

# The Amston Laker

## A Note From Our President

Hi neighbors,

Let me welcome you all to the 2022 summer season. It is my sincere hope that everyone is doing well and that life will once again start to feel a little more normal.

But normal...what is that? Have you seen the early morning mist settling across the lake before it burns off – welcoming a glorious new day? Or the flapping wings of 20 Canada Geese as they honk their favorite tune gliding effortlessly across the lake? Some things never change.

Whatever “normal” is to you, remember how lucky we all are to be witness to those few things in our community unaffected by anything these last two years. Take a moment or two this summer season and enjoy this wonderful neighborhood we are all part of. There may be a new normal going forward...but don't forget to take in a sunset once in a while.

As always, please be safe and smart.

*Frank Hoisl - ALD President*

## A Fond Farewell from the Connors

Nineteen years is a pretty long time. That's how many years ago we bought our cottage at Amston Lake. And we are so glad we did. We discovered a few old friends there and made a lot of new friends.

Almost from our first summer season in 2004 we have been actively involved with Amston Lake District board functions and social activities. John served on the security team and as a director and vice-president. Anita helped previous treasurers with accounting questions and has served as a director for seven years, six of them as treasurer.

Working and living here has been a great experience. We know it takes each of us doing our part to make Amston Lake a community to be proud of. Thank you for the opportunity to have served and for all of your support over the years. We cherish our many memories of Amston Lake. Now we leave to start another chapter in a new community – Lakeshore Village in Sarasota, Florida. Our leaving is bittersweet but we know the lake is in very capable hands for many future generations to enjoy. We wish all of you Godspeed and good luck.

*– Anita & John Connor*



## Life is Complicated...So is Lake Health

To admit that the recent Aquatic Ecosystem Research (AER) 2021 Water Quality Monitoring report is complicated is an understatement. I am reminded of my lack of understanding of the nitrogen cycle, the phosphorous cycle, the carbon cycle, the water cycle...the way life actually works. You can read the report yourself on the Amston Lake website – but several reads may be required!

Eutrophication is the process by which a lake fills in through sedimentation and aquatic plant and algae growth. In nature the process may take hundreds of years, but when humans move in, it can accelerate and happen much sooner. Land clearing, over fertilizing, and creating impervious surfaces (roofs, paved driveways and roads) can prevent rainwater from seeping into the ground, resulting in nutrients and sediment washing directly into the lake. Even adding sand to waterfronts (which is a violation of our ordinances) is filling in the lake. The Amston Lake Health Committee (ALHC) monitors water quality trends and looks for ways to minimize erosion to keep the lake in the best possible condition in order to preserve recreational opportunities and maintain property values.

Dredged areas can be prime targets for invasive plants to move in. Dredging was suspended in 2018 after oxygen levels at the bottom of the lake began to decrease, raising concern that dredging was having a detrimental effect on lake health (the lake needed time to recover). Measurement of continuing sediment build-up remains an ongoing concern. A recent aquatic plant survey of the lake conducted by AER showed no invasive plants were discovered in locations that were previously dredged. In August 2018 DEEP confirmed the presence of the invasive common reed *Phragmites australis* along the shoreline of the northeast cove. AER visited the area in June 2019 and indicated that *P. australis* actually helps to prevent erosion and is acting to “filter” the surface water entering the lake in that location. The ALHC continues to monitor the area.

The subject of benthic barrier use (a sheet of specialized fabric laid down on the lake floor to kill weeds) was first brought to the attention of the ALHC in November 2020. Much time and effort was expended exploring the pros and cons of benthic barrier use (search ‘benthic barrier’ under Lake Health). Benthic barriers have been used in Coventry Lake as part of efforts to control the growth of hydrilla, an invasive plant. Boat inspections and the continued diligence of lake residents help prevent invasive weeds from entering our lake. Remediation costs and recreational impacts have been kept to a minimum through these efforts.

Another goal of the ALHC is education. The ALHC has been instrumental in gathering and consolidating past information on the Amston Lake website under the Lake Health tab. Their extraordinary efforts deserve a great deal of praise. Jeff Arpin led these efforts by researching, organizing, and developing a lake health web page. I encourage all to read the Amston Lake Health web page and learn about efforts the committee has performed to date. The recently completed Amston Lake Management Procedures and Planning Guide provides a great deal of information about our lake. Another excellent source of information is *The Turner Legacy: A History Of Amston Lake*, compiled and created by ALD resident Larry E. Zimmerman. The ALHC meets once a month and is always looking for new volunteers. I remain steadfast in my belief that our collective wisdom will evolve and overcome any obstacle in order to preserve our beautiful lake for generations to come.

– Les Parlin, ALHC Member

## Beach Pass Checkers

Last summer the board decided to try something new at our two beaches with the introduction of “beach pass checkers.” The idea was to put our security budget dollars back into residents’ hands by having our own residents manage the attendance at the beaches. We received nothing but positive feedback from the residents and all the credit goes to the beach pass team for doing a phenomenal job throughout the entire summer season. The board also thanks all of you for complying with the District ordinances by carrying and showing your beach passes every time you’re at a beach or right of way and hanging your parking tags in your car. We’ll be employing District residents as beach pass checkers again this summer, so please take an extra minute and introduce yourself to a beach pass checker!

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## Caring for the Lake

It starts with everyone in the District taking responsibility. “What can I do?” you might ask. As you might remember from that science class back in high school, gravity is the force that attracts a body to the center of the earth. Ok, before your head explodes, think of how a ball rolls downhill...gravity does that. Now think of the lake as the bottom of that hill. The remains of everything you do in your yard – i.e., washing your car, mowing the lawn, fertilizing the garden, walking the dog – will eventually flow into the lake, little by little, each time it rains. If we all think about it that way you can see how the choices you make affect the lake we all share. So please take the responsibility seriously and make the right choices about what you do in your yard. Have a question? Contact any member of the Lake Heath Committee or the ALD Board of Directors for advice. Thank you for making a difference for all of us.

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## Limnology – the Study of Inland Aquatic Ecosystems

Last summer about 50 District residents attended a presentation and discussion on the health of Amston Lake at the clubhouse with the District’s limnology firm, Aquatic Ecosystems Research (AER). Larry Marsicano was the chief presenter, and was joined by William Henley in person and Mark June-Wells, PH.D., who joined the meeting by phone. Both Larry and William had just completed the aquatic plant assessment of Amston Lake earlier that day. There was a great exchange with residents and Lake Health Committee members asking questions and helping to explain how we can continue to keep the lake healthy. AER has scheduled another presentation this year for Saturday, June 25, with a rain date of June 26.

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## Sewer No-No’s:

A sewer line on the Lebanon side of Amston Lake became plugged with wipes (baby wipes and/or cleaning wipes) last fall. The total cost of this event was added to the sewer charges incurred by the Lebanon WPCA, and was eventually passed along to the Lebanon residents served by the sewer system. This is what is meant by the signs you see that say **“No Wipes in the Pipes.”** Whether you live on the Hebron or Lebanon side of the lake, please familiarize yourself with the list of banned items that you should not put into the sewer system or run through your disposal – you can find the list on the Lebanon WPCA website page.

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## No Trash at the Beaches/Rows

Carry out what you carry in! We continue to have issues with trash being dumped at the beaches. PLEASE do not leave trash on the beaches, parking areas, or in and around the porta-potties. Our vendor has put us on notice that if refuse continues to be placed in the porta-potties, they will discontinue our service. This is an important convenience for residents that use the beaches and we need your help to ensure that this trash problem doesn’t persist. Please help keep our beaches and rights of way (ROWS) trash free.

## Beaches and Rights of Way (ROWs) Committee

### Welcome to Amston Lake Summer Recreation Season 2022!

The Beaches and ROWs Committee is comprised of volunteer residents who meet monthly year round, and engage in activities to beautify, maintain, and improve our beaches and rights of way (ROWs).

This group of volunteers is responsible for helping to keep the public areas of Amston Lake clean and tidy for residents to enjoy boating, swimming, or simply sitting in lawn chairs to view the lake and soak up the sun. The Beaches and ROWs Committee identifies issues around the lake in need of attention and works with the Lake Health Committee and the ALD Board to find solutions.

Each spring and fall the committee organizes a cleanup for the beaches and ROWs. In the fall, the cleanup includes raking leaves out of the lake at the beaches and ROWs that are then removed by a contractor. In the spring, it involves cleaning up after the winter storms – picking up sticks, litter, and raking any remaining leaves out of the lake. The committee also hires contractors to clean out plunge pools and re-establish washed-out spillways. Many of our volunteers act as stewards of a particular beach or ROW by cleaning up litter, raking the washed-up lake grass that gathers along the public shorelines, and generally keeping their designated areas in good order for residents to enjoy. Some committee volunteers even pick up after the geese on a weekly basis!

This year the committee has purchased a new volleyball net for Main Beach and a commemorative bench for Lollipop Beach that will be dedicated to the late Jeff Hatch, a former resident who gave much of his time to help keep the lake areas maintained.

The committee welcomes new members and could always use more hands to make lighter work. If you are interested in joining this hard-working group of individuals, please contact them through the ALD board or attend one of their monthly committee meetings, held the second Wednesday of the month at the clubhouse or at a designated beach or right of way, weather permitting.

#### Thanks to our contributors

who made the 2022 newsletter happen:

Liz Bowen

Anita Connor

Maureen Dagon

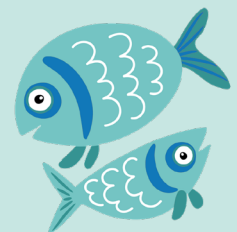
Frank Hoisl

John Matra

Les Parlin

Karen Patterson

Jean Waleszcyk



**DON'T BE AN  
EASY TARGET**

**LOCK YOUR CAR &  
TAKE YOUR KEYS**

NEVER LEAVE  
VALUABLES IN SIGHT

#### Fireworks:

Fireworks are not allowed by law in Connecticut for use by non-professional, non-licensed users. Our ordinances also specifically prohibit fireworks on any ALD property.

If you haven't been receiving our periodic email blasts please go to our website [www.amstonlake.org](http://www.amstonlake.org) and sign up. Don't miss another informative update!





# Amston Lake Association (ALA)

.... All things FUN!

John Matra, President

Dear Neighbors,

In 2021 the ALA not only survived, with almost 200 dues paying households responding through our website and mail solicitations, we *thrived*, with activities that included:

Lake Day	Lobster Dinner	Movie Nights	Food Trucks
Tiki Night	July 4th Parade	Yoga on the Beach	Murder Mystery Party
Hot Dog Social	Craft Nights	Bingo on the Beach	Fishing Derbys

2022 is looking even better! Over the off-season we rehabbed the bathrooms at the clubhouse, installed new blinds and window treatments, and had the roof cleaned. In addition, all major systems (heating, plumbing, etc.) were professionally inspected and repairs were made as needed. Clubhouse usage for private events has been steady during the pandemic with COVID protocols followed.

We have moved to hybrid monthly meetings – in-person at the clubhouse or participating over Zoom.

On April 30, we held our first big event at the clubhouse since the pandemic began, our Cinco de Mayo Fiesta – which sold out!

2022 is also the 80th anniversary of our organization. Founded in 1942 as “The Amston Lake Improvement Association,” our mission is to foster a sense of community through a variety of social events and activities. To celebrate this milestone, we will be incorporating some of our history into our events throughout the year.

Please visit our website [www.amstonlakeassociation.com](http://www.amstonlakeassociation.com) to join, pay dues, purchase merchandise, register for events, view the calendar of activities, reserve the clubhouse, or to volunteer.

## Fishing Licenses:

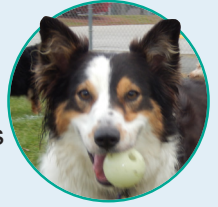
A fishing license is required in the state of CT for anyone age 16 or older. Fishing licenses are available online from the CT Dept of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and from many town clerk's offices.

**Share the road:** During the summer months, many more of us will be lured outdoors to enjoy the beauty of the lake. Sharing the road with motorists will be walkers, runners, and cyclists. State law requires motorists to keep 3 feet from cyclists. Pedestrians should always walk facing traffic, while cyclists should ride with traffic. Remember, the speed limit in the District is 25 mph, and 15 mph on the private Lebanon roads.



## Attention Dog Owners

Dogs can be loving companions and important members of our family. But they can also become a nuisance to neighbors if not properly controlled. Following are some guidelines for ensuring your pet is a responsible member of the Amston Lake community:



- Make sure you pick up the poo when you walk your dog around the neighborhood. This avoids people inadvertently stepping in it, and also helps keep bacteria out of our watershed.
- Don't allow your pet to run free without supervision. Dogs should be on leashes when around people or other pets.
- Warn people who approach your dog if it's not friendly toward strangers.
- Remember that pets are not allowed on any ALD property (this includes the beaches, ROWs, and their parking areas) between April 1 and September 30. Per the ordinances, fines may be imposed on residents who are in violation of the ordinances.

Let's all be respectful of the District rules and remember health and safety should be everyone's concern. Thanks for helping your pets to be an asset to our lake community!

## Boat Auction

Each year, after clearing the boat racks on the beaches and ROWs, the District ends up with several unclaimed boats. The last two years we've held an online auction, with residents getting great deals on used canoes, kayaks, and even a paddleboat. Proceeds from the auction were added to the General Fund. Keep an eye on the website and email blasts for the dates of this year's auction, planned for early summer.



On ALD  
Property

## Property Rentals

**If you plan to rent your property this season, here are a few things to keep in mind:**

- You are responsible for ensuring that your renters are familiar with and comply with all ALD ordinances. Make sure they understand that participation in all activities on the water and/or on District property are at their own risk.
- Ensure your renters have the proper beach/parking passes for the current season. The Amston Lake website has the most up-to-date information on obtaining lake passes.
- If you provide boats for your tenants' use, be sure that current boat stickers are on each boat. Visit the ALD website for information on obtaining boat stickers.
- Be sure that renters know that it is their responsibility to properly dispose of trash. It is not permissible to leave trash at the beaches or rights of way (ROWs). This creates unsanitary conditions and causes extra work for your neighbors to clean up.
- In the event of emergency, ensure your renters know their location – Hebron or Lebanon side of the lake.

## New Process for Amston Lake Passes

The ALD has implemented an online registration process for beach and boat passes. Only current District residents are allowed to use the lake and a valid beach pass, boat sticker, or car hang tag is your proof. Property owners are encouraged to go to the [amstonlake.org](http://amstonlake.org) website and register. The process is easy, efficient, and saves time and paper. Support will be available at the pass distribution dates at the clubhouse for those who need assistance registering online. You may also opt to fill out a paper form (available on the website) and bring the form with you to the clubhouse – however, your passes will not be available until the next pickup date as we need time to process your form.

Pre-registration is required to allow us time to verify property ownership and up-to-date tax status. This allows us to get the packets of passes ready quickly to avoid long lines at the clubhouse. Contact board member Al Fichtel at [fickerama@yahoo.com](mailto:fickerama@yahoo.com) with questions or for more information.

**Following are the remaining dates for pickup of the pre-registered passes at the clubhouse:**

- Friday, May 20, 4 – 6 p.m.
- Saturday, June 11, 10 a.m. – noon
- Additional dates may be added – check the ALD website, display boards outside the beaches, and upcoming email blasts.

### Clubhouse Pass Distribution Volunteers:

Todd LaMontagne,  
Karen Patterson, Gail  
Golden, and Al Fichtel



***It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to our friend and neighbor, Ray DeCormier, who lost his battle with cancer on May 1.***



Ray was a lifelong resident of Connecticut, acquiring Amston Lake waterfront property in 1986. He and his wife Frances completed the building of their lake home in 2002. Many afternoons would find Ray, Fran, and daughter Brittany out on their pontoon boat entertaining family and friends. Between 2008 – 2018 Ray served as a director and as treasurer on the ALD Board. Ray was always on the lookout for ways to keep lake costs down and to make ALD operations more efficient. As treasurer, he modernized our financial reporting system and set up ALD financial records in an accounting software program. Ray encouraged residents to get involved with lake operations and his impact is felt to this day. Ray was a great friend of the lake and will be missed.

**2022 Boat/trailer Inspectors  
on call 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.:  
(when available):**

Carl Wool 860-334-9754

Dave Arnold 860-228-1944

Jim Delisle 860-707-6512

Al Fichtel 860-338-4300

Marge Arnold 860-228-1944

Craig Nowak 203-868-6728

Bill Anderson 203-218-6399

## Protect Our Lake From Invasive Species

For the safety of our lake, the Amston Lake District requires that all boats/trailers be inspected.

- Boat launching off trailers is strictly **prohibited** from private property. All boats launched from trailers must first be inspected at the Main Beach boat launch area to check for the presence of invasive weeds (see list of inspectors or visit [www.amstonlake.org](http://www.amstonlake.org) for more details).
- If you or your tenants or guests bring any boat from any other body of water, you must first either clean it thoroughly or dry out your boat, trailer, and fishing gear for a minimum of five days to prevent foreign species contamination by invasive weeds. This is known as the “Clean, Drain & Dry” protocol.

## Calling All Volunteers!

Our beautiful and vibrant lake community depends on volunteers to keep our lake healthy, keep our beaches safe, and provide a variety of fun social activities! Some of the things your neighbors do include:

- Conducting water testing to monitor the health of the lake, including the presence of harmful algae and invasive weeds
- Installing and maintaining the docks at the beaches
- Maintaining the catch basins to reduce the likelihood of harmful contaminants entering the lake
- Inspecting boats to prevent introduction of foreign weeds
- Distributing and tracking boat stickers, beach passes and beach parking tags
- Serving on the board of directors for the Amston Lake District (ALD) and Amston Lake Association (ALA)
- Inspecting and maintaining beaches and rights of way (ROWs), including coordinating and monitoring mowing, boat racks and other maintenance/improvements with contractors
- Raking leaves at beaches and ROWs in the spring and fall
- Coordinating beach pass checkers – paid residents who ensure only those authorized have access to our beaches
- Monitoring and coordinating maintenance of private ALD roads on the Lebanon side of the lake
- Organizing a variety of social events for the Amston Lake community, such as the 4th of July parade, dinners at the clubhouse, food trucks and movies at the beach, Lake Day, fishing derbies, craft nights, and more
- Maintaining the ALA clubhouse at 16 Wood Acres Road, which is a hub for social events and available for rental

**A big thank you to all volunteers who keep things running around here!** We can always use more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact an ALD Board member, using the “contact us” feature on the ALD website [www.amstonlake.org](http://www.amstonlake.org). If you’re interested in volunteering for social events here at the lake, check out the ALA website [amstonlakeassociation.com](http://amstonlakeassociation.com).