents will comment on work being done to keep our lake "healthy" from invasive species so I will let them handle that info. I spoke with Leroy Williams at the Road Commission and I know that no large projects were done but we did get patching, grading and some striping done along center lines.

The Marine Patrol felt they had a good year on the water with plenty of friendly contacts as lake users are getting use to seeing them and interacting with them about issues of concern with after hour boating and the latest "speed limits" concerns and safety. SGT Bob Myers and his staff have worked hard to build trust and safety for all. Some tickets were issued but probably down just a bit. SGT Meyers and the Marine Patrol were chosen to do some State level training classes in our area and it was my honor to meet many Marine officers and candidates this past summer. He also says thank you for our yearly donation to cover expenses of the Marine Patrol.

In closing, I will tell you about reports from Restorative Lake Sciences. Mike Solomon is the one who helps survey the lake and to oversee the results of treatment. He told me this past week, "we could not have had a better year." They treated less milfoil and Big Star is responding very well even with the water lower and the possibility of more sunlight penetration. He is attending a conference next month on invasive species and hydrilla is one of the species they are keeping an eye on. He looks forward to speaking again with us at our annual meeting. He also stated the latest rain we have had is helpful and a GOOD winter would help us with levels.

Have a good Fall and hope to see you at...The Golf Course, Natahka, Housemans or the famous "MR. BIBBS"





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### **New Efforts to Control Nuisance Geese**

They have waved the white flag in trying to control and relocate problem Canada Geese flocks. The people in Lansing that control Canada Geese populations – Michigan Natural Resources Commission – have proposed authorizing qualifying crews from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services to use targeted lethal control methods. This replaces a longstanding nuisance goose relocation program that state officials say is ineffective. Populations have soared.

In the last few years, we've seen a significant increase of Canadian geese on Big Star Lake. Many folks like to watch and report on the loons that come to our lake and nest. All good. But Canada Geese are prolific and can be annoying creatures causing a complete mess and a health concern with the droppings they leave on beaches, docks and lawns. In just a few years, a pair of geese can easily become 50 to 100 birds. Their feces will pollute the water, foul the areas around the lake, and also damage the lawn and other vegetation. Landowners have tried tactics that include pyrotechnics, dogs, barriers, laser pointers (at night), distress calls, hunting, or grape-flavored repellents all with limited success. Unless action is taken the goose population will continue to grow and become more of a problem for property owners on Big Star Lake.

The new policy will allow some lake associations, golf courses, municipalities and other goose-aggrieved parties to hire federal crews to perform egg/nest destruction control as an option for Spring 2025 to be performed by a service provider (TBD).

This topic will be discussed in further detail at our upcoming Fall meeting with more information and specifics to follow.

Mark Hoekstra

Big Star Lake Association Board Member

Source: Michigan Environmental Watch, Sept. 12, 2024  
Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources