



# DRIFTWORDS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BIG RIDEAU LAKE ASSOCIATION (BRLA)  
SERVING THE RIDEAU SINCE 1911 • POONAMALIE TO NARROWS LOCK

Fall 2004

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## THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

2004 was the year when I spent the most time at the cottage in my life. I have been going to 'The Pines' for more than 46 years. I find myself constantly thinking how fortunate I am to be able to come to a great place like this. My grandfather purchased the property just North of Bellows Bay in 1916 for mere \$125.00. Taxes were less than \$35.00 per year. He had the main cottage built in 1918 followed with two cabins and out buildings in 1945. The boathouse (that bright yellow box on the water – you know the one I mean) was built in 1942.

The reason I mention this is that it would be almost impossible for me and my family to afford to buy this place today. Not to mention the up-keep (don't get me started). Just two cottages down, there is a newer cottage / home going for over seven hundred thousand dollars. \$700,000. That's insane. What will this do to my taxes in coming years? I'm afraid to ask.

For those of you who own heritage family cottages, stop – look around and soak it up. The Big Rideau Lake is truly a great place to be.

I would like to extend a BIG THANKS to all of BRLA's volunteer boards of directors, summer camp staff and committee members who have accomplished numerous tasks on our behalf this year. Have safe winter season and I hope to see you up at the lake really soon.

Bob



Bob Evans, BRLA President  
[president@brla.on.ca](mailto:president@brla.on.ca)

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## PAT CHAMBERLAIN REPORTS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

The Environmental Committee members very much appreciate the support and encouragement we receive from all of you and want to thank you for your comments and suggestions. Please contact us at [environment@brla.on.ca](mailto:environment@brla.on.ca) with your questions or ideas. We are reviewing our programs, thinking ahead to 2005 and would welcome your input.

We also want to thank the Rideau Lake Environmental Foundation (RLEF) for their financial support. The work we do would not be possible without their assistance and I hope you will consider a donation when you receive their appeal.

### WATER QUALITY TESTING

Water still rates as the number one environmental priority of the BRLA members and, while the 2004 test results cannot be analyzed until all results have been received from the lab, I can say that there is nothing abnormal to report this year.

The 2003 Water Quality Monitoring Report is on the BRLA Web site and I recommend that you take a look at it. (The 2004 Report will be posted when results are analyzed.) You will find detailed explanations of testing sites and results, it describes lake dynamics, nutrients and their effects, and explains what is being tested and why.

Two important tests are the measurement of phosphorous levels and water clarity. In combination, high phosphorous levels and clear water encourage weed growth and algae bloom. Zebra mussels have increased water clarity. But it is up

to each shoreline resident to help reduce phosphorous loading by maintaining and restoring a natural shoreline that will protect water quality by absorbing excess nutrients from both natural and human sources.

### LOON NESTING PLATFORMS

Seven volunteers have stepped forward to “adopt” a loon nesting platform which means they will monitor its condition and place nesting material on it each spring. Gemmell’s Garden Centre in Smiths Falls has offered to supply sod for the platforms and we appreciate their interest and support. Thanks especially to our platform caretakers Doug and Joyce Cowan, Dorothy and Kenneth Cowan, Brian Mahon, Robin Riles, Roy Sampson, Doug and Yvonne Watson, Janet and Wally White.

### LOON AND TRUMPETER SWANS

Most of the time these birds coexist quite happily. But we had one report this spring of a pair of swans chasing loons from what has been a traditional loon nesting site. Naturally the human neighbours were very upset! There are 19 swans on

the lake now. There may be further interaction as they adapt to their environment and we appreciate receiving reports about unusual activity.

Janet White reports that she is still waiting for final reports from the participating Loon Watchers. If you have not already done so please send her your observation sheets so she can tally the Rideau Lakes information and forward it to Bird Studies Canada. New participants in the loon watching program are always welcome. Email her at [loons@brla.on.ca](mailto:loons@brla.on.ca) to be on the spring mailing list.

### FISHING RELATED NEWS

We are working closely with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to ensure that our brochures, etc. reflect their interests and policies and we are also gathering fish stocking information from them. Our Bass Watch program is being evaluated and we are looking into ways of educating lake users about protecting bass nests, proper catch and release methods and trout regulations on Big Rideau Lake.

Your suggestions and questions would be helpful. Please contact us at [environment@brla.on.ca](mailto:environment@brla.on.ca).

### RIDEAU LAKES WATERSHED PLAN

*The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) is asking lake users, residents, and all interested people to provide input to a watershed study, scheduled to begin next year. Please respond to their Survey, to ensure that the study will include your ideas and concerns. For more details, see [http://www.rideauvalley.on.ca/programs/watershed\\_planning/rideau\\_lakes/index.html](http://www.rideauvalley.on.ca/programs/watershed_planning/rideau_lakes/index.html)*

*A Survey Form is enclosed with this copy of Driftwords. Please return it to the RVCA, at the address on the survey.*

## MIKE FRASER REPORTS ON FIREWORKS - CANADA DAY 2004

Once again the weather cooperated and hundreds of boats were out to watch the Canada Day fireworks at Cow Island. We hope it looked good, as it is difficult to tell from the sending end. This is one of the times that the BRLA is the most visible on the lake. Remind your neighbours that this display is entirely funded by our association!

The show would not be possible without the help of the volunteers who set up the display. Many thanks to Franziska Graf, Jim Sneyd, Doug Arrand, Jessica Long, D'Arcy McCarney, John & Carroll Ketchum, John & Tracy Delaney, Donovan & Olivia Arnaud, and Paul & Lyn Connor. Also in attendance were the Fire Chief Jay DeBernardi and volunteer members of the Rideau Lakes Township Fire Department, whose invaluable assistance kept us all safe during the event.

BRLA needs your donations to keep this event a success. Remember to support Fireworks when you renew your membership.



## COW ISLAND UPDATE

Thanks to Doug Arrand, and a group of volunteers, Cow Island is looking great. We're flying a flag from the cabin, and we've put up a new sign at the docks, reminding visitors that Cow Island is BRLA property, and that there are some basic rules for its use. Summer Day Camp was a great success again this year. Many young friendships were begun. How many of your lake friends did you meet at Camp?



## WATERFRONT RATEPAYERS AFTER FAIR TAXATION AN UPDATE ON WRAFT FROM HENRY COPESTAKE

BRLA has joined a new Ontario coalition of waterfront associations to fight an increasing shift of municipal taxes onto waterfront properties.

The Waterfront Residents After Fair Taxation (WRAFT) coalition brings together cottage and other resident waterfront associations from across Ontario to achieve equity in waterfront property taxation. Its efforts are strongly supported by the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association (FOCA), representing over 550 cottage associations.

WRAFT works to:

- Halt any unfair shift of tax onto the waterfront
- Find ways to mitigate rising property taxes
- Fight for reform in the way property taxes are allocated

Ontario waterfront residents have seen substantial changes in assessed property value. Some property owners have seen double digit increases in their assessment, spurring large hikes in the property taxes they pay. Those tax hikes pay for municipal and other services. Is it fair that waterfront residents should pay the largest share of taxes to receive the same amount of service, or less? Action is needed to restore fairness and equality in property assessment and taxation – on the waterfront.

WRAFT has a team of experienced property tax reform advocates who will recommend specific mitigation strategies to the province, and work to persuade the Ontario government to restore fairness in property taxation. We will keep you informed of WRAFT's work. You can also find more details on their web site at <http://www.wraft.com>

## YOUR COMMENTS NEEDED: PARKS CANADA DRAFT POLICIES FOR IN-WATER AND SHORELINE WORKS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Members of the BRLA are strongly urged to review the new Parks Canada Draft Policies for works around the shoreline and in the water of the canal system, including Big Rideau Lake, now available at: [http://www.pc.gc.ca/docs/r/rideau-trent/index\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/docs/r/rideau-trent/index_e.asp)

These guidelines will affect "installation, repairs & replacements and annual or sporadic maintenance" of all waterfront works, including

- Docks and Boatlifts
- Boathouses & Boat Posts
- Shoreline Stabilization
- Mooring Buoys, Swimming Buoys, Swimming Rafts and Water Ski Courses

Send your comments to Parks Canada: [rideau.consultations@pc.gc.ca](mailto:rideau.consultations@pc.gc.ca)

Send a copy of your comments to BRLA: [govtaffairs@brla.on.ca](mailto:govtaffairs@brla.on.ca)





## BRLA'S ANNUAL REGATTA AUGUST 2004

*For the first time in a long while the BRLA Regatta was held on its Rain Date, the Sunday of the August Long Weekend. (Usually the Regatta is on the Saturday.) The sun came out, and we put the day to good use!*

*Thanks to Jim Sneyd, Bob Evans and their extended families for their organization.*



*See the BRLA Web site – [www.brla.on.ca](http://www.brla.on.ca) – for more photos and a schedule of activities in 2005.*

*Plan ahead. You don't want to miss anything!*



All Photographs © J. Trant, 2004.

### **RECREATION COMMITTEE SEEKS ASSISTANCE FROM BRLA PARENTS FOR DAY CAMP PROGRAM**

We are seeking BRLA members with young children who have participated or will participate in the annual summer Day Camp held on Cow Island to become members of a newly formed Parents Advisory Committee.

This committee will advise the Recreation Committee and Day Camp Staff on program activities, funding and providing a great experience for our children. Meetings will be kept to a minimum and use of Internet communication will be maximized during the off season. It is our hope that parents will assist BRLA in providing our lake kids an opportunity to meet other children who spend summers on our lake, to socialize and forge friendships, through the day camp experience that may become life long relationships and memories.

Interested volunteers are invited to contact Doug Arrand by email to [recreation@brla.on.ca](mailto:recreation@brla.on.ca)