

# Group's goal: Clean the Bowl

By Derek Gentile, Berkshire Eagle Staff

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STOCKBRIDGE — There's a kind of cute picture in the informational brochure published by the Stockbridge Bowl Association. It features longtime president Gary Kleinerman standing waist-deep in the Stockbridge Bowl amid a sea of lily pads.

If one is unaware of the problems of the Stockbridge Bowl, Kleinerman acknowledged, it's a nice photo. But for those SBA members and residents who are aware, it's an ominous one: Kleinerman is standing several hundred feet from shore, and the lily pads that surround him, along with the silt on which he is standing, are choking the life out of this lake.

On Saturday, the Stockbridge Bowl Association and the town hosted the third annual Stockbridge Bowl Day at the Bowl's town beach.

There were boat rides and tours, hot dogs and hamburgers as well as swimming and a raffle. Camp Mah-Kee-Nac, which abuts the Town Beach, provided items for the auction and volunteers, who helped with the food concession and also provided entertainment.

Part of the reason for Stockbridge Bowl Day, according to board member Cris Raymond, is to emphasize that the Stockbridge Bowl, or at least parts of it, is a public lake. The Town Beach is open to all residents of Stockbridge. The boat ramp across the lake is open to anyone from Berkshire County and beyond.

"We want people in town to know that this is their lake," said Raymond.

This is not always apparent to some. Kleinerman admitted on Saturday that he ran into a second-home owner at the event who said he had not been to the Stockbridge Bowl in the 35 years he has been coming to town. But the other reason for the event, said Raymond, is to alert residents and other lovers of the Bowl that not everything is hunky-dory on the lake.

The town's annual battle with the weeds on Stockbridge Bowl is ongoing, she said. In addition, Kleinerman estimated that there about 85,000 cubic yards of silt on the bottom of the Bowl, enough to fill a couple of gymnasiums.

That has happened, he said, because of the gas and sewer pipes that cut through the southwest corner of the lake, blocking the silt from being carried out of the lake via an outlet stream.

And the SBA has a plan, some of which is near fruition. The association, in conjunction with the town, has applied for the necessary permits to install a diversion pipe to allow the water to drain properly out of the lake.

As part of that plan, according to board member Margaret M. Reiser, the town and the SBA have applied for a federal grant to help pay the cost of installing the pipe. Berkshire Regional Planning provided the technical assistance, she said. The town will be notified in September of the success of the application.

Another part of this plan is to obtain state and local permission for a 5 1/2 foot drawdown of the lake in winter to battle the weed infestation, said Kleinerman.

Then, there is the dredging issue. With tens of thousands of cubic yards of silt to remove, the cost will be considerable. "About \$2.5 million to \$3 million," said Kleinerman, "in today's dollars."

A capital campaign is under way for that work. Although the Stockbridge Bowl is designated a Great Pond, and as such under state control, no one is pretending the state will allocate \$2.5 million for the Stockbridge Bowl anytime soon.

Kleinerman and Raymond are optimistic. The campaign has really not gotten under way yet, but about \$200,000 has been pledged. The town, notes Selectman George Shippey, has been very supportive of the project. "It's a beautiful lake," agreed Holly Brouker of Pittsfield, a longtime visitor to the Bowl as a rower. "It's one of the best-regulated lakes in Berkshire County. It needs to be preserved."

"I think we have an obligation to be proactive," said board member Matthew Mandel. "We don't want our descendants asking, 'Why didn't they do something?'"

### **About the Bowl**

**Area:** 372 acres

**Depth:** 48 feet

**Average depth:** 27 feet

**Houses on the lake:** 450

**Public access:** Boat ramp on northwestern shore, off Route 183.

*SOURCE: Department of Fisheries and Wildlife*