



DRIFTWORDS

SERVING THE RIDEAU SINCE 1911 POONAMALIE TO-NARROWS LOCK

Fall/Winter 2003-04

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(RLEF)



THE BRLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT - Bob Evans
VICE-PRESIDENT - Noelle Caloren
SECRETARY - Molly Ellard
TREASURER - Henry Copestake
MEMBERSHIP - Doug MacGillivray
ADMINISTRATION - Graham Mowat
ENVIRONMENT - Pat Chamberlain
RECREATION, YOUTH & CHILDREN
Peter Leishman
Nancy Watters
Jim Sneyd
Mike Fraser
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS - John Peart
INFRASTRUCTURE - Doug Arrand
SHOAL MARKERS - Doug Good
WEBSTER - Jennifer Trant
ADAM'S LAKE REP - Jack Clements

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Presidents Pen

Another successful summer of cottage and lake activities and BRLA sponsored programs are now behind us. We had an excellent turn out at our AGM in early July. Outgoing President Richard Bradley summarized the BRLA transition over the winter as the government sponsored environmental research programs were launched as an independent organization - *Centre for Sustainable Watersheds* (CSW). BRLA has returned to its roots as a lake association and members thanked Richard for his diligence through this challenging process.

Looking forward, I thought it would be appropriate at this time to introduce your newly elected Board of Directors. Let's take a closer look:

- Our V-P, *Noelle Caloren* is liaising with CSW and sits on the environment committee.
- *Molly Ellard* does minutes of Board meetings and works closely with me in many areas. Her experience as BRLA past-president is an asset.
- *Henry Copestake* brings tenacity to this important roll as treasurer. He is also involved with social events and sailing.
- *Doug MacGillivray* has taken on the task of tracking current member information and merging the 2002 BRLA/RLC membership lists. He is doing a meticulous job.
- *Graham Mowat* resides year around in Portland and we are fortunate to have his vigilance in looking Dry-Dock security, banking and mail. He also sits on the environment committee.
- *Peter Leishman* is a long-standing, member of BRLA and brings his experience as co-founder and President of the Rideau Lakes Club (RLC) to the new Recreation program.
- *John Peart's* past presidency with BRLA is an asset in keeping us in touch with local issues and government affairs.
- Look for *Pat Chamberlain's* environment report in this and every issue of *Driftwords*. She also works closely with the Rideau Lakes Environmental Foundation (RLEF).
- *Doug Arrand* is developing our vision in looking at ways to preserve and enhance the amenities on Cow Island.
- *Nancy Watters* is editor of *Driftwords*. Her past active involvement from the early days of RLC come into play as she continues to assist with sailing, social and youth activities.
- *Jim Sneyd* took over the regatta this year and we welcome this significant commitment and his help to oversee maintenance issues.
- *Mike Fraser* has been involved in our annual fireworks display for 3 years now. His creativity will guarantee continuing outstanding displays.
- *Doug Good's* long time residency on the Big Rideau familiarizes him with the importance of our successful shoal marker program.
- *Jennifer Trant* has lots of experience with designing sophisticated web sites. Drop by for a look. Your comments are always welcome.
- *Jack Clements* keeps Adams Lake residents up-to-date with BRLA activities and is an enthusiastic BRLA volunteer for a range of events.

Here is your roster of dedicated and hard working volunteers. This is your association. Please contact me personally if you have any concerns or ideas. Your input is very important to the growth and vitality of the **Big Rideau Lake Association**.

Bob Evans - President.

MEMBERSHIP & TREASURER'S REPORT .

The membership this year stands at 355. Your generous donations permitted us to continue to operate our full slate of programs as planned. As we merged the BRLA and RLC organizations during this transition year, it is possible that some members did not receive their Spring 2003 Driftwords and membership forms. We are working hard to ensure we stay in touch with the full list of 2002 BRLA & RLC members and apologize to anyone who may have been missed.

This year of transition for BRLA is perhaps most vividly reflected in the change to the Association's operating budget from \$480,000 and 52 staff to \$48,000 and the equivalent of 2.5 seasonal staff. The BRLA core member services have been successfully maintained with your funding and the volunteer time contributed by our very active Board members. See Driftwords items for more details about the 2003 environmental, shoal marker, recreation, youth and children's programs.

Revenue from membership fees has remained virtually the same as the previous year (approximately \$21,000.00). Membership donations and fund-raising for specific programs such as the fireworks and youth and children's program along with user fees for the recreation and sailing programs raised an additional \$11,000.00. We were also successful in obtaining a youth employment subsidy of \$2,450. As in previous years, core environmental programs are funded through member support and the Rideau Lakes Environmental Foundation (RLEF). Overall, we anticipate having a balanced budget.



The Recreation, Youth and Children's Program and much of the Fireworks costs were covered through fees, donations and fund-raising. However, your membership dues are essential to cover the costs of our shoal marker program (\$3600), property costs for the Dry Dock (\$4500) and Cow Island (\$1500), insurance (\$4309), Driftwords and our website (\$3900). For this year, we will have a significant audit bill to cover the costs of preparing financial statements based on the larger 2002/03 organization.

There are a couple of items to note as we begin planning for the 2004 season. The Board intends to move the fiscal year end to December 31, in keeping with the activity of the Association, and to ensure that financial statements will always be available for the AGM. While we operated with a small staff in this transition year, they worked hard and should be congratulated for their terrific efforts. The pared down operations of the BRLA now rely more upon the volunteer support of our membership.



ADAM LAKE CORNER

The Adam Lake -Property Owners' Association was founded in 1989. Of the 71 residents, 45 are members of ALCOA and 24 are dual members of BRLA. Like BRLA, environmental issues such as water quality, bass spawning and shore line protection are priorities. Adam Lake sent a number of keen youth sailors to our 2003 Sail Week and the McCarney family has contributed BRLA staff and volunteers for the past two years. BRLA is grateful for the contribution to the BRLA of Adam Lake reps Mary Kilgour (until past Spring), and currently, Jack Clements.

Welcome aboard and thanks!!

SHOAL MARKERS

BRLA installed and maintained 104 approved shoal markers this season. Seventy-six markers west of Rocky Narrows are maintained by Portland contractor Lamont Brown at a reasonable annual cost. Nine volunteers, under the supervision of Past President Richard Bradley, attend to 28 markers east of Rocky Narrows. Additional volunteers are always welcome for duties east of Rocky Narrows.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS FOR 2003 .

During 2003, BRLA has continued to work on its core environmental programs:

- water quality monitoring and testing;
- fisheries awareness; and
- wildlife monitoring (loon and bass programs).

These activities rely on the continued support of members and the RLEF. Some services were contracted from the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds (CSW - formerly part of BRLA) such as, water testing, Take a Little Lead-Out and loon nesting platforms. Other programs are working well and we thank the many volunteers who have contributed their time and expertise.



Water quality sampling at 12 sites was done from May-September for phosphorus, Secchi depth recording, chlorophyll, dissolved oxygen & temperature. Results from the State of the Lake Report for Rideau Lake (due in 2004) indicate that overall water quality has improved in recent years. Reasons for this might include reduced inputs from Upper Rideau Lake due to improvements in Westport's sewage treatment. While this is good news, we each need to remain proactive to make sure we keep our lake clean and healthy.

Every year we lose loons on our lake from lead poisoning. This year we developed 'permanent displays to promote our lead exchange program offering free lead-alternative tackle at 4 sites: Murphy's Point Provincial Park, Maple Crest in Rideau Ferry, Len's Cove Marina and Dry Dock.

Over 20 volunteers have been keeping track of nesting loons and the progress of their young. This help is invaluable. We have had many positive comments and look forward to receiving final reports. Our data is shared with Bird Studies Canada and contributes to the Canada-wide loon data base. On a sad note – a pair of loons and their chick were being watched by boaters near Tar Island when a second boat roared past, panicking the loon parents and killing the chick. A careless, thoughtless act!

A new bass program is being developed. Who better than shoreline residents to know where and when the bass are spawning? If you are like me, you keep an eye on the spawning bed, note the hatching, and watch the growth of the fry. We are enlisting volunteers. Can we count you in?

Many people have expressed concern about the number of trees under stress with wilting and dry leaves (such as on Cow Island). According to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), the trees will take a few years to recover from the drought of 2002. This is not due to a gypsy moth infestation.

We recently mailed the 2003 *BRLA Members' Survey* and look forward to



WE NEED YOU!

The Big Rideau Lake

Association is currently inviting enthusiastic applicants for our **2004** summer youth programs. If you are a dynamic leader and interested in joining our team then please respond with qualifications via email. It's a great way to spend the summer and we always enjoy new ideas.

Email: brla@brla.on.ca

your thoughtful response. Your input will help us plan how and where we can be most effective for the environment. Survey results will be printed in the Spring issue of *DriftWords*. We really need volunteers to participate in these programs. Please consider how you can help.

COW ISLAND

BRLA members are fortunate to own this magnificent property on our beautiful lake. Thanks to a renewed interest in its potential to provide a service to

our members, a group of volunteers is in the process of evaluating the island and its facilities. BRLA has owned the island for over 40 years. The 2003 real estate value is being appraised (purchase price was \$5,000 in the 50's). The building, constructed in the 60's, needs serious upgrading and repair. Toilet/septic needs are urgent. Estimates are being obtained for longer term improvements such as docking, beach options and fostering of trees, flora and fauna. Our vision is to return the island to the jewel it once was so that members and their guests will be able to enjoy the island for picnics, swimming and games and the continuation of the children, youth, sailing and social activities reintroduced to Cow Island 3 summers ago. Watch for more information in the *Spring Driftwords* and at the 2004 AGM.



RECREATION, YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS 2003

The BRLA Recreation, Youth and Children's Programs for 2003 were based on Cow Island -- a property obtained by the BRLA many decades ago for the enjoyment of its member families. This year's activities included

- Canada Day Fireworks
- Family Fun Regatta (August Civic Holiday w/e)
- Children's Summer Quest Program
 - Teen Wacky Weds and Friday Evening Program
- Sail Training and Recreational Race Program
- Family Socials featuring a Lobster Fest in July and Salmon B-B-Q & Auction in August



Several hundred boats again gathered on the water to enjoy the Canada Day Fireworks Saturday June 28th. Members responded enthusiastically to our Spring appeal for donations, indicating a strong desire to continue this unique Rideau Lake tradition-- an expense which has not been able to be fully covered via the basic membership. We look forward to mounting another great show in 2004.

Our *Summer Quest Program* for children 5-12 yrs ran 3 mornings/week for 10-25 children per day. Activities included sports, swimming, crafts, games & storytelling by our own Cow Island poet, author and BRLA member Anders Carson. About 25-30 teens from Portland and summer cottages came to *Wacky Wednesday* and *Friday Evening* camp outs, progressive dinners by boat, sailing and dances. Summer senior youth staff and younger teen counsellors-in-training did double duty keeping Dry Dock open through this summer's transition and gained excellent employment experience in the process. Parents volunteered to chaperone dances, loan sailing equipment, haul barbeques, donate food and time to provide a winter time of memories of summer on the lake. Watch for the Spring issue of *Driftwords* for registration and information for next summer on Cow Island!



The BRLA Sail Week 2003 (July 28th - August 1) was one of the best we have ever run. We had 15 participants ranging in age from 8-15 yrs. By week's end, 7 candidates passed their White Sail 3 Level and even the youngest sailors earned awards. Many brought their own Lasers but thanks to the generous loan of boats from the Leishmans, Halpennys and Copestakes-- there were plenty of boats to go around --including Lasers, CL 16s and Optimist Dinghies. We could not have accomplished this without the skills and flexibility of our certified instructor - Penny Stants and the volunteer help of assistant instructors, dock and crash boat crew provided by the Watters, Copestakes, Leishmans, Jurcynskis, Arrands, Dinsdales, McCarneys and the BRLA staff.

RIDEAU LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION (RLEF)

Individual donations through RLEF have been the backbone of BRLA's Environmental Programs. Your generous response to this year's appeal will ensure support for activities in 2004. Givings qualify for a charitable tax receipt and 100% of those dollars are put towards programming.



You may forward your donations to: PO. Box 159, Portland ON, K0G 1V0. BRLA heartily thanks RLEF Board members for their wisdom and advice through the re-structuring of our association which took place over the past 12 months.

PORTLAND OUTDOORS



The First Big Rideau Lake Speed Skating Marathon will be held in Portland Ontario, in the Township of Rideau Lakes, on January 31st, 2004.

A unique event seldom seen in Ontario skated on a 2.5 kilometer rink in the Portland bay. The main event will be a 40 kilometer speed skating marathon and other 5-10 k options.

Info: www.portlandoutdoors.com
email : info@portlandoutdoors.com

