



February 2010

Volume 8, Issue 5



Cognashene Cottagers Association

President's Report

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Despite the fact that we are presently at the opposite end of the calendar to the warm days of summer, winter is probably the most active time for your Board of Directors. Plans are well underway for a host of programs and activities for the 2010 season. The calendar will soon be filled with dates for Recreation Program events, Environment Day, Art on the Rocks, and Garden Club to name a few.

This is the time of year to **renew your Association membership**. Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed renewal form and return it along with payment in the enclosed envelope. The application is also available on the CCA website.

You will note the addition of a line requesting your **"911 Emergency Cottager Location Number"**. This number is on the blue marker that is displayed at your dock to assist personnel in responding to an emergency. It is also shown on your Township Tax Bill, located directly below the line *Property Description*. (It is NOT the roll number) Please assist us by providing this valuable information for our mapping project as well as making it easier for property identification in case of emergency.

It seems that life on the Bay is never without an issue that brings

us closer together. The communities of The Township of Georgian Bay continue to be frustrated by a local government that does not reflect the interests of the taxpayers who contribute the lion's share of the tax base. Also, despite repeated requests to provide public information concerning the status of the Township's Fire / Rescue boat that went out of commission this past August, this affair has been clouded in secrecy. We have been assured that repairs will be effected by the end of March, however, there appear to be no new safeguards in place should a similar situation arise in the future. The residents of the Township deserve responsible representation from its elected officials at Council.

It was apparent at the 2009 AGM that the Board was charged with being more actively involved in the political process. To this end, CCA recently participated in a meeting with the four other GBA members (Honey Harbour, Go Home, Wah Wah Taysee, and Twelve Mile), together with representatives from the inland lakes to discuss ways and means of positioning our interests. A committee made up of members from the Georgian Bay coastal communities, the inland lakes as well as from the towns of

Mactier and Port Severn/ Honey Harbour has since been struck. Their goal is to identify issues of interest to the residents of the Township and to poll candidates on their position on such matters. They will also provide information as to who is permitted to vote and how to be on the voter's list. There will be much more information made available throughout the next few months; we promise to keep you posted.

I hope you find this issue of our newsletter informative and, as always, if you have a question or comment, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely, Craig

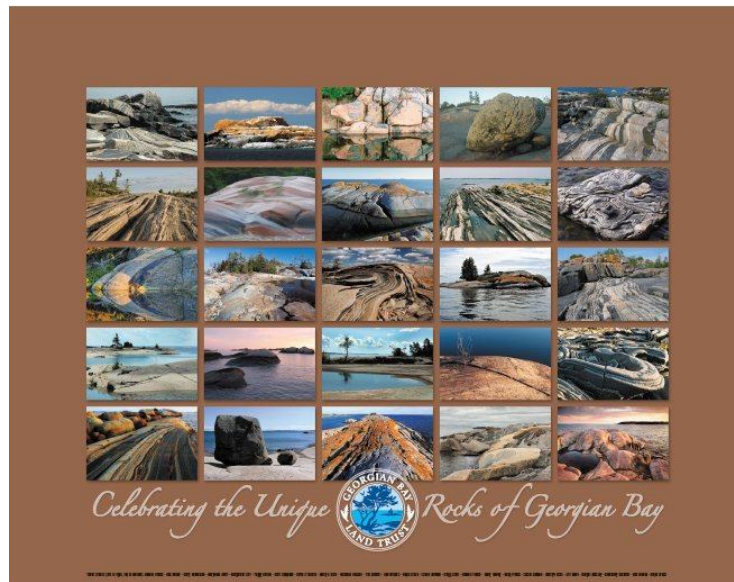
Your Executive Committee

Nancy Bennett
Craig Bowden
Doug Carr
Susan Carter
Anna Cook
Cathy Cooper
Ian Davis
Doug Deeks
Susanna Ferguson
Derek Friend
Susanna Henderson
David Matthews

Ian Melhuish
Wendy Parker
Liz Ross
Karl Schiefer
Bill Stewart
Sarah Tawaststjerna

2009-2010

Georgian Bay Land Trust



The "Unique Rocks of Georgian Bay" Poster is now available! See www.gblt.org for details or call 416.440.1519 x3

Municipal Affairs - Cathy Cooper

CCPAG

The planning advisory group looked into seven applications for variance in the past year. In almost every case, we found common ground with the applicants and everyone was pleased with the outcomes.

In one instance, we asked for and got a deferral until the spring, when the owner has committed to working with us to find a solution.

Responses from various applicants working with our planning group have been extremely positive. We have also had some very good input from neighbours of applicants, who really appreciated our efforts to inform them and to work out something with the applicant that was respectful of the entire neighbourhood. People are beginning to see our community's role in planning issues as stewards of the natural beauty of our area.

I am so proud of the group we have assembled and the efforts they have made on behalf of our community.

If you are interested in playing an active role in the planning issues of Cognashene, please contact any CCA board member.

GBA Conference for Member Associations

In January, the GBA facilitated a conference wherein various cottage associations got together to discuss the issues that they would like to see on their respective municipality's radar. It was interesting to learn how very similar the issues were from Honey

Harbour to Parry Sound, including a few 'inland lakes', such as Gibson Lake.

Once a number of commonly held issues was established, we shared any information and perspectives each association had on an issue and that was very illuminating. Then we talked about how to get these issues in front of the respective electorate and the politicians.

The general consensus was that most residents do not follow local elections or candidates' platforms carefully, so they are unsure of how to vote. Many people at the conference recalled the old Baxter, Gibson, Freeman Committee, a citizen's committee that vetted all candidates running for election in the Township of Georgian Bay. A report by that committee went out to residents and it supported the candidates with the best comprehension of the issues, and the right skills to serve the public. Readers of the report had some confidence that the selected candidates would do a good job for us, and were therefore more likely to vote in the election. We all agreed that the committee had provided a vital service to voters and a new one should be struck. This committee will be balanced, so as to not just represent seasonal residents. Representation will be based upon the same principles used to distribute elected officials fairly from all over the Township.

The next election in our municipality is this coming November, so we will experience the benefit of this committee's efforts this fall. There are a lot of hot issues so stay tuned and let us know *your* concerns; we need to ask candidates the right questions. Certainly, the list of topics we need to discuss with candidates will include:

- Development plans for Port Severn: what will the cost and benefit to ratepayers and how will

capitol projects be paid

- Planning concerns, including support by the township for community plans
- Taxation and the return water-front ratepayers get for the dollars they pay; also fiscal responsibility and controls
- Staffing at the Township offices; the rapid rise in costs
- Water quality and testing
- Emergency response/fire services
- Council performance: transparency and accountability

Here are some interesting facts that were shared at the conference:

About 86 percent of the voting population in the Township is made up of seasonal residents.

The current mayor received 3400 votes in the last election.

These statistics are heartening. If we take the time to learn the issues and determine who is best-suited to handle the job on council, we can have a profound influence on the make-up of council, and perhaps the future of our Township.

Environment Report - Doug Deeks

Notes from the Bay while it sits in winter's grip.

Water Quality

Results from last summer's testing program will be available in about a month and will be reported on in the spring newsletter. There's some assurance that the funding required for this program from the Township will remain in place for 2010, though actual budget details from our Township Council's budget committee are vague on this point at the current time.

Water Levels/Weather Conditions

What felt like a wet summer 7 months ago has flipped to be an unseasonably dry winter. While I am writing from Toronto, where barely a snowflake has had to be pushed by a shovel all winter, the story is only slightly different for the entire Great Lakes basin. Precipitation along with temperature and ice cover is the greatest natural influence on water levels and over this last year we now stand at exactly *average* for total precipitation and that coming after a heavy snow year at the start of 2009 and ample rain in the May to August period. Since Labour Day it has been unseasonably dry as characterized by January where just 33% of the monthly average precipitation fell in the Lake Michigan-Huron drainage basin.

How will all of this lack of snow affect your docks and beach come spring, you ask? It depends what happens the rest of the way between now and May 1st. Currently Georgian Bay has slightly higher water levels than a year ago, and heavy snow in February followed by ample rain in April would

likely maintain that gap, giving you 6-12cms more water come dock launching than last spring. The current forecast from the US Army Corps of Engineers however, suggests that levels will be very close to last year based on the current precipitation trend. Not really bad news when it comes to navigation, dock management and the like for the cottager out there but not great if you're hopeful of a reversion to the levels associated with the Upper lakes long term water cycle and evidence to counter the theory of man-made water levels loss through the St Clair River.

At Feb 2, Lake Michigan – Huron is 15cm (6 inches) below the long term average and the current downward trend will persist as long as there is limited ice cover and limited precipitation. Jan-Feb is normally the start of the annual water cycle rebound. If the groundhog is right and winter will stick for another 6 weeks, than good coverage of ice on the lakes and a couple feet of snow will send the water levels back in the upward direction come spring.

Art vs. Nature

Surely the living breathing environment is a better sell than static representations of same, no?

Cognashene Environment Day Saturday July 17th 1:30 – 4:30

I read the 2009 Art on the Rock summary from Catherine Gillespie the other day and was astounded to discover that attendance for that most noble of events was 900 people. Nine hundred. Well, Enviro Day is also noble and has good looking boat boys and everything else and I'll bet we struggled to hit 90 last year. Surely the living breathing environment is a better sell than static representations of same, no?

Topics and speakers for the day are TBD at this stage though there have been some requests for a forestry walk along with the inclusion of environmental solution demonstrations like solar panels, alternative waste treatment systems and the like. Feel free to voice your opinion with me and I'll try to accommodate.

Asian Carp

This issue is progressing at an unfortunate rate as evidence of Asian carp eDNA has been found in Lake Michigan's Calumet Harbour as of last week. The threat of these two species of carp (Bighead, Silver) to the Great Lakes and its native fishery is being touted by all sides as being enormously perilous. Efforts to take decisive action to prevent the migration of the species are still afoot with a meeting of the Great Lake State Governors and other stakeholders set for the White House on Feb 8th. The main objective of that meeting will be to

Environment Report cont'd

get the locks at the head of the Chicago sanitary canal closed temporarily to allow time to assess the situation and ensure that current controls can meet the task of repelling migratory minded fish.

I was asked recently what the threat of Asian Carp really is since the current species of carp found in the Lakes (the Common Carp) is also an Asian invasive and doesn't seem to have caused much trouble. Indeed these two new species are related to the common carp which found its way into the Great Lake System through accidental release in the late 1800's where it quickly spread and

has since become a primary fish species. The Common Carp is not present without a cost due to its impact on shallow water habitats (creates turbidity that disrupts native species breeding and feeding) however it is a smaller and much less troublesome fish than its cousins, largely owing to differences in appetite. The Bighead Carp grows to a metre and will reach 50 kgs at maturity, the importance of which is the appetite that is demanded by that size. Living off of a diet of molluscs, insects, worms, algae and aquatic plants, the Carp consumes massive amounts of the base of the aquatic food chain, leaving little for the rest at the table. In the

Mississippi and Illinois rivers whole sections of the river have been reduced to near single species environments by the Asian Carp (97% of the aquatic mass has been found to be Asian Carp) and that is what has most people concerned about what will take place in the Lakes, let alone being hit in the head by a flying silver carp while water skiing...

More to come.

Your thoughts are welcome, send to me at: dougdeeks@gmail.com.

Services Report - Derek Friend

Winter patrol is well underway for the 2009-2010 season. There has been only one incident of a break-in so far, the next newsletter will complete the winter patrol report, so stay tuned.

Unfortunately, (see previous article for more details) the issue of the Fire Boat remains unchanged and I have great concern that fire response is not an increased focus for the township. We

will continue to work hard on exploring this issue and getting the Townships report if possible. We will advise as more information comes to light.

Following up with the last newsletter, we are still in the process of gathering information from those cottagers who are willing to make their private fire pumps available in

the event of an emergency. As our fire safety seems to be falling more and more on our communities shoulders, it is important to rally together and work collectively in this regard.

Please email me if you wish to make your pump available at dfriend@rogers.com.

Cognashene Cottager - Susanna Henderson

Submissions Wanted for the 2010 Edition of the Cognashene Cottager!

Please send me your stories, adventures, photographs (no more than 5 per person), poetry, and original artwork for this year's Cottager. If you have a bear story or photo, please submit them for a special section on bears.

The deadline is Monday, March 1st, 2010.

If you are emailing your files, please send your articles within your email, or as a word file and images as high resolution jpegs.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email or phone (416) 540-1468.

By Post:

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Toronto, ON M4V 1J4

Telephone: 416-540-1468

Email: cognashene.cottager@gmail.com

Cognashene Cottagers Association



The Cognashene Cottagers Association represents a water-based community on the east shore of Georgian Bay. Its mandate is to represent and coordinate the communal interests of its membership, to assist in the preservation and protection of the area known as Cognashene and beyond to ensure an ongoing enjoyment of the Bay and to build a strong sense of community.

- The membership includes permanent and seasonal visitors.
- The Association facilitates the provision of programs and services to protect and enhance the members' enjoyment of the Bay.
- Through the participation of the membership in the programs and services offered, a great sense of community is achieved, communal interests are safe guarded and knowledge of issues is obtained.
- A partnership with the Georgian Bay Association and other related organizations assists in the promotion of careful stewardship of the Georgian Bay environment.
- The Association promotes an effective and ongoing communication with all of our membership and respects the diverse needs of the membership.

Visit our website at www.cognashene.com