



# DriftWords

The Newsletter of the Big Rideau Lake Association (BRLA)  
Serving the Rideau Since 1911 Poonamalie to Narrows Lock  
Spring 2012

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## From the Editor - Sue Van Slooten

Spring is here, not that you would know it. The only real evidence, is there isn't a shred of hard water in sight. But that could change too. In this issue, we have a truly great (in size and writing) article by Doug Arrand, with assorted photos, of just how much goes into putting on our annual fireworks. I want to thank Doug for putting this article together for us, we've been planning it now since October, a big effort on his part. To coin a phrase, this is no walk in the park! You really have to know how to set your cannons.

The water levels this Spring are still a subject of great concern, and as such, and Toby has taken up the topic in his Pen.

Another important health article on Lyme Disease by Keith Walker on Page 7 explains how serious and insidious this disease is.

-Sue

**IMPORTANT DATE CHANGE: PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MAY WORK WEEKEND HAS BEEN CHANGED TO MAY 26.**

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Photo Courtesy of Jean Van Loon

## President's Pen - Toby Spry

Welcome all to the 2012 summer at the Cottage or Boat. The board has been busy on your behalf, arranging the 2012 summer activities. You can get all off the calendar of events on the web site (and below), but suffice to say it looks busy.

We are planning to continue with Peter Copestake's initiatives to improve Cow Island. This will include painting the inside and finishing off the new windows. If you have any spare time or would like to volunteer your teenagers to help, please

contact the board. Remember that volunteer hours for students in Ontario Schools are mandatory for graduation. We can provide some of those hours.

Cow Island will have its internet hook up and running again this year for members. If you can't break your habit of contacting the office or need to say hi to friends via email, come and use our connection. Please respect the camper's activities and the Sailing School in July. Docking is limited, but there are three mooring buoys off the south east shoreline for your use as members.

Cottagers and boaters will notice that the lake is lower this year due to the lack of snow and run off. Please be careful around shallow areas and Shoal makers.

We are still looking for new members and new board members. Check with your neighbours and see if they are members. If you are not a member then you have little say in the activities of the association or the programs it provides.

I hope to see you all at the BRLA events this summer, have a great and safe season on the lake.

### BRLA 2012 Events

- **Saturday May 26<sup>th</sup> 9AM-3PM**  
**Cow Island Spring Clean Up -**  
**Note new date!**
- **Saturday June 30<sup>th</sup> @ Dusk**  
**Canada Day Fireworks from**

Cow Island ( Rain date:  
Sunday July 1<sup>st</sup>)

- **Sunday July 2<sup>nd</sup> Canada Day**  
**Fireworks Clean Up – Cow**  
**Island ( Volunteers needed)**
- **Saturday July 7<sup>th</sup> @ 10AM**  
**BRLA Annual General**  
**Meeting- Portland Community**  
**Hall**
- **Cow Island Kid's Day Camp**  
**Mon-Fri 9AM-12PM ( July)**
- **Saturday July 14<sup>th</sup> 2PM-4PM**  
**Summer Sounds Cow Island**  
**Fundraiser**
- **Saturday August 4<sup>th</sup> Annual**  
**Swim Regatta Cow Island**  
**11AM- 1PM**
- **Volunteer Appreciation Party**  
**August 25th, 2-4 p.m.**

### BRLA's Annual Fireworks-Doug Arrand. (Photos Courtesy of Doug Arrand)

For 35 years my family and I have enjoyed the annual fireworks show BRLA provides. We have not thought much about the work that goes into putting the show on each year.

A few years ago I volunteered with a number of other BRLA members to assist the fireworks team assembled by Mike Fraser. Following is a brief report of the preparation work that goes into the annual show.

The first job on the morning of the show is to receive and transport several pallets of fireworks and equipment to the Cow Island cabin. We then get the mortar frames out of storage and move them into locations around the shoreline as directed by Mike according to his design for the evening show. Below you will note Mike Fraser on the left with volunteer John Sterling with a number of the mortars to be aimed and eventually loaded. The frames in this photo represent but a few of similar mortars placed along the shores of the island.



Mike Fraser and John Sterling-Photo by Doug Arrand

Other volunteers will trim the lawns where the mortar frames are located for fire safety reasons, while others will carry plastic bags full of earth or sand to provide weight to hold down the mortar frames when they are fired off in the evening. Some will dig holes in the volleyball court to bury the largest of our mortars, which are 6 inches in diameter.

Water tanks with pumps must be filled with water from the lake and located strategically for use in case of a misfire or grass fire during the show. One of BRLA's gasoline

powered fire pumps is fueled and tested and fire hoses connected again in case of an emergency during the show.

Once the work required of the BRLA volunteers is completed, Mike sends them home and his team takes over.

They string hundreds of feet of wire to the mortars from the control panel that activates the firing of the mortars. Each mortar is loaded with a fireworks shell and an electric igniter is inserted. The firing wire is connected to each charge and a piece of tin foil covers the muzzle of each mortar. Mike's team spends several hours meticulously carrying out this operation to minimize the risk of a misfire and to ensure that the cannons will fire in the sequence of fireworks that we all ooh and ah at during the actual show.



In the photo above, John Delaney and Will Evans prepare the control panel.

In the next photo Ed. Brigden and Mike Fraser are attaching the legs to the mortar frames to aim the mortars into the sky at the correct angle.



Cannons aimed and sand bagged in the photo below. Note the yellow wire that connects the mortars to the control panel.



6 inch mortars buried in the volleyball court for the really big display fireworks. They are yet to be loaded, armed and connected to the control panel.

During the evening show two volunteers from BRLA assist the team by manning fire lines in

preparation to put down any fires that may occur with this type of show.

The following day the whole apparatus must be torn down and the mortars and mortar frames put away for another year, wire collected, the boxes and debris created by the explosions picked up, the sand bags collected and stored and the control panels and myriad of equipment required packed up and taken away for winter storage arranged by Mike Fraser.

The members of Mike Fraser's team who have been providing BRLA's Annual Fireworks for the past 11 years are also **volunteers**. The 2011 team included John Delaney, Ross Dunthorn, and Patrick Nicholson. Mike holds a Pyrotechnics license that is required to work with the type of fireworks used in the BRLA annual show. We are indebted to Mike and his loyal team of experts. One of the greatest benefits of having the show produced by volunteers is that every dollar donated by our members and the public goes into purchasing fireworks and the more money raised each year means a more spectacular event.

This article in a very small way is our attempt to make members of BRLA and the community at large aware of the tremendous amount of work Mike's team carries out on our behalf, to thank Mike and his team and the BRLA volunteers who assist the team from year to year.

BRLA volunteers that assisted the team on the 2011 show were Bill Baker, John Sterling, Toby Spry, Will Evans, Michael Evans, Ed Brigden. Many thanks to all!



Typical portable fire pump used during the annual fireworks show.

## **BLRA Marine Safety-Toby Spry**

### **Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada**

#### **Boating Safely**

##### **Q: What is the “Boating Safely” Campaign?**

**A:** Parks Canada's goal is to educate boaters on the reasons why it is important to reduce speed, respect speed limits and watch their wake at all times.

The Watch Your Wake tagline is being used by many organizations to promote good boating safely habits. The logo that Parks Canada uses was created specifically for the “Boating Safely” Campaign.

##### **Q: Who are Parks Canada's partners?**

- The Ontario Provincial Police
- The Ottawa Police Service
- Friends of the Rideau
- Ontario Marine Operators Association
- Canadian Power and Sail Squadron
- Transport Canada

##### **Q: Why has Parks Canada decided to launch the “Boating Safely” Campaign?**

Issues with wash/ wake and speed are not new. However, over the past few years, Parks Canada has received an increased number of complaints from concerned boaters and other Rideau Canal recreational users regarding excessive wake and speed along the waterway.

In an effort to protect the wildlife, reduce shoreline erosion and offer safe and high quality experiences to visitors that choose to enjoy and use the Rideau Canal, Parks Canada has decided to take action.

##### **Q: What is wake and wash?**

**A:** A wake is a disturbed column of water around and behind a pleasure craft as it makes its way through water.

A wash is a specific component of the wake consisting of loose and broken water. It includes water thrown aft by the propeller and the waves that roll off the side of the boat.

What is immediately on the surface after your boat passes it easy to see but there is also danger underneath your boat.

Drawdown caused by all boats, especially in narrow channels, can be more damaging than surface wash.

##### **Q: Why is it important for boaters to watch their wake?**

**A:** We all wish to enjoy the Rideau Canal in our own way. All of us have the responsibility to ensure that others have the ability to enjoy the waterway to its fullest.

Excessive wakes can endanger swimmers, canoeists and kayakers as well as aquatic and terrestrial animals. It can also damage property (watercrafts, docks etc) and contribute to excessive erosion. Responsible visitor behaviour is essential in protecting the ecology and the history of the Rideau Canal so it can remain intact and strong into the future.

**Q: How can my wake endanger other recreational users?**

**A:** Wake may endanger swimmers, fishermen or other recreational users along the shoreline. It can rock, swamp or overturn boats. Passengers might be thrown off balance or overboard, leading to serious injury.

**Q: Have people been killed on the Rideau Canal because of excessive wakes?**

**A:** Luckily, no one has died from excessive wake on the Rideau but it did cause some misfortune to some recreational users.

“... I had concern for my safety in the canoe, where I had little ability to escape their path- most boat captains were unaware of the affect of their wake on small craft...”

“... while repairing our dock, the wash from a fast boat was so violent it threw my husband off his feet onto the dock and he cracked three ribs...”

“... in mid-summer, we were asked to tow a customer's pontoon boat which, while stopped in the water, had been turtled by a quick series of intense washes...”

Boat wake is a major problem on the Rideau Canal and is very dangerous in some areas. The Ottawa Police Service, the Ontario Provincial Police and Parks Canada are very concerned with the problem and are working together to inform boaters on the consequences of excessive wakes.

**Q: How can my wake kill or endanger aquatic and terrestrial animals?**

**A:** Shoreline erosion caused by excessive wake and wash has many consequences on the environment, including habitat destruction. For example: powerboats can send waves crashing into shorelines, drowning loon nests or endangered species of turtle, like the stinkpots.

Also, sediments caused by shoreline erosion settle to the bottom, silting in fish spawning habitat.

Shoreline erosion increases the sedimentation and the release of nutrients (phosphorous and nitrogen) that promote aquatic vegetation growth.

**Q: Aside from the Boating safely campaign, what is Parks Canada doing to protect the natural shoreline?**

Parks Canada continues to play a role in protecting natural shorelines through its role on the Rideau Waterfront Development Review Team (RWDRT). The RWDRT is responsible for reviewing applications for shoreline and in-water developments along the Rideau Canal. The RWDRT works to provide advice and guidance to shoreline property owners to help minimize the impact of development on shoreline habitat, and to ensure that the natural and heritage values of the Rideau Canal are protected to be enjoyed by future generations. If you have any questions about protecting your natural shoreline, someone from the Rideau Canal will be glad to offer you advice and direct you to information and resources.

**Q: What can I do to protect the natural shoreline?**

There is lots you can do! If you are a boater, one of the most important things you can do is keep your wash and wake under control - wash and wake created by boats can have destructive effects on natural shorelines. If you are a shoreline property owner, you could consult with one of the many agencies that can give you guidance, including Parks Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and your local Conservation Authority. There is lots of great information available from these sources in free booklets, pamphlets and brochures. Some of the key things you can do include: maintain a buffer of natural vegetation between your lawn and the waterfront. Avoid the creation of barriers to wildlife movement - turtles

and other wildlife may wish to use your shoreline for nesting, but they are not very good at climbing walls! You may also look at re-naturalizing your shoreline. You will want to look at using native plant species that are suitable to your property, and will want to take preventative measures to keep soil and sediments out of the water while you are working.

**Q: I heard that Parks Canada was implanting a new enforcement and compliance regime with the help of the Ontario Provincial Police and the Ottawa Police Service. Is that true?**

**A:** Police officers patrolling the canal have always been in a position to charge boaters, under the *Contraventions Act*, found exceeding the speed limit or endangering the safety of other persons or property.

This summer, Parks Canada employees (on or off the water) will play an active role in the "*Boating Safely*" campaign. Based on the testimony of front-line staff, police officers may lay charges on boaters who do not respect the law.

*Watch Your Wake Zones* are now *No Wake Zones*. When cruising close to the shore, in narrow channels, near other boats or swimmers and docks, boat operators should drive as slowly as possible.

**Q: What happens if I get caught being negligent?**

**A:** Pleasure boating on the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site is a privilege. Boaters who display blatant disregard for the safety of others, risk having his or her lockage permit revoked and/ or fined by enforcement authorities.

For example; the fine for failure to comply with a posted sign is \$100

**Q: What can I do?**

**A:** As you travel, watch behind you. Regardless of the size of your watercraft, you are responsible for your wake.

Be considerate of small vessels such as canoes and kayaks.

Slow down well before meeting and overtaking other boats, posted speed zones and narrow channels. Leave as much room as possible between you and the boats you meet or are passing.

Maintain a proper look-out at all times to avoid emergency manoeuvres.

**Q: To whom do I talk to if I have questions or concerns?**

**A:** For more information on the Rideau Canal and the "*Boating Safely*" campaign please talk to lock operators or contact the Rideau Canal Headquarters by telephone at 613-283-5170 or by e-mail at [Rideaucanal-info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:Rideaucanal-info@pc.gc.ca).

## LYME DISEASE

Sue was asking for some articles for the Newsletter so I thought people should know about Lyme Disease, which quite a few of my friends seem to have caught particularly if you are an outdoors type. This disease is caused by bites from ticks from deer, and ticks can also be spread by birds and other animals. This disease can be very serious.

A friend of ours was bitten some years ago and it took some time for his illness to be diagnosed and as a result he is now very ill and bed ridden. His insurance gave difficulty in giving financial support and there seems to be a reluctance on the part of the health system to recognize this disease possibly because it could be a chronic care disease. This disease has now appeared in Australia with similar difficulties. However Health Canada now covers the disease but says risk of exposure is fairly low! See [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca).

A friend of mine and his dog received bites from ticks when I was closing up my cottage near Portland last year so it seems the Lyme ticks are in the Rideau lake area. The bites often have a bull's eye rash appearance but not always and sometimes flu like symptoms occur, so on return from an area where you think ticks could be, I suggest checking your body for bites and ticks, or later flu-like symptoms. Keep your self well covered when outside, even to tucking your trousers into your socks if in grass particularly long.

I was going to end my article here and then discovered an article in the Wall Street Journal. Google **This Season's Ticking Bomb**. Reading this article is very informative, a must, and a little scary. I believe there is a vaccine for animals but so far not for humans, WHICH IS BADLY NEEDED.

Take care.  
Keith Walker

Editor's Note: *There is a vaccine for both animals and humans, but according to my vet at the Perth Animal Hospital, the human one has been mostly discontinued due to extreme muscle pain that persists for about 3-4 days. One should always vaccinate your pets against this disease.*

Gardener Ed Lawrence highlights "Ladies at the Lake" Fundraiser in June

Camp Otterdale on Otter Lake is hosting a fundraiser for Dignity House Hospice (DHH) and The Canadian Federation of University

Women (CFUW) on Saturday June 9, 2012. Mark your calendar! The fun starts at 9:00 a.m. and winds down at 7:00 p.m.

100 tickets are being sold by Reservation only, none will be sold the day of the event. This 'Summer-Camp' day has been organized to fund DHH client programs and the CFUW who support women's rights and education.

"**Ladies at the Lake**" is a day specifically designed for women and will feature 3 speakers discussing Reflexology, Nutrition and an interactive TAI CHI session. Enjoy two relaxed meals in the beautiful Dining Hall, camp activities such as canoeing, swimming, archery, climbing and a nature hike. Music, door prizes, draws and FUN are all a part of the day! A rest period is included for a walk or to get in a game of bridge!

Mr. Ed Lawrence, Gardening Guru and author of "Gardening Grief and Glory" will be the featured guest speaker at 4:30 pm. Ed's expertise gained popular recognition through CBC Radio's "Ontario Today" noon-time gardening phone-in show heard every Monday afternoon. He will be speaking on "Tips, Tricks and Techniques to garden without using Pesticides" and give a presentation on pruning and care of the shears.

Ladies interested in gardening, 'retired' campers and supporters of DHH and CFUW are invited out to Camp Otterdale for the "Ladies at the Lake" event. Tickets are \$60 plus HST (\$67.80) and are available from DHH Board Member Sue Brown. Contact her at [HYPERLINK](mailto:auntieotterdale@hotmail.com)

["mailto:auntieotterdale@hotmail.com"](mailto:auntieotterdale@hotmail.com) [auntieotterdale@hotmail.com](mailto:auntieotterdale@hotmail.com) or through the camp website at [HYPERLINK "http://www.campotterdale.com"](http://www.campotterdale.com) [www.campotterdale.com](http://www.campotterdale.com). A \$20 charitable receipt will be issued by Dignity House.

**Can't attend a full day? Drive out to the camp at 4:00 pm, get parked and come in to hear Ed's presentation. Then join him and the rest of the "Ladies at the Lake" for supper! Tickets are \$35.00 and can be purchased from Sue at [auntieotterdale@hotmail.com](mailto:auntieotterdale@hotmail.com), at Sweet Peas Florist in Perth and at Gemmill's Nursery in Smiths Falls. Advance-sales only. See you there!**

## TMK

Last summer we dealt with a case of TMK, “too many kids”. For a week we enjoyed a wonderful gathering of 9 children, all under the age of 8, at our small cabin on the Rideau. Luckily the weather was excellent.

A favourite activity was taking groups for rides in our boat. During one ride, one of kids kept changing seats. I slowed the boat and pointed to one of the charming little islands located on our wonderful Big Rideau. I asked the children, “Do you know what that island is called?” They shook their heads, so I responded, “That is Time Out Island!”



Photo courtesy of Bill Belanger

All remained seated for the rest of the trip.

When we returned to the cabin I pointed to a large rock on the shoal in front of our cabin and asked if they knew the name of that rock. One of the boys smiled and replied, “Time Out Rock?” The other children giggled and reference to these two locations became part of the joking that dominated the week.

No, we never made concrete use of either one but it was a great way

of drawing attention to inappropriate behaviour.



Photo Courtesy of Bill Belanger

## FAMILY FUN POKER RUN AUGUST 4<sup>TH</sup> 1-4 P.M.

So here’s the deal, have a great afternoon on the water and have some fun doing it playing to get a poker hand. This is not a speed race, more a navigation and boating skills knowing the lake and being able to go to four different locations to get a playing card. You then receive the last card at the finish line, with the best poker hand being the winner.

Three separate events are being proposed of different lengths, all going on at the same time, going different routes, and starting, at different intervals, and finishing at Hanna Park or the Government dock (depending on the number of participants):

Event:

- 1/ Rowing and paddling
- 2/ Pleasure boat a/ up to 16 feet and 30 horsepower, b/ any length over 30 horsepower
- 3/ Cruisers

Although the BRLA is organizing the event, each boater will be responsible for ensuring they have the proper insurance and safety equipment, including fuel, on their "vessel". We want this to be a safe fun filled family event so please be make certain the day of the event, and for your safety all the boating season, that you have your Pleasure Craft Operators Card and that your vessel is properly equipped in accordance to the applicable Federal Boating Regulation.

Two major components are required: participants and volunteers to help organize and man locations to pass out the playing cards. We will be getting a registration form on the BRLA website, and if you are interested in volunteering to organize the event, please contact Doug Good at [dcgood@xplornet.ca](mailto:dcgood@xplornet.ca).

#### **MRSSO Septic Re-Inspection Program April 2012**

Water quality is the most prized aspect of any lake and is particularly cherished in the rocky highlands of Rideau lake country. The most significant threat to lake water quality in our area is faulty septic systems.

The Mississippi Rideau Septic System Office (MRSSO) is pleased to salute Tay Valley Township for their commitment to protecting water quality in local lakes. Tay Valley Township took a progressive approach to the protection of local recreation and environmental assets by passing of a Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Program Bylaw on seven lakes within the municipality. The Discretionary Maintenance program becomes effective as of March 13, 2012 and involves mandatory inspections for properties involved. Special thanks to the seven Lake Associations who were the

driving force behind the implementation of the program.

Tay Valley Township is continuing the Voluntary Septic Re-Inspection Program on other lakes within in the township. Big Rideau Lake residents within Tay Valley Township can expect MRSSO requests for participation in the 2012 Voluntary Septic Re-Inspection to arrive in the mail in mid-May.

For several years, the MRSSO has offered a modest septic re-inspection program on behalf of the Township of Rideau Lakes. This voluntary re-inspection program is offered to "water access only" properties on Big Rideau Lake. We are now in the last year of scheduled septic re-inspections for the Township of Rideau Lakes. Although we've talked to over 500 property owners about the operation and maintenance of their septic systems, there are hundreds more within Rideau Lakes Township.

If you support the inspection of existing septic systems in the Rideau Lakes, we encourage you to contact your local councilor to let them know.

The Mississippi Rideau Septic System Office appreciates the Big Rideau Lake Association's support of the septic re-inspection program. We would very much be interested in meeting with you to discuss Tay Valley Township's approach to protecting water quality and the future of re-inspection programs on Big Rideau Lake.

We hope to see you this summer.

Eric Kohlsmith  
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MRSSO  
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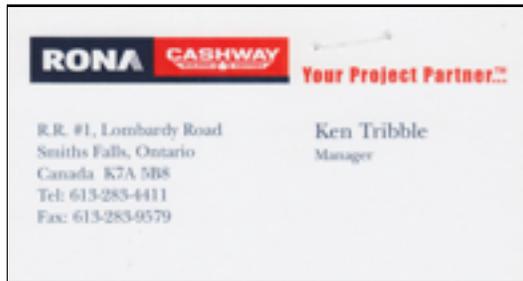
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