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President's Message*…Bob Snider*

Conversations this time of year, always at some point, turn to the weather. Wow, has it been warm. Wow, was it cold this morning. If you were fortunate enough to be at your cottage on Thanksgiving weekend you would have experienced both, with a high on Friday of 24 degrees C and a low Sunday night of zero. I find it curious that changes in weather patterns create such interest when the same trends occur every year without fail. There must be something in our makeup that makes us take notice of change.

Change is something the Board has managed over the past couple of seasons and continues to manage. It started with the revising and updating of the CCA website. Under the direction of Brian Neely, Communications Co-Director, more functionality has been incorporated to the point now where better than 50% of renewals take place on the website and nearly 100% of Rec program renewals. The improved data collection made possible by the website is the backbone of the Winter Patrol app now entering its second year under the watchful eye of Tom Halpenny, our new Services Director. The personalized emails with attached photos three times a winter (weather permitting) give members an added level of comfort after they have departed their cottage for the winter.

But not all changes have been technological. As invasive phragmites crept into our waters, Sandy Thompson, Environmental Director, responded with efforts to educate, map and eradicate the plant. Steps were taken this past spring to purchase an underwater cutter to improve and speed up the removal process. Like computer viruses, invasive phragmites will be with us for many years, possibly forever, and so these early steps are significant in the control of the invasive plant.

The changes have not stopped there though. The monumental task of recording GPS coordinates for every dock in Cognashene was completed last summer by John Maynard, our Treasurer. Brian Neely has used this data to help bring our community map to a new level as plans are being finalized to print, almost on demand, a colour satellite view version.

The corollary of our membership map is now knowing where non-members reside. The newly struck membership committee, under Chris Hawley, Membership Director, will find this information useful as the committee, among other responsibilities, make plans to expand our membership base.

Under discussion now is how we communicate with the membership. The move to MailChimp by Laura Adams, Communications Co-Director, has improved the formatting of eBlasts and has also allowed us to understand how eBlasts are received. With increased printing and mailing costs, and digital content easily accessible, the move to all electronic communications is being investigated, including the distribution of newsletters coming from the GBA and GBF.

Water quality remains a top priority for the membership and significant effort has been made by many in our community to ensure that our stewardship through the Township's planning policies reflects this concern. The changes to these policies being argued at the upcoming Macey Bay OMB appeal could have an impact on future

Environment: Giant Hogweed…

Sandy Thompson

Giant Hogweed is an invasive plant in Ontario. There have been a few articles about it recently. Although it is not new to Southern and Central Ontario, it is becoming more common. I am not aware of any sightings of it in Cognashene, but it is a good one for us to be aware of as it can be harmful to people and pets.

Mature Plants

Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum)* is a perennial, a member of the carrot family and looks similar to Cow Parsnip, Lovage and Queen Anne's Lace (i.e. Wild Carrot). However, it is *'GIANT'*: it can easily grow to be 3-5 metres tall in a summer. The plant is originally from Asia and was brought to Ontario as an ornamental plant. You will find it growing on the edge of forests and riverbanks (or possibly your backyard). It likes full sunshine but can tolerate moderate shade on the edge of forests. As it tends to invade old fields and open woodlands, we hopefully may not see it in Cognashene as often.

Young plants

According to Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program website, "Seeds may take several years to germinate and are viable in the soil for up to 15 years. During the first year, the plant produces a rosette of leaves up to one metre high. After 2 to 5 years, the plant produces flowers. As it grows a large root, thick hollow stems and large lobed leaves are formed. The stems of the plant are covered with reddish-purple flecks and stiff hairs filled with sap. Sap may also collect in the hollow stem bases. Giant hogweed flowers once in its lifetime, unless the flower clusters are damaged before opening. Once the plant produces seeds it dies. Each plant can produce up to 120,000 winged seeds (typically 50,000). Seeds dropped in streams can float for three days. They can move long distances via water in ditches and streams. Seeds can also be spread up to 10 metres by the wind."

Much of the concern with Giant Hogweed is related to the sap which, if it gets on your skin and is exposed to sunlight, can cause severe skin burns. It is reported that symptoms, including painful blisters, may occur immediately or within 48 hours of contact. There have been reports in the media that getting sap in your eyes can cause temporary or permanent blindness, but these have not been scientifically substantiated. Either way, this is not a sap you want to get on your skin or in your eyes! The sap can affect pets as well if they get into the sap from the hairs or the stems. It is recommended that you wash your skin with soap and water if it comes in contact with the sap, keep it out of direct sunlight, and seek medical attention.

If you have Giant Hogweed on your property, it may be wise to get an expert to remove it, but if dealing with it yourself, be sure to wear protective clothing, including goggles, and be cautious about how you remove the protective clothing so that you do not get sap transferred onto you. Like Phragmites, the goal is to remove the flowers before the seeds spread if the plant is flowering.

If you see Giant Hogweed when out walking, best take a picture and don't touch it!

Purplish stems with spines

Municipal Affairs...*Stephen Jarvis*

Our municipality is determined to get all voters onto the Voters' List for the elections coming in 2018. Yes 2018! This may seem like a long way off, but given the generally slow pace of any government action it is recommended that we all read the attached flyer "**Get On the Voters' List"** sooner rather than later. Please be sure to take the survey.

Get on the Voters' List

Make your Voice Count

Eligible voters in your household may not be in the Township of Georgian Bay's Voters' Database. We encourage you to read the following information and take action if you or someone in your household has been missed. That way all voices will be counted in 2018 and all future municipal elections.

The Township of Georgian Bay updates its Voter Database on a regular basis, mainly with change of address requests provided to its Tax Department when you move. The actual Voters' List for the next municipal election will not get created until September 1, 2018. Election Day is on Monday, October 22, 2018, but staff can add you to the Voter Database at any time, provided you are eligible to vote.

Who is Eligible to Vote?

In order to vote in any municipal election in Ontario, you must be aged 18 or older and be a Canadian citizen. You must also qualify to vote in your municipality. There are several ways to do this:

Property Ownership

Whether you reside in the Township on a permanent basis or a seasonal basis, if a property is registered in your personal name, then you **and your spouse** are entitled to vote in the municipal election (subject to age and citizenship).
If a property is registered in the names of multiple individuals, whether related or not, all registered owners and their spouses are entitled to vote (again subject to age and citizenship).

Tenants

If you occupy a seasonal residence that is registered in the name of any entity other than your personal name, then you are not considered to be the owner of the property but rather a tenant.

The Municipal Elections Act 1996 (MEA) defines 'tenant' broadly as "*any occupant and person who is in possession (of a property) other than the owner."* There is no mention of a lease agreement or fees. However proof of occupancy is required. This may be a letter from the property owner or a utility bill for the property in your name or a cottage association membership list with your name listed.

A tenant must be "in possession of a property" for at least 6 weeks during the calendar year in which the election takes place in order to be eligible to vote. Landlords who can grant tenancy include: a private property owner, the trustee of a trust, the executor of an estate, the authorized administrator of a holding company or corporate entity.

If a property is registered to a corporate entity and is used by multiple employees and guests of the corporation, they are not considered to be 'tenants' under the MEA.

Trustees, executors or administrators of entities that own property are prohibited from voting municipally unless otherwise eligible through the occupancy rule.

Occupancy derived via a time-share contract is excluded from the definition of 'tenant.'

Residency is Not Necessarily a Requirement

If you own an undeveloped property in the township, you may vote, even though you do not reside on the property. You and your spouse are entitled to vote by virtue of your status as a property owner/ratepayer.

Adult Children of Property Owners:
If a property occupied by parents is also the *permanent* residence of an adult child, the adult child may vote.

In the case of a *seasonal* residence, adult children are not entitled to vote unless their name(s) is/are on title.

If an adult child shares a property that is *leased* by their parent(s), the adult child could have their name added to the lease and thereby be eligible to vote, as well as their parents.

Multiple Properties

If you own multiple properties in the same municipality, you only get one vote. However if you own multiple residences in different municipalities, you may be eligible to vote in each municipality.

Students

There is a special rule for students who may be living away from home while attending school. If you are a student who considers your "home" to be the place where you live while not attending school (i.e. you plan on returning there), then you are eligible to vote in both your "home" municipality and in the municipality where you live while attending school.

How to get onto the Voters' database

Request to be added to the voters' database by either going in person to the township office or emailing a colour copy of your photo identification which shows that you qualify. Address this request to the Acting Clerk at jgunby@gbtownship.ca. If your mailing address is different from your property address in the township, provide that as well.

If you are a tenant, personal identification combined with proof of your tenancy will be required (rental/ lease agreement, utility bill in your name, etc.).

If at the outset of the writ period for an election (i.e., Sept. – Oct., 2018), you have not received notice of the election and voting instructions indicating your right to vote, please call or email the Township office to verify that you are on the Voters' List.

Survey

The Township has created a survey that will help them with the next election and are seeking public input at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TGB2018election
The survey will remain open until November 30, 2016.

Community Planning...*Bill Sayers*

The planning committee has had another year of participating and managing the planning issues that have come up in Cognashene. We have had three Committee of Adjustment hearings this year and one Zoning Bylaw Amendment. We have participated in all four applications and provided guidance and opinions based on each application. We continue to have a very good relationship with the Township Planning Department. As I stated at our AGM, we are in a position now to have healthy discussions with staff and debate issues, agree on many, agree to disagree on a few issues and continue to have a respect for each other's opinion and view of the discussions we have. While I know it is not a true measure of successful planning, we have not had an OMB hearing related to Cognashene in 2016 and it would appear that we have no issues of concern in our community coming into 2017.

We do have an issue of concern outside our community that may have an impact on our community in 2017. The Macey Bay development has been a challenging issue for many years now. From the GBA to all our neighbouring associations we have all been following this trailer park development. In the past year, due to a lot of focused and dedicated work for the Macey Bay Community by Jean DeMarco a lot of information and details of this project have been brought to the attention of the CCA. We have had several board discussions. Wendy, Ian, Bob and I have met and discussed with the presidents and directors of other associations, the township and councillors and legal and planning professionals about the Macey Bay development. There is an OMB hearing scheduled for January 23 that will last a minimum of three weeks. There will be legal counsel from Talisker (the developer), the township and the Macey Bay Community.

We have a 200-plus-page binder of documents from this OMB hearing and appeal of Bylaws and the Official Plan. Upon review of these documents, after discussions with the Board and other associations and having paid for legal and planning opinions, we have applied to be a Participant in the OMB hearing in January. There is no cost or financial obligations for the CCA as a Participant. Our reason for being a Participant is our concerns relate not only to the development of the Macey Bay property as proposed, but also with any general amendments to the provisions in the Bylaw related to permitted uses and setback requirements related to the Environmental Protection Zones and with the setback requirements for septic systems. In particular we are concerned by the proposed changes to setbacks for the septic system as this issue has had a long and much debated history that we believe need not be revisited by the developer nor the township.

I will keep the membership advised of the outcomes of this development as they occur between now and when we all return to Cognashene.

The **GBLT Bayscapes Bash + Auction**

is being held

Friday November 25 from 7-11 at Artscape Wychwood Barns.

Here is the link for more info; hope to see you there.

https://www.gblt.org/events/bayscapes-bash-auction

Past President: Volunteers Recruitment...*Ian Davis*

How should we get the membership involved in the association? We have sent out emails, newsletters, and have made face-to-face appeals. While we have had some modest recruitment success recently, it is nonetheless disappointing when compared to the response our southern and northern neighbours have had, when appealing for volunteers. One thing I do know, if you tell me you are too busy, I don't have time, I would say come join your Board and see how self-employed, highly motivated individuals who volunteer their time selflessly, make time.

Without past and present stewards of our community, we would not have the services that are presently offered to our membership. The most important, a beach and recreation program that taught many of us, our children and grandchildren how to swim. A recreation program that fosters lifelong friendships for parents and children alike.

Whether new to the area or if you have been cottagers on Georgian Bay for generations we all share in our commitment to ensuring Cognashene continues to be a place worth protecting. A place that recognizes the sensitive balance between development and the environment, a place for our children and grandchildren to learn life's lessons every day by simply experiencing what Cognashene is.

It is time we give back to a place that asks so little of us.

Send me an email, we are looking for anyone who is prepared to give up a little of their time. You just might find it is not only rewarding but we also like to have a little fun. There is such diversity in our Board that regardless of your skillset or interest there is an opportunity to give back to this place we call home.

You can reach me (Ian Davis) at pastpresident@cognashene.com.

Environment: Calling all Phrag Busters!...Sandy Thompson

The CCA Environment Director is looking for a volunteer (or two) to assist with the coordination of the Phrag program in the summer of 2017. Responsibilities may include:

- Helping cottagers determine if they have invasive Phrag or not
- Helping to coordinate educational events (if we do one it will likely be in cooperation with HHA or GBF; you will not be expected to run or present the material – unless you want to!)
- Being a point of contact for mapping of Phrag and identification of shoreline spotters in each region (we have a great group now so mainly it will be to maintain contact with them)
- Coordination of the Phrag Cutter sign out
- Coordinating cut dates and connecting volunteers as needed (i.e. sending out dates of cuts via CCA eblast or on social media)
- If you would like to help with cutting you can, but that is not a required part of the position.

As you know we have very proactive and engaged CCA members so this is quite easy to do! If you have questions about what is expected, please call me at 647-465-7933 and we can discuss it. Thanks!