

Queens Lake Club



A Message From the President

QUEENS LAKE CATASTROPHE and CHARACTER

It has been said and I believe it to be a fundamental truth of life that it matters not how many times you are knocked down; the measure of character is how many times you rise again.

As Hurricane Isabel, that raging, malignant and uninvited witch, came roaring through Queens Lake, she hurled huge oaks, tall pines, elms and poplars as though they were mere sticks. She threw them against homes; she smashed roofs, whipping a blizzard of limbs and debris against structures containing families and the treasures of lives. And though she devastated some of our most beautiful structures and desecrated some of our most beautiful architecture, how fortunately we came through in the most important measure. Not a life was lost. Family rooms were crushed but the families were untouched; bedrooms destroyed but no one slept there. Office rooms had crooked arms reach through and destroy computers, but no one sat at the keyboard. In at least two instances, the gnarled limbs of massive trees tore through ceilings reaching into children's bedrooms, but the children were not there. Every one of our neighbors, all of our friends, survived. Glory.

As I went out into the first light of the morning after the storm, the material carnage was overwhelming. And though in the five years of living in Queens Lake, we have been visited by another hurricane named Floyd, followed by a hundred-year ice storm, nothing was like this. Nothing I have ever seen has come close. Trees had not simply fallen on power lines; they had fallen on everything. It was as though our arboreal army had been raked with grapeshot, and bodies lay everywhere. Everywhere. On West Queens Drive, the first question was not when power would be restored, but when people would even be able to move about. I am told that sixty-eight trees blocked the road. Sixteen lay across the dam. Driveways were impassable. And so many homes were covered, some simply wrecked.

In the aftermath of this storm, the first feeling, the most natural, was to be overcome by despair and to sit passively stunned with grief. That, for some, would be the natural response. Not Queens Lake. In morning after the storm, the sounds of power generators broke the morning silence and it was as though a chorus of defiant survival began as chain saws whirled into action and people called out greetings from smiling faces that echoed a celebration of life. People were already in the streets, not waiting to be rescued, but rescuing themselves. The only way to achieve is to start, and before the last winds of Isabel had calmed, Queens Lake had started to rise from the devastation with a spirit of cooperation, selflessness and determination that would not be denied. Neighbors sawed and moved trees together in little driveway and road-clearing battalions. Those with tarpaulins gave to those with holes in their roofs. Those with generators took in frozen foods to fill available freezer space. Groups came together to share food and fellowship. Circulars were delivered calling everyone (all residents, not just Club members) to a shared supper on grills at the pool, and for hot showers. Neighbors who drove great distances to buy a generator brought back several others for their neighbors. Lemonade and sandwiches were provided to beleaguered road and power line workers. Queens Lake had risen. Before Isabel had blown herself out, I believed she probably looked back and saw a small community in Virginia that she had devastated but not broken. She probably saw a community that was indeed knocked down, but when it stood again, it stood taller.

In the spring, visitors will again come to Queens Lake to see the wonder of our dogwood blossoms and azaleas. They will comment how beautiful they are. I wonder if they will sense how much those blossoms reflect the character, style and grace of the people who live here.

Don Tortorice, President
Queens Lake Club





Renewing a Sense of Community

Chris Hailey, Vice President

When my family and I emerged from our basement sanctuary on the morning of Friday, September 19, I was relieved to find that our house was almost completely unscathed, and the trees that fell around it were of little consequence. But as I made my way down Maid Marion Place toward Holcomb Drive, I was stunned by the degree of devastation wreaked by Hurricane Isabel. Fallen trees beset beautiful homes, roofs were breached, and walls were battered. My normal path out of Queens Lake was blocked on Holcomb and West Queens Drive by somewhere between fifteen and twenty broken and uprooted trees. The enormity of the task that lay ahead was still not fully apparent, but it was obvious that it would take some time break us out. What if there were medical emergencies in our corner of Queens Lake? How would we get sick or injured people out, or emergency crews in? I should have known that the answer to those questions was short and simple: community.

It was an amazing display of cooperation and hard work that cleared West Queens by the end of that same day. Without a county or utility crew in sight, neighbors brought out chain saws, trucks, pry bars, and strong bodies to attack that seemingly endless expanse of debris. Kevin Poitras, Michael Fox, and Greg Morgan, among dozens of others, were instrumental in organizing a highly effective ad hoc crew of men and women, boys and girls, who worked throughout the day for the sake of their community. I am loath to even name names of those who helped for fear of leaving out important contributors. I saw faces that I have known for years and others I had never met. All were tireless in their efforts.

I know that all around Queens Lake there were similar stories. Each street has its heroes and its grateful residents, its young and old pitching in to help neighbors in need, its examples of determined and resourceful efforts to begin the process of recovery. I hope to share some of these stories in the pages of the newsletter, either in an issue devoted solely to those accounts, or in a series of articles over the next several months. I invite all of you, club members or not, to submit any stories you may wish to share. Some may be joyful and appreciative, while others may reflect the sorrow that we all feel as a result of our losses. I believe that the result will be a compelling demonstration of the power of community.

Please type your submissions if possible. The best way to transmit them is by e-mail to cbhailey@cox.net, or you may drop off notes to the clubhouse at any time. I look forward to reading about the strength and resilience of my neighbors in the coming months.

Membership Committee News

How comforting it was seeing so many helping hands from our community after Hurricane Isabel. Neighbors were out with chain saws clearing streets, checking on senior citizens and supporting each other. How lucky we are to have such fine people in our community.

However, this is also the time to encourage Queens Lake Membership. Just as we stood together after Isabel, we must stand together and pay our share of Queens Lake Association dues. The amenities and common spaces from which we all benefit are maintained by the Club. Without the full support of every member of this community, we are hard pressed to respond to the costs of emergencies like this one.

Financially, our community resources will break with only a few sticks belonging to the association, but a bundle of sticks will make it strong. Please plan on joining.

Membership Chair
Sally Dafashy



Beautification Committee News

Nancy Dutro, Chair, Beautification and Maintenance



Damage to Playground and Clubhouse Areas

At the playground, two large pine trees collapsed on the tire swing and sliding board. The damage caused will require that these two pieces of playground equipment be removed.

The clubhouse itself did not sustain any damage but has been treated for mold by the insurance company. The majestic deodora cedar that stood at the entrance to the clubhouse drive was uprooted and fell against a utility pole. Likewise, the locust tree that anchored the bank adjacent to the clubhouse steps toppled on to the railing, crushing a portion of the railing and blocking access to the steps. Two large poplar trees fell off the bank and across the marina road.

A group of volunteers worked several hours on our scheduled fall clean up day September 27 to remove fallen limbs and other debris from the area. Special thanks to Alex and Joanne Andrews, Joan and Gerry Clarke, and Gail Roberts. The large trees and root balls that created property damage have been removed professionally. The Queens Lake Club has donated \$175 to the beautification and restoration effort. Thanks to all who care about our Club's property.



Lake Committee News

Much attention has been directed to the after-hurricane status of Queens Lake dam and spillway. Firstly, the dam has not been breached in spite of the downing of 18 trees by Isabel. Furthermore, Dominion Power has felled other trees still standing and potentially subject to future dam damage. Now our attention is drawn to the cutting up and removal of all of the downed trees and debris. Efforts are underway to get help in the task from York County. Chain sawing the trees to ten foot lengths may require some voluntary help. Keep your eyes open for further updates!

Have you checked your lake boats? Do you do so regularly? Two canoes were stolen this year. To help prevent this happening to you, make sure your boat is registered. Contact Julia at the Clubhouse to register your boat, 220-0973.

Can you sing? I'm looking for some singers to help with the Veteran's Day celebration on November 8 at 9:30 AM. Let's not forget what great service and sacrifice they have rendered us in times past.

Finally, many thanks are due for the great effort put forth by all to clear roads and help with our neighbors' stresses. What a neighborhood we enjoy in Queens Lake.

Bob Caven
Chair

News You Can Use

The recovery process in our community has required more than the hard work of citizens. It also requires federal, state, and local authorities, utility crews, tree crews, insurance agents and adjusters, and many contractors and skilled workers. First, we must express our sincere gratitude to all the many workers from as far away as Florida and Quebec who have worked so tirelessly to restore services to Queens Lake. Let's hope that many of us said thank you to those crews while they were here.

It is often difficult to know where to turn or even whom to trust when we are in a vulnerable state. Many Queens Lake residents put their faith in people they had never met as they tried to dig out and rebuild. Were there individuals or companies that impressed you as particularly helpful, competent, and reasonably priced? Which of the many tree crews, plumbers, electricians, and builders would you like to recommend to your neighbors? Please share the names of any such services with the community through the newsletter. Send an e-mail to cbhailey@cox.net, or drop a note by the clubhouse office.

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Marina News

Hurricane Isabel hit the QL Marina with major high water as well as high winds and, as expected, some damage has been done to the facility. At the peak of the storm the water level was about five feet over the gas dock. Fortunately though, Marina damage was minor compared to overall damage in our community. No boats were lost and boat damage was relatively minor in most cases.

The most significant facility problem is the electrical systems which were all under water during the storm surge and will all need to be replaced. We also had some roof damage on the South end of the boat house and wall damage on the North boat house. We have one broken piling and several lost dock boxes on the outside slips. Most of the major damage should be repaired within the next couple months. The boat ramp has been temporarily closed due to underwater debris and will be reopened as soon as the debris is removed and the ramp is considered safe again.

We are still gathering repair cost data and find that some costs will be covered by insurance with the remaining repair to be covered under our normal maintenance budget.

We have already had a significant amount of clean-up work performed by volunteers and appreciate all their efforts. If anyone has any specific questions or would like to volunteer their time and talents to help with Marina repair, please contact Doug Olson or Pat Reinecke.

