

# Echoes of the Oxtongue

Newsletter of the Oxtongue Lake Ratepayers Association

Fall 2007

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## President's Message

Another **wonderful** summer at Oxtongue Lake draws to a close but with another day like today, with temperatures hovering at 30°C, the Fall Season should be a classic providing us with early morning mist rising from the lake, warm sunny days and chilly star filled nights.

Soon some of you will be closing up the cottages and heading back south taking with you, hopefully, fond memories of another **beautiful** summer at the lake.

We had another excellent Annual Association meeting, which was very well attended and we covered a lot of subjects affecting our community and hopefully providing everyone with much needed updates. We also had an excellent video presentation on the early years of Oxtongue Lake, which was very well received and much appreciated. Thank you to the Siegfried family (hopefully the start of a new trend in highlighting memories on the Lake).

Two new Board members were elected, Betsy Siegfried (Board Secretary) and Jim Grant (VP) - thank you both for your commitment. A big thank you to Anne Lista, our out-going Secretary, for a great job throughout the last two years and to Rick Wesolowski, our out going President, who will remain on the Board for a further one year. I am very grateful to the continuing Board for their commitment for another year. Tracie Parrott, John Lawrence, Jim Elliott (Treasurer) and Ted Keown and for their hard work on issues relating to our environment, fostering Lake fellowship and for monitoring and responding to all levels

of Government on issues that may effect our members enjoyment of their property and Oxtongue lake to which we are all attached. Gary Schultz

*Editor's Note:* Postal and e-mail addresses for the Executive can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

## Highlights from the AGM

The Community Hall was filled to capacity on the Monday of the August Civic Holiday for the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Association. Rick Wesolowski, President, welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. He stressed the importance of an active membership and indicated that the Association membership for 2006/07 exceeded 100, the highest for many years! Three guests were in attendance: Reeve Eleanor Harrison, Councillor Diane Griffin and Paul Cameron, a representative from the Maple, Beech and Cameron Lakes Area Property Owners' Association.

- Jim Elliott presented the treasurer's report and budget for 2006.
- Rick thanked the Parrott family and volunteers for organizing the Regatta. Tracie thanked all those who attended and thanked her son Korby for his work organizing the regatta this year. Tracie estimated between \$1400 and \$1600 was raised this year. This will be donated to the OLRA and volunteer fire department.
- Ted Keown thanked all the volunteer firefighters for their dedication and hard work this year. He estimated 120 hours per year were devoted to training and fire calls by these volunteers. Last year

- there were a total of 37 emergency calls. He stressed the importance of having working smoke alarms. Ted asked everyone to remove old yellow property identification numbers and to ensure the newer blue and white signs are clearly visible. Ted confirmed that the fire hazard was at the low end of extreme and stressed that fires should only be built for cooking and warmth between 7pm and 7am and should be kept small. There is a \$350 fee per hour to fight a fire started by a homeowner and homeowners will be charged. Liz Lindsay publicly thanked the fire department and its volunteer firefighters for their dedication and hard work.
- Scott Hayden, President of the Snowmobile Club, described the poor weather conditions at the beginning of the season and suggested the season did not really begin until the 20<sup>th</sup> of January. Social events included the chili cook-off at the McCann hunt camp and the fish derby on the lake in March. He thanked everyone for their generous donations for the fish derby prizes.
  - Gary Schultz reported on behalf of the Business Association. He described how the association and its members are committed to improving the community and protecting the environment. He also stressed the cooperative attitude of the members and how they were all working with, and not competing against, each other. Initiatives organized by the association included the highway 60 garbage cleanup, efforts to cleanup derelict properties, the Welcome to Oxtongue Lake sign and the marketing strategy to brand our community as the ‘Gateway to Algonquin Park’. He also described the website created by the business association [www.oxtonguelake.com](http://www.oxtonguelake.com) and its useful applications for the community in general. A brief discussion ensued concerning the dark sky issue – specifically regarding sentinel lights in the community. Gary confirmed that the business association would be pursuing

this issue and Dianne Griffin will also be bringing the issue to Council.

- As an update on access to the dam, Tracie reported that she and Ted had met with the property owner and confirmed that we, as an Association, have access to the dam for the purpose of maintaining it.
  - Jim Elliott introduced a motion to change the Association’s bylaw pertaining to the election of directors from:
- “Each director shall hold office until the first annual meeting after he shall have been elected or until his successor shall have been duly elected and qualified. The whole Board shall be retired at each annual meeting, but shall be eligible for re-election if otherwise qualified”
- to:
- “Each director shall hold office until the second annual meeting following their election or until a successor shall have been duly elected and qualified. Any director shall be eligible for re-election if otherwise qualified.”
- Motion carried.
- Paul McInnes, a guest from Maple, Beech and Cameron Lakes Area Property Owners’ Association reviewed the issues surrounding the airport expansion and called for support from other local ratepayer associations in requesting open dialogue with Council regarding this issue. Reeve Eleanor Harrison gave her comments regarding the expansion. She discussed expropriation issues and described reasons for expanding the airport at this time such as MNR firefighting demands, hydro, police and medical requirements. She also confirmed with the membership that no further action will be taken by Council until it is confirmed that the expropriated Middleton lands have been acquired. Reeve Harrison stated that any group could approach Council to make a presentation. Gary presented a motion for OLRA to support the Maple, Beech and Cameron Lakes Area Property Owners’

Association concerning the Airport expansion. Motion carried.

*Editor's Note:* Since the AGM we have learned that at the annual meeting of F.O.C.A. there will be a special meeting of Lake Associations in the County of Halliburton to discuss the airport issue and that a petition with 500+ signatures has been sent to all three levels of government voicing concern over the airport proposal.

- Diane Griffin provided an update from Town Council.
  - Maple Lake landfill site will be expanded
  - Dorset landfill site will close within the next few years. Garbage will go to Maple Lake landfill not Oxtongue Lake
  - Clear plastic bags will be mandatory by 2008 to increase recycling compliance
  - Hauled sewage – field application no longer allowed in Algonquin Highlands. Currently negotiating with Minden to accept our hauled sewage
  - 911 signs must be visible and well-maintained
  - Road maintenance issues: call 705 754 5450
  - Property behind the community centre has been acquired by Council for non-payment of taxes. Council was highest bidder.
- Gary Schultz discussed the possibility of building an OLRA website. Development and maintenance costs were estimated to be \$1,200 to \$1,500.
- Fran Gower brought to the membership's attention the recent loss of three community members: Gwen South, Dorothy Moore and Bill Elliott.
- **Date of 2008 Annual General Meeting:** Tentatively set for Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 10:00am in the community centre (subject to a survey of the membership)

A presentation of historical film footage from Oxtongue Lake by Elizabeth Ziegfried was shown following the AGM which was much appreciated by those in attendance.

## Bear Visits

Several residents have reported visits from bears this summer, particularly along Harris Road and Tom Parris Trail. They seem to have a liking for humming bird feeders as the picture below clearly demonstrates. Bears can be dangerous so extra caution should be taken to ensure that no food or other tasty morsels are left outside, especially in the evening hours and overnight. As usual, a little common sense is the best preventative action.



The remains of a humming bird feeder after a visit from an inquisitive bear (submitted by Tom Witter, Harris Road)

## From the Fire Department

The present Volunteer fire Department was formed in the early fifties.

Fund raisers were held and over time a gas powered water pump and hose was purchased and after that a 1947 Ford truck equipped with a 200 gallon water tank and small pump. Since that time we have been constantly upgrading our equipment through fund raising and township tax dollars. We now have a truck that carries 1000 gallons of water and can pump 1050 gallons of water a minute. We also have a Rescue/medical truck, snowmobile with rescue sled, A.T.V.

with trailer, bush fire fighting equipment and complete firefighter protective equipment. We are as well equipped as most large town fire departments.

At present time we have 15 active fire fighters on the roster.

Bill Service	Firefighter	35 yrs Retired
Ted Keown	District Chief	33 yrs.
Scott Hayden	Captain	23 yrs.
Gary Logan	Firefighter	22 yrs.
Ken Williams	Captain	19 yrs.
Joe Lindsay	Firefighter	14 yrs.
Mike Brethour	Firefighter	7 yrs.
John Catterall	A/Training Officer	6 yrs.
Gary Shultz	Firefighter	5 yrs.
Steve Keown	Firefighter	4 yrs
	Alberta bound Aug /07	
Taylor Hill	Firefighter	3 yrs.
Steve Cunningham	Firefighter	3 yrs.
Greg Parrott	Firefighter	2 yrs.
Bunny Lamoureux	Firefighter	2 yrs.
Doug Kyle	Firefighter	2 yrs.
Tracie Parrott	Firefighter	2 yrs.

Congratulations and a very special ‘thank you’ to Bill Service who retired from the Fire Department after 35 years of service. The community is most appreciative of your contribution, Bill!

Ted Keown

*Editor’s Note:* Members of the community wishing to make a donation or bequest to the fire department may do so by leaving contributions in a sealed envelope at Helsel’s General Store or sending them directly to Ted at the Fire Department.

## Annual Regatta

Another very successful Regatta was held Sunday, August 5 at the beach of Oxtongue Lake Cottages. A great time was had by one and all. It was great to see the majority of races with a full start line. The float line at the start helped our seasoned paddlers as well as the novices.

It gives us great pleasure to put two new names on the high-point trophies. The Art Andrew Trophy for best female went to Katheryn Chalmers and the Tom Paris Trophy for best male went to her brother Matt

Chalmers, I think grandpa (Jack Gervais) and the rest of the family are very proud of these two young paddlers. Way to go, the future of paddling continues.

A very heartfelt THANK YOU goes to all the many willing helpers both prior to, and on the day of the regatta. There are too many to list but without them the regatta would never take place. Likewise, a big THANK YOU to all who donated prizes, refreshments, equipment, etc.

We are pleased to report that after all expenses were covered, a little more than \$1,500 was raised. A portion of this will go to the Oxtongue Lake Fire Department and the rest to the Oxtongue Lake Ratepayers Association. This has been a learning experience for the whole family, one which we have truly enjoyed. We would love to hear from someone who would like to take over the reins for the 2008 Regatta – it is a great way to earn community service hours. Please call (705) 635-1549 for information.

Korby Parrott

## Threat of Blue-Green Algae

You may have noticed recent articles in the popular press concerning increasing occurrences of harmful algal blooms, particularly in Quebec and Ontario. The following is an excerpt from a note prepared by Dr. Sue Watson, a research scientist with Environment Canada.

‘Blue-green Algae (Cyanobacteria) are a widespread group of photosynthetic bacteria that have existed for more than a billion years. They are well adapted to a diversity of environments and play key roles in many terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. High nutrient supplies favour blooms of certain bacteria capable of producing toxins which harm humans and animals (livestock, pets and birds) and bioaccumulate in fish and shellfish. These blooms can also cause skin rashes, taste and odour, impaired drinking and recreational water, beach closures and fish kills. The health effects of long term exposure to sub-lethal levels are unknown but may be linked to increased cancer. Prediction of harmful algal blooms is

hindered by a lack of understanding of their identity, causes and controls. Phosphorus is the primary nutrient that limits the development of these blooms in most waters. The potential toxicity increases with eutrophication, notably increased phosphorus loading. However, the nature of the problem is further complicated by the fact that there is not a simple way to predict when a bloom is toxic. An increasing number of cyanobacterial toxins are being discovered. These are difficult to detect and identify, differ in stability and toxicity and some can persist in water after a bloom has degraded. Toxicity varies among species, among cells in the same species populations and with the surrounding environment. Toxin producers can be hard to trace since they inhabit both surface and deep waters, sediments and biofilms. Other factors such as temperature, light, wind and water currents can influence their growth and accumulations as surface scums along shorelines and beaches. Climate change is likely to increase the risk and persistence of cyanobacterial blooms which are favoured by warm temperatures, severe weather events with high run-off, high irradiance and extended growing seasons'.

and seasonality of phosphorus loads affects the bioavailability – and this can change from one area of a water body to another. Typically, phosphorus from fertilizers, sewage and wastewaters more readily promote algal growth compared to that associated with sediments.

So far, Oxtongue Lake has been spared harmful algal blooms. Let's try to keep it that way by minimizing the amount of nutrients (phosphorus) entering the lake. We must all do our part by minimizing the amount of dishwasher detergent we use (unlike laundry detergent, dishwasher detergent is still unregulated with respect to the amount of phosphorus it may contain), not using fertilizer on our lawns near the lake and keeping our septic systems in good order.

*Newsletter edited by Margaret & John Lawrence. If you have comments or ideas for topics in future editions please contact us at [lawrencemj@sympatico.ca](mailto:lawrencemj@sympatico.ca) or by mail at P.O.Box 302, Carlisle, Ontario L0R 1H0.*

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## **Membership**

Congratulations! In 2006/07 our Association membership climbed to over 100, the highest for many years. Hopefully we will see a further increase in 2007/08. Membership of the OLRA is open to any permanent or seasonal resident of Oxtongue Lake. A vibrant membership will provide a strong and clear voice for sustaining and enhancing the community for present and future generations. Please encourage your neighbours and friends to join as well.

If you have not already done so, please complete the membership form below and mail it, along with a cheque for \$30 to the OLRA Treasurer, Jim Elliott, 8 Island View Blvd., Toronto, Ontario M8V 2P4 or drop it off at Helsel's General Store. E-mail addresses are appreciated where possible as they facilitate communication with our members and reduce mailing costs for the newsletters.

### **Membership Form Oxtongue Lake Ratepayers Association 2007/08**

**First Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Last Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cottage Address\*:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Province:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address\* (if different from above)** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Province:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Please indicate which address you would prefer we use for correspondence and newsletter:**  
**Cottage** \_\_\_\_\_ **Home** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone**  
**Cottage** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_