



Driftwords

Serving the Rideau Since 1915, Poonamalie to Narrows Lock

What a Lovely Fall!



BITS FROM BETH

Welcome to Driftwords **Winter 2015/16** edition. What a wonderful summer we had. Thanksgiving and Halloween have come and gone and we can now prepare for Christmas. The board of the BRLA is busy preparing for next season. I hope you enjoy the latest edition of Driftwords - please submit your ideas for the spring edition. driftwords@bigrideaulakeassociation.com



Now that Thanksgiving is well behind us, the shoal markers are off the lake, Cow

Island has been put to bed and most of us have "winterized" our boats and/or cottages, your Board is starting to prepare for the 2016 season!

There is lots of work ahead!

Again in 2015, your Association presented a busy and very successful series of programmes and events with highlights including shoal markers, environmental monitoring, government affairs interventions, fireworks, day camp, sailing camp, summer sounds, two regattas (family aquatic and sailing) and of course our 100th Anniversary Celebration on August 8th.

A huge "Thank You" to all those who worked so hard to make the season so successful!

For the first time in many years, our membership has risen to over 300 families – another "Thank You" to John Callan and his membership committee for all the phone calls and emails.

Unfortunately with all this success, we will deliver a second consecutive deficit this year, the details of which are presented in the Treasurer's report.

It was in anticipation of this that at this summer's AGM, the Board asked for and the members approved a fee increase for 2016 to \$75 per family.

The Board's response to this continuing financial predicament is to conduct a thorough review of

every programme and event we present to ensure it meets two criteria:

1. It responds to a demonstrated need/want expressed by the membership overall and
2. It is either financially viable on its own, or is supported by the members through their fees.

This review starts at our October 24th board meeting and will focus initially on our big ticket items including fireworks and Cow Island. I hope to contact all of you to ask for input to make sure our 2016 plans reflect your priorities.

I have a personal request, which is critical for my personal, marital and mental wellbeing!!!! OK, a bit of an exaggeration perhaps, but I really do need to pass off my board position as Treasurer.

Spring activities will be seriously hampered without that position filled!!! So please help us to find candidates for that Treasurer's position.

Please contact me at president@bigrideaulakeassociation.com or by phone at (613) 878-4212 to volunteer or recommend someone we can contact to take on that role.

On behalf of the Board, I wish you all a wonderful fall and winter and we look forward to seeing you once again in the spring.

Brian Hawkins,

President





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MEMBERSHIP

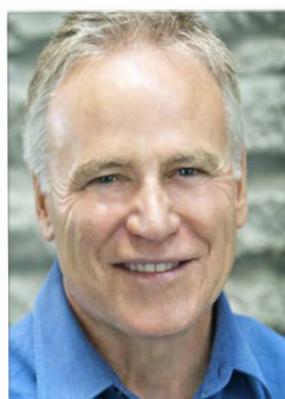
GREAT NEWS! I am pleased to report that we have exceeded our membership goal set this year by your Board of Directors of 300 members. We now have 309 members (including new and renewing members) of our Association. In the summer edition of Driftwords, I reported that we had 265 members and asked you to help us get another 35 more. Thanks to all of your efforts and in particular, those of Nancy Watters, we have exceeded our goals for this membership year.

We also had some young members travel across the lake over the summer dropping off membership forms and Rideau Valley Conservation Authority's 2014 Subwatershed Report.

Thank you all for being members and we look forward to you all renewing your memberships for next year. This coming membership year starts April 1, 2016 to April 1, 2017 and the fees to renew are \$75.00. As you all know, your Association relies on the revenue from membership fees and your donations to carry out the many programmes we offer.

John Callan

Membership Director, BRLA



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MARINE SAFETY

Top Boating New Year's Resolutions

10 New Year's resolutions that will help make you a better boater.

This skipper isn't just going slowly - the boat's wake is minimal.

Just so everybody realizes I am not preaching, I want it understood that I have been guilty of each of the offences these boating resolutions address at least once. I am a firm believer in the power of positive expectation for self, and others.

1. I resolve to slow down so as to reduce my wake, and not damage the shoreline or my fellow boater's vessels. It's not enough to just observe the posted speed limit.
2. I resolve to tie my boat up with care, whether for the long-term at the marina, or just briefly at the fuel dock or a waterside eatery. If my boat got loose it may damage my fellow boater's boats.

3. I resolve to have my boat prepared and have all the required safety equipment on board.
4. I resolve to keep my music and engine noise down while near shore, anchored boats or late at night.
5. I resolve to shut down my engines when in a canal lock.
6. I resolve to not drink alcohol while operating a boat.
7. I resolve to conduct a man overboard drill with my regular crew.
8. I resolve to conduct an abandon ship drill with my regular crew.
9. I resolve to bring at least one non-boater boating.
10. I resolve to wear my life jacket.

Toby Spry



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THE BIG RIDEAU CHALLENGE

Ottawa is home to Canada's top Masters Lifeguarding team, who compete every 2 years in the 'world master lifeguarding championships' in various locations around the globe. (Egypt, Australia, France to name a recent few). Amongst this group are two individuals who have cottages in Macleans Bay on the Big Rideau.

We admit that this is a crazy sport, having to compete 2 days in the pool and 2 days in or on the ocean in all sorts of wavy and windy conditions. The ocean aspect requires agility in what is called a 'surf ski' which is a kayak with an odd looking nose that will help lift up and over 6 foot crashing waves. Another is on a paddle board, kneeling and racing against a group of highly trained athletes from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and all parts of Europe and the United States.

The ocean swim is total mayhem with large groups racing into the water and fighting the swells to race around a 400 metre course, hoping to catch a few waves for an easier ride to the beach.

This summer marks one year before the next competition in the Netherlands, and a few of us wanted to find new and different challenges to maintain our fitness but to push the limits of our sport.

Normally we get excited with those blustery and wavy days on the Rideau to practice the surf ski in ocean like conditions, but during one of our meetings it was Betsy Simpson who suggested a far different set of challenges. One was to see if we could complete a 50 km ski (kayak) on the Rideau. This we completed from Rideau Ferry to Portland and back in late July.

The second, and most intimidating was the idea of swimming from Portland to Rideau Ferry. We are good swimmers, but none of us had attempted this sort of distance.

On August 9th of this year, three of us (Doug Bishop, Betsy Simpson and Christina Sutcliff) entered the water off Portland. Our major concern was the boat traffic, but we were fortunate to have Bill Connerty (who also has a cottage near Rideau Ferry) to be our patient guide and carry food and fluids on his boat. Having never swum long, long distance, none of us were sure what sort of troubles we might encounter; for me, I was sure that becoming cold might be a factor, or leg cramps or fluid or food depletion. Surprisingly, even though we were in the water for 7.5 hours cold wasn't a factor. When we reached the narrows (about 13 km from our start and taking in some crossings we did to follow the sun) our legs were heavy and beginning to cramp. A stop there to eat a bit and take in Gatorade did wonders for our heavy limbs.



It's amazing how close one is with nature while swimming. I could watch the trees and rocks go by, swim close to loons who were probably questioning our sanity more than we were, and wonderful glimpses of cottages with bright coloured Adirondack chairs on the docks. Many, many boats skimmed by and the swells were simply another challenge to confront.

After the narrows it felt like we were close to home and our pace picked up. However, at this point leg cramps and low back discomfort were a factor and we all would do intermittent front rolls to stretch out the muscles and keep on going (a wonderful technique to stretch in the water). We ultimately reached our destination; a total of 7.5 hours and 20 km of swimming. The hardest of our challenges now met.

For me, swimming in the Big Rideau is an amazing body of water and would wish that more people could enjoy the pleasure of swimming parts of it, whether 500 metres or 5000 metres.

If you ever want to get an idea of what we are doing at these Lifesaving competitions, simply go to You Tube and enter 'world lifesaving championships'. You will see examples of the racing in a surf ski, board, beach run and swim. (just don't ask us why we do this; it's an existential question we would have a hard time answering).

Doug Bishop

BETSY'S SWIM IN MEMORY OF TOM PURCELL

Many years back I swam about 12 km of our route on a September morning with the supervision and support of my father-in-law, Tom Purcell. We had both planned a second attempt in warmer waters but between injuries and busy lives it didn't get done. Tom passed away last fall. I was taken back at his wake, when so many of his cottage friends (he had an island near Portland) referred to my swim with Tom. I was surprised they knew of the adventure and all the more determined to complete it this summer. And so, for me, personally, I was swimming for Tom-a very special man whom I miss dearly. Our swim was from Tom's dock just outside Portland to our cottage dock in the base of McLaren's Bay near Rideau Ferry.

Also, just as a point of interest - four of us completed the same route Labour Day Monday on our boards (kneel and paddle with arms)...Taking about five hours of paddling, it surprisingly seemed to tax our bodies more than the swim (quads and shoulders)

Betsy Simpson



THE DANGERS OF WILD PARSNIP

Wild Parsnip is a dangerous, invasive weed that has spread prolifically over the past few years, particularly through Eastern Ontario. During the summer months, Wild Parsnip is the most common yellow-flowered weeds that we see growing in areas such as roadside ditches, forest clearings and shorelines and along railway tracks, fences, trails and fields.

The sap of Wild Parsnip produces chemicals that cause a severe skin irritation in humans, including intense burns, rashes and blisters which can result in severe scarring. Contact with the eyes can cause temporary or even permanent blindness.

In the case of exposure to the sap, the Health Unit recommends washing the exposed area with soap and water as soon as possible, and protecting the area from exposure to sunlight by covering up with a cool, wet cloth when in the sun.

What should you do if you have Wild Parsnip on your property? Protective clothing, including waterproof gloves and boots, long-sleeved shirts and pants, and eye protection, is absolutely essential if tackling the problem. For fewer than 100 plants, options include removal by shovelling, mowing, tarping or chemical control. Beyond 100 plants, professional treatment is recommended.

The spread of Wild Parsnip has been escalating in recent years, and it's extremely critical that everyone, particularly children, learn to recognize what it looks like and understand how important it is to avoid contact with it. The following websites provide valuable and much more detailed information about Wild Parsnip and other invasive weeds, and we urge everyone to familiarize yourself with this weed and its dangers, and what you can do to stop its spread.



Ontario Invasive Species Awareness Program
<http://www.invasionspecies.com/invaders/plants-terrestrial/wild-parsnip/>

Eastern Ontario Health Unit
http://www.eohu.ca/segments/topics_e.php?segmentID=3&topicID=356

Leeds, Grenville & Lanark Health Unit
<http://www.healthunit.org/hazards/dangerousweeds.html>

We will also continue to update the website with links to information about Invasive Species - <http://www.bigrideaulakeassociation.com/links.cfm?LinkCatId=17>



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TREASURER'S REPORT

While the year is not over, we have most of our expected revenue and expense items in, so we can talk with some certainty about the year end results.

Unfortunately, again this year we will have a deficit, albeit smaller than last year, but still around \$4,000.

While our membership revenue increased some \$2,700 as a result of the strong membership growth, that increase was completely offset by a serious decline in the Sailing Camp registrations. We are looking closely at that programme for next year.

On a positive note, we successfully reduced our expenses by almost \$3,000 this year, which resulted in the smaller deficit. As you know this summer's AGM approved a fee increase for 2016 to \$75 per family.

If we can successfully retain the same membership numbers, we should be on slightly drier ground next year.

As stated in the President's report, we are conducting a thorough review of every programme and event we present to ensure it does not put our future at risk. You will hear more of that as 2016 approaches.

Also as stated in the President's report, I have a personal request to ask each of you, please help me to pass on this board position as Treasurer to a new person.

Please help us to find candidates for that Treasurer's position.

Please contact me at treasurer@bigrideaulakeassociation.com or at (613) 878-4212 to volunteer or recommend someone we can contact to take on that role.

Thank you for your continued support.

Brian Hawkins,

Treasurer

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BRLA ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Please feel free to contact the Chair of the Environment Committee at buzzzzz@live.ca if you have any questions about BRLA's work in the protection of the lake natural environment.

- **OMB Hearing:** The OMB initiative launched by BRLA has now been transferred to the Govt. Affairs Committee of BRLA as it now enters more into the realm of governance procedures in general. Environmental protection of lake waters remains the founding concern of the Environment Committee but now this issue revolves around how governance procedures should be carried out to accomplish this end.
- **Fishing Derbies:** An Environment Committee representative is in dialogue with the major bass fishing derby organization active on the lake. Their stated standards are very high with regards to fish protection while in temporary captivity but we are seeking a procedure whereby fish caught during a derby are released back into Big Rideau Lake central waters rather than far away such as near Rideau Ferry or Smiths Falls as has been the most recent practice. A meeting with the major derby organizer is being arranged.
- **Wild Rice Plantings:** There is continuing further consideration and investigation but no proposal for action yet.
- **Invasive Aquatic Plants and Animals:** To keep its membership up to date and aware and watchful Adam Lake Association has prepared a power point presentation on invasive water plants in Ontario and it is well worth viewing [see the BRLA website]. Invasive species are an issue for all waterways and lakes in Ontario and on the Rideau we should be aware and watchful. The main sources of invasive plants, animal and fish species are from foreign minnow pail water, accidentally transported aquatic plant seeds or cuttings and benthic organisms arriving in boats and on trailers, dumping of home aquariums into Ontario waterways and then the natural spreading of invasives along the waterways and up branch waters. One of the best defences is to spot them early and deal with them before they spread and become a serious problem.
- **Cormorants:** Continued field observation and counts were carried out by a number of BRLA members up until the end of October when the birds appear to have all departed. The information collected since June of this year will help create a data base to aid in assessment and BRLA decision making for dealing with cormorant impact issues, particularly on the north Owl Island and surrounding waters. Study will continue again next year. Cormorants are probably a significant part of the food chain in the lake and care needs to be exercised to not unduly disrupt that food chain which in a large part maintains the high quality of the lake water as recently reported on by the RVCA. It is a very complex issue.

Buzz Boles



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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Your Government Relations position has grown. With the increased amount of work, it was more than one person could effectively do. The Board has approved a motion to create a formal committee with members from the 3 townships bordering the Big Rideau Lake, Township of Rideau Lakes (TRL), Tay Valley Township (TVA), and Drummond and North Elmsley Township (D/NE). The committee is looking for two interested members (do not need to be members of the Board) to act for the TVA and D/NE areas. We are fortunate to have the services of Mr. Peter Hannah on the committee. Peter is a retired municipal planner with a respected history of sound planning experience to advise and counsel the other committee members on planning matters and how planning interacts with political councils. All the members will convene to discuss new items and directions to follow.

Ontario Municipal Board Appeal (OMB)

The hearing on our appeal to the OMB took place on Friday, November 13th at the TRL municipal Offices in Chantry. It is a formal proceeding that follows tight rules of evidence and conduct. It is an uncommon position for the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) to oppose many of these challenges to the 30m setback policy, but they did in this case and further stated the setback should be 40m for this site. Their position was supported by currently practiced environmental science. Based on a detailed site inspection, the RVCA recommended a 40m setback but the TRL is attempting to reduce it to 8m anyway. We believe the BRLA has a strong position in challenging the Township decision to allow a new building only 8m from the Big Rideau Lake. The BRLA has a champion who came forward to argue the case in front of the OMB Hearing Officer. The short news is the hearing happened and, as we all thought, it was not going to be heard within one days sitting, let alone the 2.5 hrs scheduled. It has been adjourned to April 28th and 29th for completion. There will be a larger report to the members after the Hearing decision is made and announced.

It is important to state that your Board is not about to start routinely dropping OMB appeals on every questionable TRL decision. Each situation will be examined for merit and application of the rules. What does seem to be at variance with other municipalities is the use of the term minor variance by TRL.

In the winter, the committee will meet with Parks Canada (PC) staff. I recall from the early '90s that PC had a series of statutory requirements that determined water levels at various times of the seasons from the beginning of the year to the end. We will revisit those parameters with PC to allow us to report back to you on why water levels are the way they are from ice out to haul out. I can report, from my years of observation, the usual water level at the end of August from the 50's through to 2000 is what we now encounter in recent years at the end of October. We will find the answers for you.

Doug Kirkland



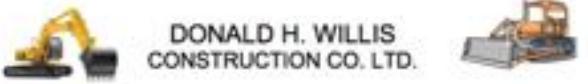
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Big Rideau Lake Association



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* Family is defined as up to 2 parents and their children under 21 years of age.

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Marina _____

Boat Phone _____

Signature _____

Date _____

AROUND THE LAKE



If you would like to share a special birthday, anniversary, or cottage event in Driftwords, please contact:
driftwords@bigrideaulakeassociation.com

BIG RIDEAU LAKE FALL CRUISE



On October 30, 2015 between 1:30 and 4:30 p.m I was privileged to enjoy a solitary slow trip around the south end of the Big Rideau Lake. It was that once a year wonderful sunshine that blesses a photographer with a magical light as the sun settles into the low western sky. It is my absolute favourite time on the lake and on the 30th I only had one other boat out, a float boat with two persons aboard at the end of my trip who appeared to be doing a survey near Tower Island. All the shoal markers were gone and the sense of a special shared privacy with the few remaining loons and gulls imparted an ethereal and deeply spiritual presence on this solitary voyage. I do not wish to influence you to join me. That would break the magic spell of these annual trips but, regardless of your religious attachment, being on the lake, in that setting, with no other human intruding into the cool (sometimes cold and breezy) and soft quietness can soothe and revitalize everyone with a Soul. Have you ever stopped among a group of loons during their moult and listened to them chattering back and forth? It is only one of the wonders late fall on the Big Rideau gives to those who seek it.



I hope to get out once more for a last journey in 2015 but weather can be such a stopper to the best laid plans at this wonderful time of the year.

Doug Kirkland.

A proud and grateful Big Rideau Laker and BRLA member

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