



Your CCA Board

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(non board position)**

Next edition will follow
Spring 2021

President's Message: Tom Halpenny

Welcome to 2021. As most say, let's hope it will be much better than 2020 and we can resume part of our normal lives. Between news about the vaccine, its slow distribution and the uncertainty about the spread of COVID 19, I'm afraid it is not looking good for the recreation program or large gatherings this summer.

As I write, winter has arrived in Ontario. The ice is forming on the areas amongst the islands. I noticed last night some ice formed at the cedar point ferry dock that serves Christian Island. My prediction based on the long term forecast that Georgian Bay will not freeze over and there will be lots of evaporation to help keep the water levels stable.

The board of directors met just recently and the consensus was, we just don't have enough information to make final decisions about this summer programs and activities. Based on the target of all vaccinations by September promised by our Prime Minister it would seem there will still be restrictions this summer. What this means is that we will probably not be able to offer the recreation program as the public health guidelines will make it impractical. In order to run a program we will need to put things in place early spring as we would have to hire staff and sign up participants so unless things turn around quickly we may have to cancel the program. If all of a sudden things change in June then we will have to reconsider but it will be tough to put a program in place. Unfortunately this will be the same for the regatta ,

Same with the regatta , Art on the Rocks and annual meeting. My prediction is the annual meeting will probably be a remote virtual meeting, as this approach has now been proven to be successful for other AGM's.

Our financial year end was December 31 and despite the inactivity the finances are in good shape. This year we ended up with an operating deficit of only \$2,000 and we still have over \$150,000 in cash as a base. I expect this coming year will be similar. This information leads to a request to those whom have not renewed their membership to please do so as a soon as possible.

There is some important information on the Municipal front. The District of Muskoka is in the process of reducing the number of councilors on the District Council as a result of a requirement to do a review under the Municipal Act. The original proposal was to reduce the number that would have an imbalance between the seasonal residence representation and the permanent residents in favour of the permanent residents. A push by the seasonal residents' associations including CCA the review committee has revised their recommendation to include a more balanced representation. If you wish to find out more about this please see the District of Muskoka Web site and look under News and Public Notices under the District Government.

I hope you all have a safe winter and we will see you at a distance in the Spring.

Tom

Boat Parade July 3, 2021



*2020 was the first annual Cognashene Boat Parade
Everyone had such a good time it is going to be repeated during
Canada Day Weekend on July 3!
Start planning now about how you can decorate your boat
and/or people to cruise up the Muskoka Landing Channel
for more info contact: Catriona Boyd : catriona.boyd8@gmail.com*



Another year begins, following a year like none of us has ever experienced before. I cannot help but reflect on the challenges faced by all of us – and especially the hardships suffered by many. And the losses. Too many people are not with us now, who were here just one year ago.

It is time for a new beginning. And yet we are not there yet. I hope this note finds you, whenever you may read it, doing better than you were when I wrote it. I hope that very much.

Is it coincidental that I am writing this on Groundhog Day, when too much feels like déjà vu all over again? Last year I wrote about the Regional Governance Review, the Honey Harbour Waterfront Development, Indigenous relations, large development plans in the works, solid waste management, planning challenges, climate change, and communication.

This year I could copy much of last year's notes. Though thankfully some edits would be required. While definite progress was made on some of the files, too much was postponed by a pandemic we certainly did not understand at the beginning of 2020.

The Regional Governance Review has morphed into Municipal Modernization. Currently District Council Composition is being discussed. I am hopeful that we will make a step in the right direction. But much more should be done, such as a full review of what could be down-loaded to our Township, and how District could become more efficient and effective. Our Township operations are also Modernizing, including improvements to our information systems, with more still to be done.

The Honey Harbour Waterfront Development made great progress, in spite of some construction challenges. I hope we will be free to enjoy the results this summer, including hosting another Honey Bee Festival next autumn, after a one year forced hiatus. Even the introvert in me acknowledges that it will be so nice when we are allowed to safely gather again.

Our Indigenous relations work was also delayed due to the pandemic. But I am pleased that we are moving forward again. There is so much more we can learn, and so many more steps we need to take towards healing and reconciliation. In 2020 we declared our commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. 2021 should be a year of education for all of us.

The collection of our solid waste is a challenge far from resolved. How do we best collect, especially given that over half our residences are water-access only, while minimizing our environmental impact? A lot of work took place in 2020, in spite of the restrictions, but much more needs to be done. Your suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

Though we declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, not nearly enough was done in 2020 in regard to this challenge. This needs to change in 2021. There is so much we should do for the sake of the generations to come. Thankfully, more and more people understand how very important this is for all of us.

Please contact your Council, Township or District staff, and certainly your mayor, with your ideas on how to make our communities even better for everyone. Best wishes to all of you for 2021!

SERVICES REPORT - Jim Bowden

Winter Patrol:

Dennis Robitaille completed his first winter patrol prior to Christmas. We provide 3 such patrols, with the first one being over water, the other 2 by ice travel. Apart from some cottages being found with a door or two unlocked, there were no problems identified during the fall patrol.

We use specially programmed cell phones to get the pictures of your cottage to you. While we have experienced a few glitches, overall, with a lot of help from our geek - and some frustrating moments for Dennis - we are having pretty good success this year with the process. Dennis is well into the second patrol as I write this (early February). If you should not receive a report by February 17, please contact me directly at jimmieb@lbrlaw.ca so that we can try to assess what the problem might be.

Marina Garbage Bins:

The current system whereby the District of Muskoka has bins at marinas will continue, at least, for this summer. Eventually, the Province will be insisting that there be no pick-ups from these unlicensed sites. This is a huge concern for us. This issue has been put somewhat on the back burner for now because of COVID, but we have nonetheless been directly in touch, during the last few months, with some allies, with some of our elected officials and with staff at the District of Muskoka. We will be watching this file very closely.

Large Item Garbage Pick-Up

Township Council has asked the District of Muskoka for this service for this forthcoming summer, and, all going well, there will be a large item pick-up at some point this summer. No details yet.

MUNICIPAL AND DISTRICT UPDATE - Councillors Jarvis and Cooper

In an effort to keep things short and specific, here is a joint update on the happenings at both the Municipal and District levels.

Municipal Council and District have maintained their Council meeting schedules via ZOOM. Your Municipal Offices have been closed to public access, but staff have been working tirelessly on all the regular day to day items as well as the usual requests that come from your Council.

COVID has impacted us all in many different ways. Needless to say, the local economy has felt the impact significantly. As an example, the Day Tripper boat did not run for Parks Canada this past year leaving many to find other ways to get to the National Park property on Beausoleil. Without the easy access, many would-be campers and day trippers likely did not visit Honey Harbour this past summer. On the other hand, with many more people staying closer to home, there has been significantly more interest in cottage renovations and building. The Federal and Provincial Governments have, and will continue to provide financial support, but as we write this, the latest news is that 1 in 6 businesses in Canada is likely to close as a result of the pandemic.

Planning will continue to be a point of contention as there are many different viewpoints as to what a cottage should and can be. Ultimately, for Council, it will be the impact any development has on the environment that will influence how we should vote on any application. As well, we continue to monitor coastal commercial development activities at Oak Bay, Macey's Bay and Brandy's Island.

This summer we commissioned a detailed study, care of the Georgian Bay Great Lakes Foundation (GBGLF), of our waters from 12 Mile, through Cognashene and down to Oak Bay and Port Severn. This is to ensure that there would be more information on the status of this body of water. A preliminary report was provided by Dr. Pat Chow Fraser in December. We will see the final report by this spring. Council is budgeting for a continuation of the study for the summer of 2021, and likely the summers to follow. High water levels have been and continue to be a hot topic with a significant offshoot being their possible affect on septic systems. The GBGLF's efforts will help us identify what, if any, effect the combination of high water and aging septic systems is having on the quality of our water, as well as other very relevant data.

Our taxes have gone up – what else is new – but Council has made significant efforts to keep the increase to a minimum. The Municipal increase is 1.56%, but the District portion has not been set yet.

Congratulations to Susan McGibbon on her recent appointment as the Chair of the Township of Georgian Bay Library Board. Thank you to Susan and Maureen Cooper who have been serving on the Library Board for the past two years. The Honey Harbour Library has moved across the

street and now shares space in the Honey Harbour School. Plan to visit the library when it re-opens after the province wide shut down, see the new space and learn about the many services beyond book lending this community hub provides.

At the upper tier level of government, the District Municipality of Muskoka (DMM), we have had considerable discussion regarding thorny issues that will impact our communities. The two key ones are; the issue of solid waste services provided by the DMM and the DMM council composition review.

With respect to **solid waste services**, the most impactful for our coastal communities is the fact that Ontario Government (MECP) has dictated that the DMM, and thus our township, must deal with what they call “unmanned bin sites”, like the ones each of us use at our marinas. A solution must be found by 2023, when the sites must be either compliant or closed. We maintain that these bin sites are generally well supervised by the staff at our marinas. These marina sites should not be lumped in with completely unmanned/unsupervised bin sites like the one we find, for example, in Honey Harbour. We continue to have significant challenges with unsupervised bin locations. They are often a mess.

The second compelling issue for our communities is the DMM **council composition review**. For the past 50 years, the council voting has been weighted in favour of the 3 towns (Gravenhurst, Bracebridge, Huntsville) which each have 4 representatives. Thus, they have 12 out of 22 councillors. When push comes to shove, especially when spending money, the towns consistently outvote the 10 township council members (for Georgian Bay, Muskoka Lakes and Lake of Bays). This council make-up was supposedly considered reasonable when the district was formed in 1970. However, the reality is that seasonal residents have always counted at 50%, or half a person, versus a permanent resident who is counted at 100%.

This is not fair or democratic, and especially when you consider that seasonal resident population is close to 60% of the District population. At this time, (end of January 2021), the committee has received pressure from various cottage groups and the townships objecting to the flawed system that they were supporting. The composition committee (made up of the six mayors) is now looking to find a fair and equitable outcome. Their latest recommendation is that each municipality would have 3 members sit at the district council table and would dispense with any version of ‘weighted’ voting. Keep your fingers crossed that the Mayors will finally land on a fair electoral system for all and move away from a divisive ‘us versus them’ environment.

We certainly hope by sometime this spring, we will be in a better place regarding controlling the pandemic and that we will be allowed to once again return to our beloved Georgian Bay. Please contact us with questions or concerns

Stephen Jarvis, Councilor Ward 2 sjarvis@gbtownship.ca 416-795-5527

Peter Cooper, District Councilor pcooper@gbtownship.ca 905-727-0088



MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS – Additional Notes - Gregg Badger

Further to Councilor Jarvis and Coopers update on these pages, I am pleased to report that all seems to be going well at the District where the momentum is to change the number of councillors to 18, 3 for each Township and Town, with a good possibility of requiring a vote of 12 for all decisions (thanks to our Mayor's suggestion to 'keep it simple').

At a recent TGB meeting, it was suggested that the Waste Management Committee be absorbed into council's Committee of the Whole; that no councillors be on the Planning Committee and just one Councilor of the Committee of adjustment.

TGB will apply to the Province for funding to explore the possibility of modifying our relationship with the District, along the lines of the Township of the Archipelago which, unlike TGB, is not considered to be a 'lower tier' municipality. This may flow nicely with the recently formed Georgian Bay Coastal Protection Advisory Committee, made up of virtually all Georgian Bay associations, with a mandate to look at the various strategic plans, official plans and zoning by-laws up and down the Bay so comparisons can be done. TGB's Councilor Hazelton will sit on that committee.

TGB will explore best ways to connect with its residents; which is always a challenge. We have our association to get news out, but some do not have that advantage.

TGB will be supporting the Province in its efforts to eliminate un-encapsulated dock foam as a pollutant in our waters.

In my view, the Mayor and Councillors are all working well together, getting things done without much procedural or other hiccups which, I gather, has not been the case with some prior Councils. Sadly, our local taxes are going up (by 1.56%) but at least our Councillors agreed to freeze their pay and waived a cost-of-living allowance increase, to help that cause. Maybe next time we will see a 0% increase!!!

Gregg

MICRO PLASTICS IN THE GREAT LAKES - Jack Giroux

This past year we have all been extremely focused on our physical and mental health. This pandemic has tested our patience at every corner and helped us realize some of the things we might have taken for granted. These difficult times will surely come to an end in the near future, but the health and productivity of our lake remains in doubt. Several major authorities have weighed in on the issue of water quality over the past several months and their message is sobering to say the least. The International Joint Commissions Second Triennial Assessment of Progress 2020 Identifies climate change as the number one issue among great lakes communities. The State of the Great Lakes Report 2019 shows most indices for biodiversity, habitat and species loss are below target levels. Invasive species and algae/nutrient levels are also in poor condition. The impacts of climate change will continue to exacerbate these stresses. This may seem overwhelming, but we as a community can come together and make a true impact on the health of our lake this summer.

One issue that is often overlooked is the concentration of micro plastics in our great lakes. Micro plastics are extremely small fragments of plastic that contain potentially harmful dyes and chemicals. These fibres are expelled from a number of different sources including dock foam, synthetic rope, macro plastic pollution, and clothing. As these fibres enter the environment, they are consumed by animals at all levels of the food chain, including humans. The concentration of these plastics is magnified as it ascends the food chain, eventually making its way to our dinner plate. These plastics are not only harmful to human health, there is evidence to suggest that animals are suffering as well. The build up of these plastics in fish can cause blockages, alter reproductive habits, and may ultimately lead to death. Combined with the additive stresses of urbanization, climate change, and overfishing, our great lakes fish populations are struggling to rebound after decades of decline. Diverting these plastics from our great lakes should be a concern to everyone who benefits from the recourses they provide.

There is a way we can all do our part to reduce the flow of harmful plastics into our lake. I encourage all CCA members to consider installing a microfibre filter on there washing machine. This devise captures microfibrres that would otherwise penetrate septic and waste water treatment facilities. Georgian Bay Forever has had great success with these filters as a part of their divert and capture program with Perry Sound. If we can all come together as a community, I am sure we will have a significant impact on the health of our lake. A link to GBF's research, as well as a link to a microfibre filter retailer will be provided below.



Get your microfibre filter here: <https://wexcoenvironmental.com/filtrol-160/>

GBF's work on micro plastics: <https://georgianbayforever.org/microplastics-impacts/>

MEMBERSHIP NEWS. - Susan Carter

Hello fellow CCA members. I hope you had a healthy and relaxing holiday season and I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and healthy 2021. Like everyone else, I dearly hope it is a year that sees the beginning of the end of Covid 19. I am also hopeful that we will be able to return to some of our activities at the cottage this summer that we enjoy so much. With that in mind, I am asking you to turn your thoughts to summer and please take a couple of minutes to renew your membership for 2021 if you have not done so already. **We are strongly encouraging as many people as possible to renew your membership online as this helps streamline the renewal process for us and makes it easier for you.** I also would like to remind you that you can e-transfer treasurer@cognashene.com using the password **Cognashene**. However if you feel more comfortable I will mail you another renewal form. Please contact me at membership@cognashene.com and I will be happy to send you one.

I would like to remind you once more that you must renew your membership in order to receive your 2020 Cottager package in the mail.

If the CCA Rec program is operational in some form or another this year **you do need to be a paid up member in order to receive member rates upon enrolment.** So please don't miss out. Stay connected with your community for all the activities and news of Cognashene.

If anyone has any problem with the membership renewal process, please do not hesitate to send an email to membership@cognashene.com and we will be happy to assist you.

I would also like to welcome our new 2020 CCA members into our association;

Don Cameron, Rebecca Pollock and Greg Mason, Tim Hall and Linda Durringer, Fawn Hughson, David Plaxton and Alison Lansdown, David Dal Bello and Michele Farrugia, Alexander and Quinn Limoges Friend.

Thank you all for your continued support of the Cognashene Cottagers Association

ART ON THE ROCKS - Catherine Gillespie

The 2020 Art on the Rocks, as many events in our lives, was held virtually. The results were not fantastic, but some folks were able to contact their favourite artists to order wedding and Christmas presents. Hopefully, though not looking good, on July 25, 2021 the community will be able to gather in some way on Maxwell/Whalen Island for the 30th Art on the Rocks. (AOTR started in 1991)

If you are talented at IT and social media and are willing to help set up the virtual show, please let me know. I am better at pottery than computers.

We are not currently having potential artists sign up on the CCA website, but if you are interested in participating please contact Catherine Gillespie gillespie.cath@gmail.com. If you signed up as an artist last year, your fee has been held over for this year. Thank you!



ART on the ROCKS[®]
Hopefully Live on July 25, 2021
though it may be virtual again

Questions?
Call 716.517.0855
or 519.925.2210

Come and see
great Georgian Bay art
on Facebook
Art on the Rocks
Cognashene Georgian Bay
There are images from some of
the past artists posted so
you can see some their work
as well as make purchases

sponsored by CCA

more information to follow
gillespie.cath@gmail.com