

Echoes of the Oxtongue

Newsletter of the Oxtongue Lake Ratepayers Association

FALL 2010

President's Message

The summer that keeps on giving.

What a wonderful summer we have had this year with what seemed like endless, superb warm days that were enjoyed by all. Even on September 1st, we still managed to get up to 30 degrees. We had an excellent turn out for our annual lake association meeting again this year with lots of issues and topics discussed. Many of these issues are covered in this newsletter, some with updates. For the most up to date news please go to our website at www.oxtonguelake.ca One surprise, from our meeting is that Counselor Diane Griffin has had a change of mind and is now seeking a 3rd term as Counselor for our Ward 3. As you are aware despite our protests to council, requesting the opportunity for a vote on the Airport expansion, we have always been denied, and Diane Griffin has again confirmed that she will aggressively pursue the recreational airport expansion. This has left us with no choice but to field a candidate. Therefore, I have formally filed to run as an official candidate for your ward 3. It is shaping up to be an interesting campaign - hopefully, with a positive outcome for our community. Looking forward to a spectacular Fall....

Gary Schultz
President

Municipal Election for Algonquin Highlands.

You will have an opportunity to vote for your candidate for Ward 3.

This election is being conducted as a Mail-In Ballot, which is mailed to you at the same address as your taxes. Please ensure all members of the household over 18 are on the electoral role. The list is compiled by M.P.A.C. from your Property Title. You can confirm whether you are on the list by calling Angie Bird the Town Clerk, at (705) 489-2379 extension 224. Or send her an email to abird@algonquinhighlands.ca

As long as you own property in the township, then you are entitled to vote regardless of whether it is a summer cottage or year round residence. Your Vote matters.

Break-in Alert

There have been a number of break-ins reported around the lake this year. Equipment such as chain saws and outboard motors are popular targets for the thieves. Even firewood has been taken. The most recent case, and the most serious, happened during the week of August 14-21 when a house on Harris Road was broken into. In addition to significant theft, extensive vandalism and destruction of property was reported. As a result of these unfortunate events, the Executive met with the Police Liaison unit of the OPP to explore the formation of a COTTAGE WATCH program for the lake. The Association has now joined the Federation of Canadian Association's COTTAGE WATCH program and flyers have been delivered door-to-door in the community. The first requirement for a COTTAGE WATCH program is a complete listing of

every property on the Lake. **It is most important that everyone completes and returns the membership form even if you do not want to pay the \$30 fee to join the Association – for further details please see the last two pages of the newsletter.**

Annual General Meeting

The Community Centre was full to capacity Monday, August 2nd for the 47th Annual General Meeting of the Association. After a brief welcome and opening remarks by the President, Gary Schultz, reports were presented by treasurer, Liz Margarucci; regatta 'Commodore', Mike Zavitz; Web Master, Jim Grant; Lake Stewardship & Community Watch, Ben Teske; Fire Chief, Ted Keown; Snowmobile Club President, Scott Hayden; Community Centre Committee, Scott Hayden; Councillor, Diane Griffin; and OPP Officer Linda Cranney. In addition updates were provided on the bridge by Gary Schultz and the airport expansion by Paul MacInnes. Summaries of many of the topics discussed are included in this newsletter.

New Nickname for the OLRA

Several people who are interested in the affairs of Oxtongue Lake have indicated that they do not feel comfortable joining the Association because they are not ratepayers. In order to be more inclusive, the Executive is proposing that in the future the Association should be known as the Oxtongue Lake Association, OLA. The legal name of the Association would remain as Oxtongue Lake Ratepayers Association as recorded in our Letters Patent but for every day use we would become Oxtongue Lake Association. Nothing is really changing, "Oxtongue Lake Association" will simply be our nickname while "Oxtongue Lake Ratepayers Association" will continue to be our formal name. The Executive would like to hear opinions whether for or against such a change. If we do not hear any serious objection from Community members by the end of September we will assume everyone is in agreement..

Regatta:

Many residents and visitors gathered at the Oxtongue Lake Cottages beach on the Sunday of the August long weekend for the 47th annual regatta. The weather was perfect, there were more races than ever, lots of new participants and, of course, lots of hot dogs and pop. There are over 70 pictures of the event on the Oxtongue Lake web site www.OxtongueLake.ca. It is easy to see from the pictures that everyone had a great time. In addition to our thanks to the many individuals and businesses that generously support the regatta, very special thanks go to John DiFrancesco, owner of Oxtongue Lake Cottages for the use of his beach and to 'Commodore' Mike Zavitz and family for organizing the event this year. The Regatta is the Association's main fund raising event and this year was the most successful yet – at the AGM Commodore Mike presented the Association with a cheque for \$\$\$. Well done Mike and all the helpers!

Community Centre

The Community Centre Committee has been very active this year. We are now a committee of council which means that we must have regular meetings and report to council. If you take a quick look around the Community Centre you might notice some changes to the property. We now have a new generator that has been installed as part of a successful Build Canada funding project. This was in preparation for having our hall designated as an emergency centre should the need ever arise.

We have spruced up the outside with new soffits and fascia, and we have a new flag pole which the township crew scrambled to get erected in time for our Canada Day Celebration.

Mimi Cliff has donated her time again this year to tend the flower gardens. Thank you, Mimi. The biggest project to date that we are undertaking is to try to acquire funding to fix up the kitchen area. We have received quotes and have sent in proposals to Farm Credit Canada in an effort to get funding to overhaul the kitchen area. We had to start somewhere and the feeling was that if we had a new functioning kitchen the hall would be a more desirable place to hold an event... thus more use...which is why we are going through this whole process.

The use of the hall has increased significantly in the last couple of years.

We have had a number of community meetings. In the winter Jan Helsel held knitting classes; The snowmobile club used the hall for the Fish Derby; and this summer Yoga classes are taking place every Wednesday afternoon.

We have also initiated a Mom's and Tot's program that hopefully will be ready to go for next summer.

If anyone has any ideas regarding programs or activities they would like to see or would like to initiate please contact Fran Gower, fgower@vianet.ca.

The price to rent the hall is \$15.00 per hour for up to 2 hours or \$40.00 per day. This is incredibly reasonable and we should take advantage of it.

Scott Hayden

Naturalists & Stewardship Club

The Oxtongue Lake Naturalist and Stewardship Club had its first event on August 9th at the Community Centre. 22 participants came out to hear Alexis Burnet of Earth Tracks talk about medicinal and edible plants. The talk was very interesting and informative. Another talk is planned for next summer!

On August the 14th ten members had a lovely hike along the Beetle Lake Trail. The Beetle Lake trail is a beautiful 5km hike through varied forest types, over a creek, and along a high ridge with spectacular views. And it's right here in our back yard! On the hike participants shared knowledge of wildflowers, ferns, fungi, edible wild foods and history of the area.

We plan to do another hike on September 12th. Hope you can join.

Hike

Where: Beetle Lake Hiking Trail, Please meet at Algonquin Outfitters

When: September 12th at 1pm – 4pm

How to Register: Please contact Ben at wden@wolfdenbunkhouse.com if you would like to join in or find out about our winter events.

What to Bring: Good footwear, camera, field guides, water, snack...

Ben Teskey

Oxtongue Lake Dam

As many of you will have noticed, the lake level has been exceptionally low for a long period this summer. Two members of the Executive recently visited the dam at the outlet of the lake and found that a number of the rocks have been dislodged by ice in recent winters. Thanks to Web Master, Jim, some pictures will soon be uploaded to the web site. The Executive has decided that it is time to obtain the necessary permits so that restoration can be undertaken. In view of the time involved to apply for the permits, construction is unlikely to occur before next summer.

New Rules for Gas Retailers

At the AGM, concern was expressed by local gas station owners about new rules and legislation being introduced that will make it extremely difficult for small independent gas retailers to remain viable. The new rules are aimed at improving public safety and protection of the

environment. The extra cost of implementing the new rules is likely to be considerable and must be borne by the gas station owners. While everyone supports better safety and environmental protection, it is unfair to expect small rural operators to have to follow the same stringent requirements as their large urban counterparts. If the new legislation pushes smaller operators out of business, we could find ourselves in a situation in which there is no gas available on Highway 60 from Huntsville through Algonquin Park to Whitney, a distance of some 200 km. This not only affects motorists but will have a serious impact on tourism when gas supplies are not available for boats, snowmobiles and other recreational vehicles.

It is time to start supporting our independent gas retailers by writing to your local Councillor and MPP, asking them to help find a solution to this issue before it is too late.

Loons

According to our resident ornithologist, who also happens to be our Association President, a pair of loons nested on the island at the north end of the lake this year. They laid two eggs but only one hatched. Unfortunately, after a few days the chick became prey to gulls or other predator so there were no loons raised on the lake this year. Our Web Master will be adding a link to Loon Fact Sheets on the web for those interested in ways to encourage loon nesting on the Lake.

Township Borrows Money for Airport Expansion

It has just come to our attention that in April 2009 the Corporation of the Township of Algonquin Highlands passed a By-law, 09-7, to authorize the borrowing of up to \$3.6 million to meet capital expenditures related to the airport expansion project. Please refer to the Oxtongue Lake Community website for further details www.OxtongueLake.ca.

To contact the Executive, please visit the Oxtongue Lake Community website:
www.OxtongueLake.ca

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

OXTONGUE LAKE RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION
O.L.R.A.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE
INITIATING THE COTTAGE WATCH PROGRAM

FORTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO . . .

...the Oxtongue Lake Ratepayers Association (OLRA) was formed by a small group of concerned residents and seasonal cottagers to set policy on the upkeep and repair of the Oxtongue River dam.

Sadly, communities often wait to come together until there is a crisis. As a member of OLRA, you support your community throughout the year, as your elected Executive Committee keeps a close eye on all issues relating to Oxtongue Lake. In past years, members of the local community organization have been instrumental in addressing head-on such important issues as:

- CELL TOWER PLACEMENT • SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION ON HWY 60 THROUGH OXTONGUE • BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION • INCREASING LANDFILL HOURS OF OPERATION • STARTING A HAZMAT DAY AND BRINGING A RED BIN TO THE LANDFILL • FUNDING THE OXTONGUE WEBSITE • SAVING THE COMMUNITY CENTRE • SPONSORING THE ANNUAL CANADA DAY CELEBRATION AND OXTONGUE LAKE REGATTA • BEING A CHARTER MEMBER OF THE COALITION OF HALIBURTON LAKE ASSOCIATIONS • CREATING AND MAINTAINING THE BEETLE LAKE TRAIL • STOPPING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CHARCOAL PLANT BEHIND TIMBER TRAIL • STOPPING THE PORTAGE FLYER TRAIN FROM BEING BUILT ON THE LAKE • KEEPING RAGGED FALLS FROM BEING PRIVATIZED • STAYING INFORMED ON ALL AREA MINING ISSUES • BEING AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE FEDERATION OF ONTARIO COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATIONS • THE PROPOSED STANHOPE AIRPORT EXPANSION • SPONSORING VARIOUS COMMUNITY EVENTS AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE • SPEARHEADING A LAKE STEWARDSHIP AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM • MONITORING LAKE WATER LEVELS AND DAM MAINTENANCE •

TODAY . . .

Our community is facing an alarming increase in cottage break-ins and vandalism, as evidenced by recent activity along Harris Road. The Executive is meeting with the OPP to initiate a formal Cottage Watch Program.

All properties are vulnerable to a break-in — including the cottage you're in right now.

In order for the OLRA and the OPP to protect our community, we must have an up-to-date database of Oxtongue residences, along with appropriate contact information.

Today, we act decisively to bring neighborhood security to Oxtongue, working directly with the OPP to initiate the Cottage Watch Program.

If you witness any suspicious behavior, such as unexpected tire tracks in a neighbor's driveway, loitering by non-residents, or unfamiliar vehicles (especially without license plates), call the OPP Crime Stoppers Hotline:

1-800-222-TIPS (8 4 7 7)

OLRA Executive Committee contact: Jim@OxtongueLake.ca — www.OxtongueLake.ca

BEGIN or RENEW OLRA MEMBERSHIP 2010/2011 —

You do *NOT* have to be a ratepayer to join!

**MEMBERSHIP FORM —OLRA 2010/2011
FOR NEW and RENEWING MEMBERS and to UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please complete this form and make out a cheque for **\$30** payable to “Oxtongue Lake Ratepayers Association.” Drop off the completed form and cheque at Hesel’s General Store; or mail the completed form and cheque to the OLRA’s treasurer at:

OLRA c/o Liz Margarucci, 1780 Harris Rd, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight, ON P0A 1H0

FIRST NAME: _____

LAST NAME: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ I do not have an email address ___

**I am joining the OLRA for the first time__ I am renewing my membership__ YES, I am a
ratepayer ___**

**OXTONGUE LAKE MAILING ADDRESS (for the OPP Cottage Watch database)
Send my copy of the OLRA newsletter to *this* address ___**

Street, Road, Trail, RR#, etc. _____

Dwight, ON P0A 1H0 (If different: _____)

Local telephone _____

**OTHER MAILING ADDRESS
Send my copy of the OLRA newsletter to *this* address ___**

Street _____

City _____ Province/State _____ Postal Code _____

Country _____

Telephone _____ Cell _____
