



Cognashene Cottagers' Association

Recreation Program

Now hiring for Summer
2012
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President's Message

Wendy Parker

Hello Friends and Neighbours,

What a wonderful summer we had. The weather was terrific, the bears, mostly peaceful, and the rattlesnakes not as feisty. If the water had been about a foot higher, especially this fall, it would have been perfect.

We have Bill Stewart and Craig Bowden to thank for the new maps; I think the colour is terrific.

Environment Day gets bigger and better each year and in attendance with the rest of us this year, were two Township Councillors to learn more about the flora and fauna of the bay.

We continue to be very thankful to the Deeks, Thompson, Davis, Kohler, Endress, Winlo and Gillespie families for hosting many of the summer's events. A

grand turnout for the long distance swim, and no boats blown off course at the regatta were testament to the great weather. Many thanks also go out to Denis Robitaille for the swim and regatta docks, as well as the privy.

'Art on the Rocks' was again a beehive of activity with a mass of people and boats adding bright colours to the land and seascapes. To those visitors traveling up the channel on this 20th anniversary of the event, Cognashene must have seemed a very vibrant and active community.

After years of effort we were finally able to get the Cognashene blasting by-law passed, by a unanimous vote of council on September 6th. (Thank you Neil!)

The Open Space committee, led by Pat Edwards, has developed an excellent revamp of the wording for this by-law as it applies to O.S. Islands but a few more technical procedures are required before it can be passed by Council sometime next spring, we hope.

I feel a tremendous sense of 'family' when I think of how our community comes together to share the summer in so many ways. The Church on the Freddy, the kids of the rec. program, regatta, canoe trips, cocktail parties everywhere, the ladies afternoon 'teas' (often of interest to the OPP) and even the solitary paddlers who pass by our docks and return our wave or hello....these are things that speak of this special place. Many people from other parts of the 'Bay' and even some inland residents have commented on their envy of our unified approach to dealing with the many challenging issues that face us each year. I am proud to be part of Cognashene and support its values, community plan and by-laws. To join hand in hand with the board and all of you, to preserve this special place for future generations, is a privilege.

Most sincerely,

Wendy Parker

Recreation Program

Lisa Merry

We all had a great summer!!!! The weather could not have been better and it made swimming lessons that much more enjoyable for our kids! Enrollment included 86 registered children representing 48 families. We also had a number of guests join us along the way. We had an incredibly keen and affable staff headed up by the always enthusiastic and energetic Meg Bennett. We had a new more structured volunteer program this summer headed by Michaela Eaton-Kent. This seemed to be successful and gave 10 kids the opportunity to volunteer in the rec program and see how things worked.

As in past years, our program included Red Cross swimming lessons, sailing lessons, Jr & Sr arts and crafts, YPOC and Kids Club and Water Sports. We also enjoyed our overnight Jr. and Sr. canoe trips (and the weather co-operated for both!), an afternoon with the Georgian Bay Biosphere organization learning more about our environment and the wildlife around us and our ever popular YPOC party and end of year theme party. This year's theme was Super Heros.



I would like to take this opportunity to wish Kim Limoges and her family the best of luck as they head off to Australia this December for a year on an exchange. They will be missed. Annie Nicholls will take Kim's position as my partner in the Program Director's position.

Our recreation program has always been fortunate to hire a wonderful staff. We are sad to report that Meg Bennett will not be returning next summer as Assistant Program Director. Kim and I would like to thank Meg for a great two years. This season we will be looking for an Assistant Program Director, Head Instructors for Sailing and Swimming, Instructors,

Assistant Instructors and Volunteers. We would like to hire the Assistant Program Director by January 1st and the Head of Swimming and Head of Sailing and the full Instructors by the second week in January, and the Assistant Instructor and Volunteer positions by the end of January. Please see the details below:

We are looking for motivated, organized, enthusiastic, and energetic individuals who enjoy working with children, to provide a full range of recreational activities for the Cognashene Cottagers' Association Recreation Program in the following positions;

Assistant Program Director

Employment Period: June through August

Requirements:

- University/Community College Student
- Familiar with the Recreation Program
- Current Instructor (Red Cross and LSS),
- NLS and First Aid/CPR certificates
- Strong communication, organizational and Leadership skills
- Access to boat (30hp) and boating license
- Willing to teach all levels

Application Deadline:

December 10, 2011

Head of Swimming

Employment Period: July through August (8 weeks)

Requirements:

- University/Community College Student
- Experienced Swim Instructor
- Familiar with teaching Bronze Levels
- Current Instructor (Red Cross and LSS),
- NLS and First Aid/CPR Certificates
- Able to assist with all aspects of the program
- Access to boat (30hp) and boating license

Application Deadline:

December 15, 2011

Head of Sailing

Employment Period: July through August (8 weeks)

Requirements:

- University/Community College Student
- Sailing experience
- Familiar with teaching Bronze Levels
- Current Instructor (Red Cross and LSS),
- NLS and First Aid/CPR Certificates
- Able to assist with all aspects of the program
- Access to boat (30hp) and boating license

Application Deadline:

December 15, 2011

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Instructors

Employment Period: July through August (8 weeks)

Requirements:

- High School, University / Community College Student
- Current Instructor (Red Cross and LSS)
- NLS and First Aid / CPR Certificates
- Access to boat (30hp) and boating license
- Interest in swimming, sports, arts, crafts, sailing, canoe trips

Application Deadline: **December 15, 2011**

Assistant Instructors

Employment Period: July through August (8 weeks)

Requirements:

- High School Student
- Bronze Cross
- Standard First Aid with CPR

-Assist with swimming, sports, arts & crafts, sailing, canoe trips

-ASWI instructor encouraged

Application Deadline: **January 1, 2011**

Volunteers

Employment Period: July through August (8 weeks)

Requirements:

- 14 years of age
- Have or be enrolled in Bronze Cross
- Helping with swim lessons and other aspects of the program
- Hours worked will qualify for volunteer hours

Application Deadline: **January 1, 2010**

Please email resumes to Lisa Merry at merrys@xplornet.com

Municipal Affairs

Cathy Cooper

THE GOOD NEWS:

There have been some positive developments recently: Cognashene's proposed blasting by-law, which was promised back in January of 2008, was finally passed by council. Cognashene owes a big thank-you to Neil Davis for all of his hard work on the by-law, and to Pat Edwards who was brave enough to voice the frustration of the community at the lack of cooperation we were experiencing.

After several attempts over a 3 year period, the Wah Wah Taysee Association finally saw the first portion of its community plan adopted. While both are great news, it should not have been so difficult to accomplish these things.

OTHER NEWS:

We have heard nothing further on the electoral Ward Boundary Review. This may be because the consultants map, showing the current distribution of eligible voters over the 3 wards, was

flawed. It omitted between 10-15% of all eligible voters in the township. Without a more reliable basis upon which to frame an analysis, there is no guarantee that the review process will produce the desired effect: to have true representation by voter population.

How could so many eligible voters just disappear? These people were dropped from the previous Voters List because our township opted for a 2010 Voters List that specifically excluded any voters who were "unconfirmed". ("Unconfirmed" means some element of their eligibility was not definitively known, and would have to be established). Any municipality that opted to exclude this segment of the voter population was mandated to do a mailing to confirm the "U's" eligibility and get them back onto the Voters List.

Unfortunately, this township did not meet that mandate. The average return for municipal mailings designed to get the "U's" back on the list was 40% across the province. This township had a 2% rate. (Information provided by a senior operations representative at MPAC's Enumeration Project.)

Another factor that added to the chaos was ill-informed township staff. The lack of understanding of the Elections Act was troubling. Any resident whose land is held in trust, in a holding company name, or zoned as a family compound, was told they are not eligible to vote in this province, period. This is not correct.

Many of those who had previously voted, and who were dropped because their age or citizenship was unknown to the new computer system, were told that they must drive to Port Severn during business hours to produce their 'proof'. This could have been done by mail.

Strangely, a full year later, the township has done nothing to clean up the Voters List, despite the fact that the Ward Boundary Review is currently underway and is being based upon the number of eligible voters. The Ward Review consultant's hand-outs indicate the current number of voters in this township to be around 8,700, while MPAC advises it is actually in excess of 10,000.

Besides cleaning up the Voters List by now, we would have expected to see a resolution to provide staff with training

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on the Elections Act. However, no such thing has been proposed. The disenfranchisement of such a significant portion of voter population in this township has been placed upon the back burner because we, the voters, have done nothing about it. We owe it to ourselves and our elected officials to get involved and push for reforms.

A recent disappointment was the decision by council to abandon the Ad Hoc Committee concept. These committees permitted direct civilian participation, and in many cases, allowed the township to benefit from the wisdom of very talented subject-matter experts. The committees' recommendations to council represented the coming together of multiple viewpoints. That opportunity is now lost, and the replacement structure will see one single councillor in charge of a subject area: Planning, Administration, Financial, Public Works etc.

If a councillor's command of specific subject matter is not up to speed, key staff will be in a singular position of influence. Not exactly the democratic process that we

envisioned after last fall's election.

Another troubling township-wide issue remains Planning. Cognashene's Community Plan and those of other associations, continue to be disregarded. The Chair our Planning Advisory Group, Ian Davis, has confirmed that it is now

over 3 years since one single application for variance or severance has been turned down by the Committee of Adjustments. That statistic is unheard of in other municipalities and is a red flag indicating dysfunction somewhere in this township's system.

Planning problems was a major issue debated in the last election. Although many of those who ran for office promised to honour our community plan, several of those elected have failed to keep their commitments. We are all hoping that at some point, council will figure out how to better align its planning practices so that they actually support this township's official plan.

Another area where planning has impacted us negatively is in the area of spending. Litigation costs are at 184% of the 2011 budgeted expenditure and still rising. There seems to be a loss of control and ratepayers should be demanding accountability in this area.

Will our new council be able to deliver a more transparent and responsible government? That remains to be seen.



You are cordially invited to attend a
HOB-NOB
WITH MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Wednesday November 30, 2011
4:30-6:00 pm
(Following the arrival of the Holiday Train)
MacTier Arena

Thursday December 1, 2011
4:30-6:00 pm
Council Chambers

This is an opportunity to come out and meet with *your* Mayor & Councillors, have a coffee and a chat, and let them know what's on your mind.

Please mark these dates on your calendar and we hope to see you there!

Communications Update

Anna Cook

A warm welcome to Laura Adams to the Communication committee! Laura has agreed to put together the CCA newsletters for us. Thank you so much Laura for joining our team, we look forward to working with you. Anyone interested in joining the Communications committee to help with website development, social media, or the Cottager, please email Anna Cook at anna-cook@rogers.com or call 905-989-0757. There are many opportunities large and small to become involved with the CCA and be an active part of our fantastic Cognashene community. Submissions for the position of Creative Director, Cottager 2012 are now being accepted. Please include a brief biography or resume with your contact information and forward to Anna Cook. I look forward to hearing from you!

A reminder to start downloading your photos and sharpening your pencils for those fabulous Cottager submissions for next year's edition! Submissions are due by January 31, 2012.

We are exploring the option of offering the CCA newsletter electronically instead of, or in addition to, a print version. There will be an option on your membership renewal form in 2012 to select how you would like to receive your newsletter and GBA Update.

Just a reminder to send any address changes or email updates to the CCA to keep your information current and make sure your settings are set to receive emails from the CCA so they don't get caught in your spam or junk folders. Please note that the Cottager Directory membership list should only be used for personal or CCA matters and not as a tool for solicitation.

Environmental Report

Doug Deeks

Phragmites in Cognashene!

Many of you will have heard of the invasive shore grass named *Phragmites Australis* and its rapid spread along the shorelines of the Great Lakes, it having been well documented in GBA Update and regular media; however few of you have likely seen or recognized it close to home. Prior to this past summer I had heard no reports of phragmites from the GB east shore and specifically none from Cognashene and this despite its heavy presence along the shores of Severn Sound, Nottawasaga Bay and Penetang-Midland. Maybe our rocky shores wouldn't be so accommodating, I wondered.



Phragmites Australis in mid to Late autumn. The stalks will not fall over during the winter and will act as a nurse stand in the spring for the new growth.

This summer broke the silence with reports from North and South Bay Honey Harbour, Giants Tomb and, unfortunately, my own report from Minnicog which confirms that the "the Phrag" is indeed now in Cognashene. Given the extensive reporting on this plant, I won't re-hash the issues that it creates beyond the basics and will instead share the experience of trying to eradicate it once it has arrived. The argument against this plant is as follows: dominates coastal and inland wetland areas choking out native species and severely limiting the pre-existing biodiversity; growing to more than 10 feet in height by late summer in intense density; dominating and, depending on vantage point, obliterating views; curtails shoreline use due to sheer intensity of growth.

The phrag's quick spread through the lakes has been enabled by the long period of low water levels that Lakes Michigan-Huron have experienced which has left huge stretches of exposed shoreline open to colonization. It can spread by seed but more commonly spreads by broken bits of the plant floating ashore and establishing root. Boat propellers can be a particularly effective spreading device.

I have been walking the Minnicog shore for the last couple of years looking for signs of the phrag in the several bays which harbour an exposed shoreline and had been relieved to find no evidence; however this summer while paddling around the island, I found a well established patch in a spot I would never have suspected of being a potential beachhead and likely a spot I wouldn't have seen on a walk as it simply wasn't on my radar as being anything other than a "rocky", no risk bit of shoreline. This formerly rocky shoreline situated on the southernmost shore of the island opposite from Smooth Island now harbours a small sandy bottomed bay that is densely populated with bulrushes, grasses, reeds, and bushes due to the persistent low water, of the like that we have these days.



South shore of Minnicog where phragmites is seen on a formerly "rocky" shore— August 1, 2011

With probably 3 years of development under way, the phrag had carved out a central spot of about 4m in diameter and had several satellites of growth popping up amongst the native growth outside of its hub. The future development prospects for the plant, based on the information available to me and based on what I saw, suggests that given another 3 years of growth, there would be little other plant life left in this bay and no chance at eradication. Along with the demise of the large variety of native shoreline plant species would be the overall decline in biodiversity including insects, amphibians, reptiles, small mammals and birds. As of yet, the phragmites plays host to very limited other life making it poor habitat of the like that patches of cattails typically provide.

How bad though really is the presence of a tall attractive grass on a remote part of the island that few people ever see? If it was to stick to one spot then there really would be no issue, you might even think that it looks nice. Many of you probably

have patches of cattails that appear to be dominant in their own way and may be curious as to what the difference is. Unlike cattails which are naturally held in check from thoroughly dominating wetland environments (for example we don't have a single cattail on Minnicog despite plenty of good habitat) phragmites has no bounds where it has access to very moist soil (within 1 metre of the surface).

Upon further review of the Minnicog shore along which I had previously identified 5 hotspot areas that I felt were likely phragmites targets, I was forced to revise my estimate to include a far greater 50 sites with a total shoreline length of about 2 km's; that was a bit of a holy-shit moment.

Probably like many of you, I have been in the habit of believing that on Minnicog we have a predominantly rocky shoreline. Not so in the persistent low water regime we have been experiencing for more than a decade. Now approximately half the shore line has a cobble and sand base with varying amounts of growth in development. Of significant additional risk for Minnicog are the inland wetland areas which connect to the open shoreline and which provide ready access for an invasive like the phrag. The inner wetland is what fuels much of the wildlife on the island.

Having being through several briefings on how to tackle phragmites, I knew it to be a not-so-easy task. Most phrag eradication projects involve mechanical excavators, many bodies and much persistence. Nothing like a holiday weekend to provide some bodies and a quick effort with the troublesome plant, I thought. Having fostered support amongst a good number of unsuspecting island community blood relatives we approached the phrag with a couple of garbage bags, some hoes, shovels and gloves with the intention of pulling out the root mass of what was a relatively small patch and being rid of the invader. To my surprise and to the general shock of my vacationing relatives, the better part of a day, 10 garbage bags and many sore body parts later we had achieved what has become known as "stage 1" – the elimination of the visible presence of the plant. No better is the look on a person's face when upon confidently and aggressively yanking on a stalk of the phrag, they are jerked forward as if the phrag has not just resisted, but yanked back.

The virulence of the plant being legendary, we booked a second meeting with the phrag for 4 weeks out on the appropriately timed and named Labour Day, where I figured a whacking of a few resurgent stems might be required. Instead, another several hours by the 10 able bodied phrag fighters and

a further 6 garbage bags of mostly root material was the surprising result. A crowbar had replaced the hoe as the implement of choice amongst the keenest of our phrag fighting team.

At Thanksgiving there was no evidence of resurgence which was cause for some small amount of victory statements, though my friends in the biologist community advise that there is almost certainly remnants left underground that will have decided to heal up and wait for spring to have another go. With persistent monitoring over the next few summers we will beat this pest from this one corner of our shore, but what about the rest of it?



Likely the most important outcome for this project is the familiarity with the plant among all our island dwellers making early identification more likely. With the capacity for early detection and the knowledge on how to handle it well spread amongst the island community a much more sane control effort may be possible where small patches are identified and removed on an as-it-happens basis.

With the phrag comfortably established on Giant's Tomb, Beausoleil, the mainland shore of Awenda Provincial park and in Honey Harbour, the plant is well positioned to continue its colonizing efforts along the east shore and

throughout Cognashene. Perhaps the greatest risk to expansion comes from the marinas like those in Honey Harbour which border wetland areas (Lily pond in HH). Many of these heavily trafficked wetlands are already host to well established phragmites growth (not to mention other notorious invaders including Dog Strangling vine (DSV), Japanese Knotweed, water milfoil) and with the number of work boats and cottage boats that come out of them, the opportunity for phraggy bits and phrag seeds to hitch a ride on propellers, and boat surfaces is very significant.

Below here is a short summary of how to tackle the phrag:

1. Look for and identify it (taking a picture is most effective for later confirmation. Send to me as an option dougdeeks@gmail.com)

2. Remove all stalks, roots and rhizomes (tubular, underground growth)

3. Carefully bag all material and dispose in a dumpster

4. Be mindful that when removing it and transporting it, that any root material and seed that gets dropped along the way or flushed out the back of the boat is an invitation to start the process all over.

5. Check the spot several times per season looking for resurgence.

Georgian Bay Township Strategic Plan - Review -By Doug Deeks

The Township is in the midst of a multitude of planning exercises the navigation and comprehension of which must challenge the keenest observers of municipal affairs. We can hope that the output of these professionally contracted exercises results in some clarity and prudence on Township decision making going forward.

One of the planning exercises and ostensibly the most important, given its supposed blanket influence across the Township's planning and operations, is the re-development of the Township Strategic Plan. I should note that these planning exercises are not voluntary and all municipal bodies are mandated to update both their Strategic Plan and their Official Plan periodically. The Mayor and new Council made it a priority to get caught up on these requirements in 2011 and ensure that this Term was aligned in its efforts internally and with its many constituents and stakeholder organizations. Time will tell what positive influence these activities will have but at least they are kicking off with noble beginnings.

I participated in the development of the Strategic Plan as part of the "Citizens Advisory Group" that was assembled to assist the professional municipal planning organization, LURA, that was hired to develop the Plan. A significant effort to elicit feedback from the community (450 respondents) was made throughout the summer to identify the key issues of the Township from a citizen and stakeholder perspective with an end goal of defining a vision, priority projects and goals. The end result is an ambitious document that captures much and discards little as far as the handling of the input is concerned; however that is perhaps the overriding objective of the process which is to reflect the priorities that the community identifies. More reason to raise your voice when the opportunity is presented (especially after you see the flamingo lined Honey Harbour Rd in the spring....☺).

All kidding aside, a summary of the document (available for viewing in its entirety on the Township website - www.township.georgianbay.on.ca – or by email from me upon request dougdeeks@gmail.com) follows below starting with the vision statement and followed by the key goals for the Township. A note to the Strategic Plan is that it by itself has no actual teeth in terms of binding the forward course of the Township and its managers. Instead, it is intended to be the main source of influence, the conscience if you like, of decision making going forward. A real test for whether it will sit on the shelf untouched or be dog eared from extensive consultation starts with the overhaul already underway of the Township Official Plan. That, of course, is the document that has the teeth and we will see if the issues of importance highlighted in the Strategic plan get drafted into the actual by-laws that direct our local governance.

Strategic Plan Vision Statement (pending approval by Council)

The Township of Georgian Bay will remain a safe and welcoming home; showcasing our historic, prosperous, sustainable villages and cottage communities.

Honouring our unique natural amenities, we will promote and collaborate with the outstanding stewards of our community to foster innovative yet thoughtful growth.

Main Goals (detailed objectives for each are outlined in the document):

1. **Economy** - To be a community that focuses on economic prosperity, develops our economy, and values our natural and environmental amenities.
2. **Environment** -To be a community that supports and enhances our natural heritage and environmental assets.
3. **Society/Culture** – To be a community that celebrates our heritage and focuses on our cultural and community assets.

The document that was to be presented to Council on November 7 concludes with a lengthy list of recommendations on how to implement the plan's goals and specific actions. This plan is designed to specifically guide the Township activities for the next 5 years (2011-15) and of particular interest to Cognashene is the strong push for water quality and environmental protection through the endorsement of annual testing, documenting and reporting.

In conclusion to my summary of this process and its output, I will note that the establishment of the baseline requirements needed to maintain/establish a healthy marine and terrestrial environment along with the understanding of the relationship of those requirements to the health of the local economy and culture is essential if the Township really wants to get serious about sustainable management and forward looking planning for this area.

Please contact me with any questions and note that feedback is welcome at the Township either through our Councilor Pat Edwards or directly with the Twp via the Economic Development Officer Jennifer Schnier jschnier@gbtownship.ca, 1-800-567-0187 ext 259.



Announcement: Mark Carabetta

Incoming Executive Director of the GBLT

I am very pleased and excited to be able to announce the appointment of Mark Carabetta as the Executive Director of the Georgian Bay Land Trust (GBLT). He will be joining our team on Wednesday, November 16, 2011.

Mark has over 17 years of experience with the conservation community in both the United States and Canada. His career includes working as an Ecologist and Director of Conservation Science at the Connecticut chapter of The Nature Conservancy and for the past five years, he has worked as the Conservation Science Manager for Ontario Nature. In his recent role with Ontario Nature he built and managed their nature reserve system including 22 nature reserves and two conservation easements and provided expertise and support on stewardship, restoration, mapping and multi-stakeholder initiatives. Mark has a M.A. in Botany, from Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut.

Mark also currently serves as a Governor on the Ontario Land Trust Alliance Board, leading the Board Development committee and has volunteered with a variety of conservation organizations including the Field Botanists of Ontario. Mark has a profound love of nature and the outdoors and has enjoyed hiking and camping with his family along the eastern and western shores of Georgian Bay.

We look forward to Mark joining our team. He will have a short overlap period with our outgoing Executive Director Wendy Cooper, who will complete eight successful years with the GBLT on Tuesday, November 22, 2011. We thank Wendy for her incredible efforts and support of the GBLT and know she will remain an ongoing friend and supporter of the GBLT.

You will have an opportunity to meet Mark at our upcoming Bayscapes Photography Auction on Friday, November 4, 2011. I hope to see you there and introduce you to Mark.

All the best,
Peter Cooper
Chairman

GBA Report

During my time as one of CCA's representatives to the Georgian Bay Association, I have come to realize the true value of membership in both organizations. In my 'President's Report' in UPDATE, I give a comparison between the types of issues that may involve "local" membership and "Georgian Bay" membership. Both are equally important as they respond to items that concern the use and enjoyment of this special environment, now and into the future. I encourage you to read the enclosed newsletters to get a feel for all the work that is being done on your behalf.

The Boards of Directors of both CCA and GBA (all volunteers I might add) feel strongly about how outside forces such as the environment, climate change, communication, and yes, politics each have an affect on our daily lives at Georgian Bay. Without their dedication, your voice would likely not be heard in places like the Township and District Offices, Queen's Park, Ottawa, or at the table with the Upper Great Lakes Study Board. Most recently, GBA, together with other stakeholders, were helpful in convincing the District of Muskoka to reinstate a Citizen Advisory Council as part of the District's 2012 planning and review process. Our Executive Director was personally involved in these discussions.

I encourage you to spread the value of membership in CCA to strengthen the Cognashene community, which in turn supports the necessary manpower at GBA to advocate on collective Georgian Bay matters.

Craig Bowden
President – Georgian Bay Association



Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season,
and all the best in 2012!

You can find us at www.cognashene.com for contact information, registration forms, events and dates. Watch for the next CCA Newsletter coming in January.