



[izaakwaltonmi.com](http://izaakwaltonmi.com)

## The IKEs Update

January 2024

What will the new year bring?

Every day, I try to think of something to look forward to, big or small. Aside from the usual necessities, what might bring some happiness? For me, maybe it's the next step in an art project, getting to see a friend, or hearing the birds and knowing they want me to bring the seeds.



There's a lot we can't control, and some we can. We can be our own "influencer." We influence our own lives anyway; might as well direct it in a good way. Intention is where it's at. Home-grown evolution!

Resolutions were last year. Intentions are on-going. A plant directs its growth to the tip, the "apical meristem." Where will we grow? We need personal meaning and

good ideas in a world of change. Winter, the season of rest, can help us think clearly.

We've not had many flurries of wondrous snowflakes so far, and I'm trying hard to stay positive anyway. Unless it is pouring rain, on Saturday, January 27, 10:00-3:00, we will have **WINTER-FEST!** (Snow, please!)

Bring your friends!!! Show them Izaak-land! Contact me if you can help with activities or in the kitchen. Set-up on Friday around 2:00.

Winter: play in the snow, or games indoors, create, imagine intentions for the new year. A time for renewable energy...

Less carbon, more creativity!



We'll have archery, candle-making, and shelter-building. If we have good snow and strong ice, we could have a whole lot more, such as ice-skating, ice-fishing, sledding, and snow-sculpting. Of course, there will be a free lunch! (Please see inside for an interview with the king of free lunches!)



**Happy New Year!!**  
**Georgia Donovan**



# Christmas Dinner

Tom Watson

Thirty or so IKEs and their families enjoyed our annual free Christmas dinner on December 7. I cooked two hams, baked potatoes and prepared fresh green beans. Others brought side dishes but we were inundated with desserts, including some of my cherry nut spice and chocolate cakes. The abundance of desserts didn't seem to bother anyone, especially the kids.

Kitchen Krew: **Tam Bagby, Lucy and Georgia Hopkins, Len Kizer** and me. Others popped in and lent a hand. The Klean Up Krew were **Brian Seely** and

his wife **Marianne Smith**, all of the above and just about everyone else. **Dustin Hopkins** tended the bar and **Ron Waybrant** handled the sign ins at the door.

After dinner Georgia and Lucy staged an impromptu play, something about reindeer needing more snow. **Randy Lawrence** ad libbed a great performance. Perhaps he has a future on the stage.

Thanks to all for a great evening.

To see these and other photos in color, visit our website: [www.izaakwaltonmi.com](http://www.izaakwaltonmi.com) and look for the page with newsletters.



## December Work Day at the Ikes

Fred Eyer

It stopped raining in the middle of the night and things dried out enough for us to work outdoors.

The first task we undertook was to remove several dead limbs from the walnut in the yard by the picnic tables. After trying several different ideas, we finally decided to put a tow strap around the limb and pull it down. It worked and we were able to get this hazard down.

Secondly, we hauled wood that had been cut at the November work day and stacked it next to the wood bin near the old pavilion. Most of this wood will need to be split at the next wood gathering day.

Lastly and after lunch we finished getting down a

dead tree that was threatening our new northern bridge and the safety of our hikers. The tree was very stubborn and took a lot of time and effort to get down. After it was cut it was hung up in neighboring trees. But, at last we were able to prevail and get this menacing tree down and off the trail.

Thanks to the hearty crew of **Byron Panasuk, Bryan Seely, John Stegmeier, Randy Lawrence**, mom and son, **Wren** and 5-year-old **Rowan Burns** for all their efforts. **Tom Watson** and **Tam Bagby** picked up pizza and chips for the crew's lunch. The next work day will not be until April.

**THANKS TO EVERYONE!**

## First Michigan Detection Of Invasive Hydrilla Triggers Response

Press Release Submitted by Ron Waybrant

### Aquatic plant found in two West Michigan ponds



**Hydrilla, considered one of the world's most invasive aquatic plants, has been detected for the first time in Michigan. The Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy confirmed two small populations of the plant in adjacent private ponds on residential properties in Berrien Springs in Southwest Michigan.**

The small patches of hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) were discovered during routine monitoring following treatment for another invasive plant, parrot feather, which was found in the pond in 2020. Both species are prohibited in Michigan, meaning it is unlawful to sell, possess or import them into the state, and both are on

Michigan's invasive species watch list due to their potential environmental threat.

Hydrilla has several ways of reproducing, allowing it to spread rapidly, outcompete native plants and quickly form dense single-species infestations. Root tubers, turions (buds) and even small plant fragments can develop into new plants, making it very easy for hydrilla to disperse through water or attach to ornamental plants sold for water gardens.

"It's not clear how either plant made its way to this pond, but seeds or fragments of the invasive plants may have been attached to ornamental plants installed in past years," said **Bill Keiper**, EGLE aquatic biologist.

"Sediment core samples of the pond and genetic analysis of the plant material are planned to help determine how long the hydrilla has been here and where in the U.S. it might have originated."

EGLE's immediate response ac-

tions include surveying connected ponds, a receiving stream, and the St. Joseph River to ensure the full hydrilla population extent is known. Herbicide treatments are underway in the infested ponds, targeting hydrilla plants to prevent further tuber production this season. A response plan will focus on preventing the spread of hydrilla beyond its current location, with the long-term goal of eradication.

Why be concerned?

Hydrilla was introduced into Florida in the 1950s and has spread across the southeast. A separate strain was first detected in Delaware in 1976 and has since made its way through the Atlantic states and several Great Lakes states.

Hydrilla can thrive in both low- and high-quality waters and has been found in lakes, rivers, reservoirs, wetlands, ponds and streams. Plants are generally rooted in sediment in water depths up to 25 feet and remain submerged,

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## Interview with Tom Watson

Georgia Donovan



You've all seen **Tom Watson**, usually with an apron on, either behind a grill, in the kitchen, or setting out the food for one of the thousands of free lunches or fundraising dinners that he has worked on. Yes, with Tom many people have realized the dream of a free lunch. But wait, there's more! He and his lovely partner, Tam Bagby, do our award-winning newsletter. He is a writer. They love music, and gardening, so now, "we've got to get ourselves back to the garden" with Tom Watson.

**Me:** For starters, where did you grow up?

**Tom:** In a small town, La Porte, Indiana, about 15 miles south of the Michigan border.

**Me:** Did you have a connection with the outdoors there?

**Tom:** We had a huge garden there, over an acre. Granddad lived with Mom, Dad, my sister and me. He taught me all kinds of things, and for as long as I can remember I've been growing stuff in dirt.

Then in the early '70s, I was living on a farm in Bloomington with Pam. (former wife while in college, and still a good friend.) Those were the Whole Earth Catalog days.

**Me:** I remember those days! That catalog was a great connection to things.

**Tom:** So we had chickens and goats, bees, a huge garden, and an orchard. That's when I began getting into organics. And that's when the **EPA**, and the **Clean Water Act** and all of that was going on so I began to get my focus on the environment.

**Me:** OK, how did you meet Tam?

**Tom:** Well, I ended up with a teaching degree from Indiana University, in alternative education, to work with at-risk kids. And I came up here to intern in the Grand Rapids public school system. We eventually crossed paths there.

I worked at over a dozen different places, all alternative teaching. That's when City School and the Zoo School and all of those got started by my colleagues. I helped also with the Special Olympics was just small and it's now grown to an international event.

**Me:** Besides that, you are a writer as well. Tell us what you've written.

**Tom:** One book is See Rock City and Other Stories, plus there's a collection of essays I edited called Back Home in Indiana. Some personal things, and then I wrote a cook book.

**Me:** You did?

...Tom puts a ten-pound binder on the table, entitled, Eat Me! It includes epicurean essays, tons of recipes, and there's a photo of a pig-roast held at the IKEs' for Tam's 50th birthday. I wonder if his famous Key Lime pie is in there. [it is. - ed]

**Tom:** I'm also working on a book about gardening at this latitude.

It's called, Dig This!

And I'm working on another about my teaching experiences, called Teaching Is an Unnatural Act, because when you ask someone to learn something new, it's not a natural act for them; they have to take a metaphysical leap.

**Me:** How did you end up here at the IKEs?

**Tom:** We wanted a little more land, so we moved here and started walking around, down the road, and saw this place, called the Izaak Walton league, walked around the fence... we thought well, this looks pretty cool, so we looked it up online and wrote them a letter. **Bob Stegmier** was the membership guy at the time so of course he invited us down. The day we happened to show up, he and **Maurie Houseman**, **Jack Hornbach** and **Bob Harshman** were all dressed up as clowns, setting up a Halloween spook show for the kids.

**Me:** (much laughter here) So you fit right in!

**Tom:** Oh yeah, we started going down to the dinners. Bob Harshman and his wife, **Jane**, was in charge of the kitchen, and we drifted in to the kitchen thing. 3 or 4 years later, **John Trimberger** called me up, and said "You're on the board!" Oh, ok! A few years later Steg gave me the newsletter, and then I inherited Membership from **Ron Waybrant**.

**Me:** I think your IKEs friendships led to some good fishing trips? Down in Key West with **Jack Hornbach**?

**Tom:** Yeah, I stayed for free, for 20 years at Bob Harshman's place on  
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## First Michigan Detection Of Invasive Hydrilla

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with long, leaved stems floating near the surface. Because it outcompetes native plants, it can quickly fill a lake or pond, choking off recreational access.

Though hydrilla can be treated with herbicide, it is difficult to eradicate because tubers and turions can persist in the sediment for years, and plants can reproduce from even small fragments.

You can help.

Early detection of hydrilla provides a better opportunity for successful control and eradication. Michigan's Invasive Species Program relies on reports from the

public to help in early detection and response efforts.

Identify hydrilla: Look for long, slender stems floating near the



water surface. Check for these characteristics:

Pointed, bright green leaves about 5/8 inch long with small teeth on the edges.

Leaves growing around the stem, generally in whorls of five, but they can range from four to eight. Tiny, floating white flowers visible in late summer to fall.

Small, white to yellowish, potato-like tubers attached to the roots.

Be aware of look-alikes.

## Interview with Tom Watson

(continued from page 5)

Big Pine. So he and I, and Jack, Maurie, **Jim Biener**, and various buds, we'd all go fishing together down there. It was another thing that reinforced my concern for the environment, because when you're in the ocean, you see everything that ends up there. People have no idea what gets in there after a storm.

Plus, we caught so many fish we were able to bring up some for the game dinners. I wish we could do that again.

**Me:** Now tell me more about your garden. I know you both like to garden a lot, and your tomatoes a really good.

**Tom:** Yeah we had one plant that was really tall, with 600-700 fruits on it... We got a really nice mix of soil from a place called Green Valley. And I'd love to expand it into the front yard, add more native areas.

**Me:** I know how much you love raising your monarchs...

**Tom:** a new hole to dig... At this stage, I'd hire people to do it.

We talked for awhile about how they have hired teenagers to help around the yard and in the garden, and how satisfying it is to pass along the lore, the things Tom learned from his Granddad, and he's learned

along the way. It's important to have that continuity, knowing there's someone new carrying on with what you've learned.

One of those young men was **Tate Gardner**, who is a junior in college now and hoping to work on a turtle study. You might remember, it was Tom who rescued **Bondo**, the Blandings turtle, which Tate remembers from the IKEs during his time in the Nature Club when he was a kid..

**Me:** What's your favorite thing about the IKEs?

**Tom:** Although the environment is the glue that holds us all together, my spoke of the organization is the social stuff, especially the **Winterfest** and the **Summerfest** for the kids. That's a blast.

Thanks for all that you do for us, Tom!  
(And... have fun at that Stones concert!!)

**ANNUAL AWARDS  
BANQUET AND  
SILENT AUCTION**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH  
AT THOUSAND OAKS  
COUNTRY CLUB**

To see this and past editions of the newsletter and national IKEs information please visit our website:

**[www.izaakwaltonmi.com](http://www.izaakwaltonmi.com)**

You can also see this newsletter's photos in color. Find Michigan IKEs on facebook so we can send updates out if there is short notice on events.

Send us your fishing, camping or other outdoor stories and we'll publish them in the newsletter.  
Send plain text and/or photos in jpg format to Tom at: [twwatson@comcast.net](mailto:twwatson@comcast.net)

## LODGE CALENDAR 2024

January 9	Board Meeting 7:00 PM
January 19	Lodge Rental
<b>January 27</b>	<b>WINTERFEST</b> 10:00am - 3:00pm
February 13	Board Meeting 7:00 PM
<b>February 24</b>	<b>Annual Awards Banquet</b> <b>Thousand Oaks</b> <b>Country Club</b> 6:00 PM

Deadline for the February Newsletter is Monday, January 15th at 8:00 AM

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President**

John Stegmeier ..... [fishysteg@msn.com](mailto:fishysteg@msn.com)

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## IKEs Member Benefits

-  Monthly Award-Winning Newsletter
-  Gate Key to 39 Acres upon request
-  Nature Trails
-  Catch/Release Fishing
-  Free Camping
-  Lodge Rental (\$100/ \$200 per Day)

# PROPOSED CORE EVENT SCHEDULE FOR 2024

Izaak Walton League, Dwight Lydell Chapter

NOTE: This is a draft schedule. Due to unexpected events dates and times may change. Check for updates in our newsletters, Facebook and website along with notice of special events that come up on short notice and are not listed on this Event Schedule. Additional information about these listed events can be found in the newsletter and on the website. In addition, cancellation notices will be sent by email if your email address has been provided.

Scheduled	Event & Location
January 27, Saturday 11am-3pm.....	Winterfest Family Outing @ CC, 11am - 3pm
February 24, Saturday 6PM.....	Conservation-Awards-Fund Raiser Banquet, 6pm
March 7 thru 10 .....	Ultimate Sport Show-Grand Rapids
April 6, Saturday .....	Fix up/Clean up/Play @ CC, 9am - 12pm
April 11, Thursday .....	Fish & Game Dinner & Program
May 8, 15, 22, 29 Wednesdays .....	Kids Fishing Mornings @ CC, 6 PM to 8PM
May 9, Thursday .....	Steak Dinner and Annual Meeting
May 11, Saturday.....	Fix up/Clean up/Play @ CC, 9am - 12pm
June 8, Saturday .....	Fix up/Clean up/Play @ CC, 9am - 12pm
June 15, Saturday, 11am-3pm .....	Summerfest Community Family Day @ CC
July 6, Saturday .....	Fix up/Clean up/Play @ CC, 9am - 12pm
July 14-16, Sunday - Tuesday .....	2024 IKE's National Convention, Cambridge MD
August 8, Thursday .....	Ribs & Chicken Dinner @ CC
August 10, Saturday .....	Fix up/Clean up/Play @ CC, 9am - 12pm
September 7, Saturday.....	Fix up/Clean up/Play @ CC, 9am - 12pm
September 12, Thursday.....	Oktoberfest @ CC
October 5, Saturday .....	Fix up/Clean up/Play @ CC, 9am - 12pm
October 10, Thursday .....	Chili Cook-off/Potluck @ CC
November 7, Thursday.....	Game Dinner @ CC
December 6, Friday .....	Christmas Potluck@CC
December 7, Saturday.....	Firewood for Winter Wood Supply @ CC, 9am - 12pm

Website: [www.izaakwaltonmi.com](http://www.izaakwaltonmi.com)

CC is the Conservation Center/Lodge @ Ikes Property located at 5641 Myers Lake Avenue

Mailing address is Izaak Walton League, PO Box 541, Belmont MI 49306

## Membership Application

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_ CHILDREN & AGES \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Family - \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Individual - \$75 \_\_\_\_\_ Student (18-21) - \$31 \_\_\_\_\_ Youth (under 18) - \$16

Mail application and check to Izaak Walton League Membership, PO Box 541, Belmont MI 49306. Checks payable to IWLA-DLC. Email Tom Watson at [twatson@comcast.net](mailto:twatson@comcast.net) for more information. To apply/pay membership application online please go to our website [izaakwaltonmi.com](http://izaakwaltonmi.com) Note: Term of membership is the calendar year. A gate key is available to you by request upon confirmation of membership fee payment. **TO GET A GATE KEY CONTACT TOM WATSON AT: [twatson@comcast.net](mailto:twatson@comcast.net)** Please enjoy the 39 acres!

An active organization needs active helpers! Please check the IKE's opportunities here and indicate "all" that you can help. Thanks from your DLC Board! Please enjoy the 39 acres!

Indicate which of these important committees you're interested in working on:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Natural Features      \_\_\_\_\_ Stewardship      \_\_\_\_\_ Finance      \_\_\_\_\_ Membership  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Building & Grounds      \_\_\_\_\_ Conservation      \_\_\_\_\_ Programs      \_\_\_\_\_ Every Member Dinners

*The Izaak Walton League of America – a non-profit conservation organization – is recognized as a Section 501(c)(3) public charity under the Internal Revenue Code.*





Dwight Lydell Chapter  
of the Izaak Walton League  
PO Box 541  
Belmont MI 49306

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Please don't throw this newsletter away -  
pass it on to a friend.

Defenders of Soil, Air, Woods, Waters and Wildlife

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

# WINTERFEST

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27TH

FREE AND OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY!



- \* ICE FISHING
- \* SKATING
- \* SLEDDING
- \* SKIING
- \* SNOW-SHOEING
- \* SNOW GAMES
- \* NATURE WALKS
- \* SNOW SHELTERS
- \* CANDLE-MAKING
- \* SNOW CASTLES
- \* ARCHERY
- \* BIRD FEEDERS

- FREE LUNCH,
- \* CHILI
  - \* HOT DOGS
  - \* HOT COCOA
  - \* CHIPS AND COOKIES



**ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET**  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH  
AT THOUSAND OAKS COUNTRY CLUB