



FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

CCA BOARD

President - Kara Hunter

Vice President & Secretary - Megan Carney

Past President - Sue Carter

Treasurer - Matt Murphy

Membership - Cathie Bowden

Communications - Matthew Hawley

Rec. Program - Jenna Lynde

Services - Cam Allen

Technology - James Maynard

Community Events - Nancy Bennett

Municipal Affairs - Gregg

Badger

GBA Representative - David Matthews

GBA Representative - Tom Halpeny

Planning - Marc Kemerer

Environment - Jack Giroux

Cottager - Barb Russell

Members at large:
Jim Bowden

President's Message

Hello Cognashene Cottager Members,

It is hard to part with the glorious days of summer in Cognashene! Thankfully, September helped to ease that tough transition with some beautiful days on the Bay to close out the season. I hope the summer of 2024 gave you some wonderful cottage memories.

Cognashene spirit was in full-form all summer long. The Cognashene events and activities were well received, with the weather largely on our side and attended with energy and enthusiasm. As a result, the Long Distance Swim, Art on the Rocks, the Cognashene Regatta and Rystone Cup events stand out as summer highlights for many of us. The much anticipated inaugural Environment Day was the only event that faced a bad weather forecast and with much disappointment, it was postponed until next summer.

The Recreation Program offered a great variety of summer of activities for many young campers of Cognashene. The Arthur Island swim beach provided memory-making fun times for everyone involved. It was the first summer for the new sailing program offering, which proved to be a great success.

I want to extend a special thank you on behalf of our community to the efforts of our dedicated volunteers behind the scenes and to our generous hosts who make the activities and events all possible. Your support has such impact, contributing to our strong sense of community and making our connection to Cognashene so special.

Another highlight of the summer was the Cognashene Cooks Again cookbook, a sister publication to the coveted Cognashene Cooks cookbook! Good food at the cottage is the ultimate combination and the community is now equipped with new recipes from so many contributors. Thank you to the cookbook committee for your ambition and initiative to produce this wonderful book.

Thank you as well for the generosity of our community. In particular, the proceeds from the Regatta Raffle and the Cookbook go to support our Recreation Program, enabling the Program to continue to thrive and be a successful center point of the summer for the youth and teens of Cognashene.

Your CCA Board of Directors continue to show their passion and commitment to our purpose, which is to fulfill the collective needs of Cognashene cottagers, enhance the cottaging experience and promote sustainability of the Cognashene area for future generations. The winter patrol, the Cognashene Cottager and membership directory, a variety of services like the community fire pumps and garbage pick-up, representation in municipal affairs, environmental stewardship, planning, communication through e-blasts and newsletters, our website, the GBA membership, many events and the Recreation Program are all ways we look to deliver on that purpose. Our vision is to be a successful community association that Cognashene cottagers are proud to support. For the Board to continue to deliver on that vision we will be focusing on our strategic priorities for the upcoming year and look forward to sharing those with you. We also want to hear from you. Let us know what's important to you. Please reach out with any comments or feedback to myself or to the Board. If you have any interest in volunteering, please let us know as there is so much opportunity to get involved!

You may know that Georgian Bay was known in the original language of the territory as Mnidoo-gamii, which means Spirit of the Great Lake. It is so amazing to experience this Spirit, which I think connects us all in Georgian Bay and what makes Cognashene such a special place. Wishing you a happy fall and Thanksgiving!

Kara Hunter
CCA President

Past President's Note

Seeking Volunteers for Our Board Nominating Committee!

We are excited to announce an opportunity for you to get involved with our association! We are currently seeking dedicated volunteers to serve on our Board Nominating Committee.

What is the Nominating Committee? The Nominating Committee plays a crucial role in shaping the leadership of our organization by identifying and recommending candidates for our board and key positions. This is a fantastic way to make a meaningful impact on our mission and help guide our future.

What We're Looking For:

- Passionate individuals who care about our mission
- Diverse perspectives and backgrounds
- A commitment to promoting inclusivity and engagement

Sustaining the cottaging community for the long-term

~400 Members

Served by 17 Board members and many community volunteers

100 Years

The Association has played a central role in the well-being of the community it serves over many decades

Many Valued Benefits

The Association delivers value on all aspects of the cottaging experience, with 90% of members very likely to recommend membership

Purpose

Fulfill the collective needs of cottagers, enhance the cottaging experience and promote sustainability of the Cognashene area for future generations

Vision

To be a successful community association that Cognashene cottagers are proud to support

Strategic Goals

- In Cognashene: To foster a strong sense of community through a growing membership
- In Georgian Bay: To be an association highly effective in its stewardship, leadership and collaboration

Time Commitment:

The committee will meet as needed to fulfil its mandate and will work primarily 3 to 6 months leading up to our AGM.

Meetings can be held virtually or in person, depending on members' preferences.

How to Apply:

If you're interested in being a part of this important committee, please reply to Susan Carter at pastpresident@cognashene.com. Feel free to share this opportunity with others who may be interested!

Thank you for considering this opportunity to contribute to our organization. Your involvement makes a difference!

Susan Carter
CCA Past President

Recreation Program

Dear Cognashene Community,

As we wrap up another unforgettable summer, we are excited to share the highlights from our Summer Recreation Program. This season was filled with laughter, learning, and adventure, all made possible by our talented and dedicated staff and volunteers. Their leadership and passion for the program and our community truly shone through in every activity, and we are immensely grateful for their hard work.

Thank you to Sophie, Lucas, Nathalie, Eileen, Katie, Sedona, Allie, Nora, Maddie, Alex, Maeve and Neve for all your work this past summer. Your unwavering dedication and enthusiasm made this summer a tremendous success. Your commitment to enriching the lives of our campers and fostering a vibrant community forms the foundation of friendships for generations to come.

Summer 2024 Highlights:

- **Senior Canoe Trip to McCrae Lake:** Our seniors embarked on a memorable canoe trip, exploring the serene beauty of nearby McCrae Lake while building lasting friendships and enjoying nature.
- **Camp Cognashene Cookout:** The Camp Cognashene Cookout brought everyone together for a day of paddling, delicious food cooked over a fire, great swimming and great company. It was a wonderful opportunity to strengthen our community bonds.
- **Visit from the Coast Guard:** We were thrilled to have the Coast Guard visit us this summer! Their presentation on water safety was not only informative but also engaging, helping our campers understand the importance of safety on the water.
- **GBLT Visit to the Lizard:** Our partnership with the Georgian Bay Land Trust allowed our campers to explore the Lizard, learning about local ecosystems and conservation efforts in a hands-on way.
- **Swimming Lessons:** Swimming lessons continue to be the foundation of our program, with campers gaining valuable skills and confidence in the water. It was wonderful to see so many kids mastering new techniques and having fun!
- **Cognashene Kinders:** Our youngest campers enjoyed a fantastic season filled with creative activities and outdoor play, fostering a love for art, nature and learning from a young age.
- **Sailing Program:** Our sailing program was a huge success! Campers learned essential sailing skills and enjoyed the thrill of navigating the wind and water of Cognashene.
- **Partnership with the Library Reading Program:** We continued our successful collaboration with the Georgian Bay Public Library, encouraging a love of reading among our campers through engaging activities and storytelling.
- **Cognashene Camp Skills Passport:** The Camp Skills Passport was a hit with our older campers, allowing them to explore new skills and earn recognition for their accomplishments throughout the summer.

Summer 2024 marked my last term as the Recreation Director of the Cognashene Cottagers Association. It has been both a privilege and an honor to serve this community and to help restart our beloved Summer Recreation Program after the challenges of the pandemic. Witnessing the joy and connection that our activities have fostered among campers and families has been truly rewarding.

I am excited to introduce our new Recreation Co-Directors for the Summer of 2025, Christine Davis and Meghan Eichenberger.

We look forward to another fantastic season ahead and hope to see everyone next summer for even more adventures!

Be sure to follow us here for information about Summer 2025:

Recreation Program Website: sites.google.com/view/cca-rec-program/home

Instagram: @cogrecreation

Facebook: Cognashene Recreation Program

Jenna Lynde
Rec Program Director



A Call To Action: Cognashene Cottager

The CCA is looking for a new editor for the 2026 edition of the Cognashene Cottager. Ideally someone who can put their name forward this year, in order to learn the ropes as the 2025 Cottager gets put together.

Major skill set is organization as we have copy editors and graphic designers to do editing and design work. The job requires a time commitment during February and March.

Barb Russell
CCA Cottager

Membership

Our membership continues to be strong with nearly 400 Full and Associate members. It is our members that make the CCA so special and we hope to see our membership expand in 2025.

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members since our last newsletter:

Charlie Clark
Ken Dale
Matthew and Laura Eaton-Kent
Caitlinrose Fisher
Colin Johnson
Simon and Sonia Mills

Associate Membership

If you share a cottage with a Full Member, you may benefit from joining the Association as an Associate Member. Those benefits include the Cognashene Cottager's publication, your own listing in our member directory and discounted rates for the CCA Recreation Program. Memberships also support a variety of fun summer activities and events organized by the CCA. Please consider becoming an Associate Member in our thriving community.

I am here to support you and to improve your membership experience. If you have any questions about CCA membership, you need help accessing your online account or updating your information, or you wish to purchase an extra copy of the Cognashene Cottager, please reach out any time to: membership@cognashene.com.

Your renewal notice will be coming out in late November for memberships effective January 1, 2025.

All the best for a safe and healthy Fall and thank you for your support.

Cathie Bowden
CCA Membership Director

Municipal Affairs

It has been a pretty quiet summer at Council from a CCA perspective.

An OP and By-law review will begin to be undertaken over the next year. A building by-law comparison amongst various townships has been done by the GBA which could be instructive. We are advised that there will be plenty of opportunities for community feedback.

Unfortunately, Council did not take us up on our offer to hear from our membership about the budgeting and reporting process, the services we value, and how the TGB will help eliminate future tax increases and come up with ways to make TGB's budgets more sustainable going forward. One line item, legal fees, seems to be getting out of control. They were \$420,000 last year; \$542,000 to date this year with \$320,000 spent on one case alone.

The Planning Advisory Committee was dissolved in June, to be 'replaced' by a Working Group under the TGB Director of Planning. We have not yet been advised who is in that Working Group.

Council is still frustrated that the District has not disclosed detailed numbers on waste management and so sent in a formal letter requesting them; so that TGB can figure out how or if to take over in some fashion. Thankfully the Mayor and CAO made some progress with the Ministry of Environment on explaining the challenges and anomalies in the proposed waste systems for water access properties

Gregg Badger
Municipal Affairs Director

Community Planning

Community Planning Committee:

The purpose of the Community Planning Committee is to review applications for development in the context of the Cognashene Community Plan. Since 2007 the Community Plan has been an integral part of the Township Official Plan which is the land use vision document for the Township. The Community Plan contains important planning protections to maintain the character of this unique area of Georgian Bay.

As part of its mandate the CCA has the responsibility for ensuring that the proper planning decisions are made in the best interests of our community and the future of Cognashene. For this reason, the Planning portfolio is not a one man job, having to balance a number of different needs. We rely on a committee of at least 3 dedicated individuals that share a common interest in the protection and preservation of Cognashene, mindful that some sensitive redevelopment may be allowed to meet the evolving needs of family in this area.

Official Plans must be reviewed every 5 years. The current Township Official Plan dates back to 2014 and is overdue for a review. We are advised that Planning staff at the Township are at the beginning stages of this review although nothing has been publicly posted about this process. This process will consist of a review of the current Official Plan policies and meetings with stakeholders

to get their input on any changes to those policies. Eventually a draft new Official Plan will go before Township Council for adoption. The adopted new Plan would then go to the District of Muskoka for review/revision/approval.

The Township Mayor has advised that he does not anticipate any significant changes to the Official Plan. We will keep the members posted on when the Official Plan review begins.

Marc Kemerer
CCA Community Planning Director

Services

As I sit down to write my first official newsletter as your Services Director, I can't help but be amazed at this incredible summer weather we've been enjoying. What a fabulous way to bid farewell to another amazing summer on the bay!

While there is not much to report from the Services side, we have been working on a few housekeeping tasks.

The long and arduous process of updating the winter patrol database has now been completed for 2024. Jim, Sue and Cathie have done an exceptional job making this happen.

In keeping with the subject of winter patrol, we have also purchased (2) new phones which will be critical in keeping Scott's patrol running smoothly. A big thank you to Todd Vernon for keeping us connected in the shoulder season.

As mentioned in my first paragraph, this will be my first season as CCA Services Director and while I have a difficult act to follow, I do hope I can continue to build upon what Jim has done during his tenure. I would encourage all CCA members to send me an email to services@cognashene.com, should you have any ideas or input that you feel could enhance the present service offerings with membership.

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving and good winter!

Cam Allen
CCA Services Director

Community Events

As always, it was a wonderfully busy summer in Cognashene and we would like to thank all of our tireless volunteers who made all of our events possible. A huge thanks to Carolyn Wilson and her team for organizing the regatta – all the events ran so smoothly, and everyone had a blast! To Annie Nichols and her team, thank you so much for getting all the fantastic donations for the regatta raffle and raising about \$5000 for the Recreation Program!!! A special thanks to the Kohler and Davis families for generously letting us use their island for the regatta. To Rob and Val Thompson, thank you for hosting the Long Distance Swim yet again this year!

We wish to thank Catherine Gillespie for gathering so many talented artists and artisans together for Art on the Rocks. The show was really well attended by cottagers from all over and the weather even cooperated this year!

This summer, Angela Granziera taught four yoga classes at Aunt Edna's and the classes were appropriate whether you were just learning yoga or had been practicing for years. Angela is a very talented instructor, and the classes were magical and also really fun! Thank you to the Davis family for offering up their island to provide a beautiful spot to hold the classes. We are thrilled to let everyone know that Angela will be offering classes again next summer!

The Rystone Cup sailing race was held again in August this year and we had sailors young and older participating and a big shout out to Roger Walker and David Tawaststjerna for organizing the race! A big thanks to the Tawaststjerna family for hosting a lunch for all the sailors after the race.

Environment Day, organized by Jack Giroux our Environment Director, unfortunately was rained out but **mark your calendars for November 6, 2024 to attend a virtual presentation from the Georgian Bay Biosphere highlighting their findings on the State of the Bay report. More details about this event will be coming out shortly.**

We are looking for volunteers for next summer to help out with the Regatta and Art on the Rocks. We need someone to assist and shadow Carolyn Wilson with the regatta with the intent to organize the regatta for the following summer. Catherine Gillespie also needs someone to assist and shadow her next summer to organize Art on the Rocks. Catherine has been involved in the planning of this unique and beloved event since its inception in 1991 and we thank her so much for all her years of volunteering. If you interested in assisting Carolyn or Catherine, please email communityevents@cognashene.com.

The big event being planned for next summer is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Regatta! We are putting together a committee to plan this very special milestone and please contact Nancy Bennett at communityevents@cognashene.com if you would like to be part of this committee or if you have any ideas or suggestions how we might commemorate this anniversary.

The Cookbook!

Our community cookbook, Cognashene Cooks Again, has received wonderful reviews and our thanks to all of you who submitted your recipes and contributed your photos. It really is a beautiful reflection of the spirit of our community and how much we love and treasure our little piece of heaven. My heartfelt thanks to the cookbook committee – Laura Adams, Suzanne Bennett, Cathie Bowden, Meagan Carney, Nina Hawley and Nancy Robitaille - for their patience and tireless efforts in putting the cookbook together. We have lots of books still available and it is not too late to order for delivery this fall. Our cookbook will make wonderful hostess gifts and presents for the holiday season! Please email communityevents@cognashene.com to order your books.

Nancy Bennett
CCA Community Events Director

Environment

This summer's devastating wildfires in Jasper AB are once again bringing attention to the deteriorating conditions within our nation's forested areas. Exacerbated by climate change, the situation unfolding across Canada is becoming [less and less manageable on the ground](#). Increases in wildfire frequency and severity are ballooning the required cost of fire prevention and suppression while increasing government liability for disaster recovery spending.

Although we don't yet know how costly it will be to rebuild the town of Jasper, the amount will surely make a significant dent in Alberta's [\\$2B](#) emergency contingency fund. The 2016 Horse River fire, near Fort McMurray, was the costliest natural disaster in Canadian History, slapping insurance companies with a whopping [\\$3.5B](#) bill, and costing the country more than [\\$9B](#) in indirect costs.

It is becoming clear that wavering on effective efforts to reduce CO2 emissions and drive down temperatures, both globally and in Canada, will cost Canadian taxpayers significantly. However, the financial and environmental impacts of climate change are already here.

It's not just the quiet mountain towns that need to be worried. I'm sure we all remember the Parry Sound 33 fires of 2018, burning over 12,000 hectares of forest and destroying [homes, cottages and ecologically sensitive areas](#).

Our unique island archipelago does not make us impervious to wildfires. Embers can travel hundreds of meters from active mainland fires, landing on islands and igniting dry leaf litter. This summer has been exceptionally wet, but with extreme heat events on the rise, and precipitation events becoming more intense and unpredictable, conditions can change seemingly overnight.

Wildfire dynamics are extremely complicated. Hundreds of variables must be considered when evaluating and modeling wildfire risk. Wildfires are a vital natural process, allowing for nutrients to cycle and built-up fuel to be cleared. The Landscape response to disturbance (fire), often results in more biodiversity and resiliency, leaving the landscape with variable forest types, differing growth stages, and more foraging opportunities for scavengers.

Fire has been such an important natural process that, through evolution, the serotinous cones of the Jack Pine need fire to release their seeds. However, the effects of climate change, extreme drought, and historical fire suppression have resulted in challenging conditions for decision-makers to navigate. Due to climate change, the extent and severity of wildfires are getting worse, increasing in frequency and causing more damage to property.

Wildfire management plans are the responsibility of the provinces. Ontario has a robust wildfire management plan that incorporates many procedures and mitigation strategies. One of the most important of these mitigation strategies is restricting human activity.

In Canada, [50%](#) of wildfires are human-caused. That is why it is essential to respect the provincial and municipal burn permit procedure, fire bans, and risk ratings. Conditions may vary from region to region, and you may think "hey, we've had a lot of rain here recently". This way of thinking is not conducive to effective fire prevention. A catch-all approach, like area-based fire bans, permitting, and warnings, is essential for reducing Ontario's wildfire incidents.

Here in Cognashene, fire pumps are the quickest and most effective way to address an out-of-control fire in those crucial minutes between ignition and Honey Harbor Fire Department arrival. The faster we can get more pumps on scene, the greater the chance of control. That's why it is essential to know where the nearest fire pump is located relative to you, and how to operate that pump properly.

I encourage everyone to consult the [CCA Map](#) for pump locations, and the Cottage Portable Pump Training Program on the Georgian Bay Townships [website](#). Working order and general pump maintenance should be performed annually or after each use. If you are interested in purchasing a pump for your island, you can check out [Princess Auto](#) in Barrie.

Finally, I want to circle back and drive home the critical point about human-caused wildfires and how we can move forward.

As mentioned earlier, 50% of wildfires in Canada are caused by humans. In the United States, it's [84%](#). This discrepancy is largely due to geography. Most of Canadian wildfires occur in the vast, sparsely populated boreal forest, where lightning is the predominant cause of ignition, skewing the distribution. Surrounding more populated areas in the Canadian South, wildfires are largely the result of human activity. Where people are present, wildfires are often a result of our actions. Continued northern expansion and arctic development will result in more fires and permanent degradation of our boreal forest, one of the world's most important carbon sinks.

While we cannot control lightning or natural forces, we can significantly influence our own behavior. This behavior change needs to be seen both locally, and nationally. We must shift our societal values to a system that prioritizes preserving and protecting our natural world while sustainably addressing our needs. Our current rates of extraction and impact are [not sustainable](#). This is not just about making sure our campfires are extinguished before we go to bed, it's about how we want to proceed as a global community in the [ANTHROPOCENE](#).

Jack Giroux
CCA Environment Director