

March 2010

# Captain Otty's Log

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## President's Message

Karen Hunt

Winter at Otty Lake! So far this year it seems that we've had more rain than snow and the current ground cover is pretty hard packed - but still we look out on a wonderful wintery landscape. Goldfinches, Chickadees, White-Breasted Nuthatches, Blue Jays, Cardinals, Juncos, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers have been regular visitors to our bird feeders and, in spite of the January rains, we have had many crisp sunny blue sky days. Word has it that the Groundhog saw his shadow and, surprising no one, we're in for six more weeks of winter. Hope that they are good ones for all of you.

Although the calendar and the thermometer proclaim that it is still winter, a lot of the activity at the OLA Board is very spring focussed. Plans are being made for a number of important initiatives in which we encourage participation by members of the Otty Lake Community. Please read on for a preview about some of them.

**Another 500 shrubs and small trees are available FREE** to Otty Lake shoreline property owners who want to increase their shoreline vegetation and help protect the health of Otty Lake (the cost for the plants will be covered by the OLA and RVCA's Shoreline Naturalization Program).

The 2010 Otty Lake Shoreline Planting Day will be Sat. May 1. For more information about the types of plants that are available, look for the plant descriptions on the OLA website at [www.ottylakeassociation.ca](http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca).

**To reserve plants please contact me at 613 264-9273 or [mkhunt@ripnet.com](mailto:mkhunt@ripnet.com).**

**You are invited!** During our lake planning process (with the assistance of some knowledgeable members of our community), we gathered a significant amount of information about many of the species of plants, animals and birds that live within the Otty Lake watershed. Now the Otty Lake Association, with the support of the BioBlitz Program and in partnership with the Community Stewardship Council of Lanark County and the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds, invite you and your family to participate in our first ever **24 hour Otty Lake BioBlitz. A BioBlitz has**

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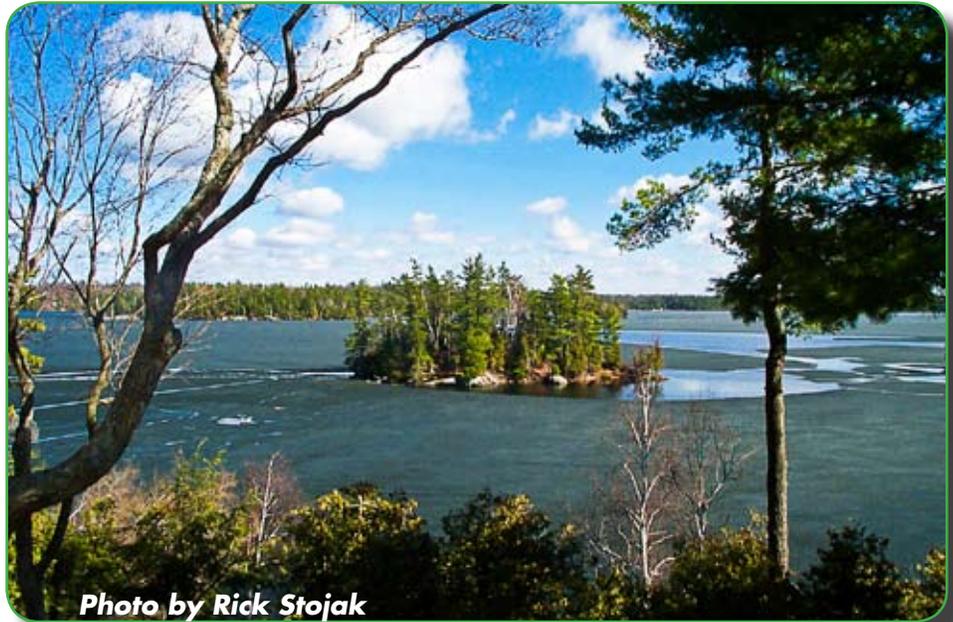


Photo by Rick Stojak

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# Lake Steward's Report

Murray Hunt

The lake may still be covered with ice, but we are planning our water quality measurement program for 2010. We will take the first set of phosphorous samples early in May.

## Nutrient Loading

Nutrient loading is a measure of the amount of nutrients such as phosphorous and nitrogen present in a lake. These nutrients originate from natural sources. Aquatic plants, fish and other species are dependent on these nutrients to survive in the lake. However, with human habitation there are additional man-made nutrient contributions to a lake. This is a factor that we monitor carefully as elevated levels of nutrient loading will encourage profuse algae blooms and excessive aquatic plant growth.

We are continuing our participation in the Lake Partner Program of the Ministry of the Environment to estimate nutrient levels in the lake. This is done by taking phosphorous samples and measuring water clarity, each month from May to October. Last year the average value of Total Phosphorous at Otty was 12.5 micrograms/litre ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ). This value is slightly below the average of 13.2  $\mu\text{g/L}$  of yearly sampling at Otty since 1996. This indicates that Otty Lake is in a mesotrophic (middle aged) state (10 – 20  $\mu\text{g/L}$ ). Please see the OLA website for historical data.

Despite the lower values of nutrient loading at Otty in 2009, there were algae blooms in the spring and early spring. The general consensus of the "experts" was that these algae are the types that form in the spring after ice-out. Their view is that the wet and cool "spring-like" weather conditions that persisted in the early part of last summer provided ideal conditions for these types of algae to grow. As algae blooms were present on most local lakes last year, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) has initiated a forum with other government agencies to respond to future algae blooms. They intend to provide communications material, make presentations and organize workshops to educate lake representatives.

## E.Coli Monitoring

Thirty E.Coli samples will be taken again this summer to obtain a general understanding of bacterial levels at Otty and McLaren Lakes. None of the samples taken in the past few years have exceeded the provincial standard for swimming. Please see the OLA website for historical data.

## Other monitoring

The OLA will continue to assist the RVCA in its water quality monitoring programs at Otty and McLaren Lakes. In addition to extensive nutrient and bacteria sampling, the RVCA conducts a number of specialized programs. These include dissolved oxygen/temperature profiles at the deep points of Otty and McLaren; monitoring for invasive species; and macroinvertebrate benthic monitoring. The latter is an analysis of the health of the lake by an examination of the aquatic insects and shellfish present near the shoreline. These programs all contribute to give us a greater understanding of the health of the Lake.

# McKay Farm Subdivision

The draft Plan of Subdivision for McKay Farm was approved by Lanark County on November 25, 2009.

Anne Scotton, as a private citizen and not as a member of the OLA Board, is submitting an appeal of the County's approval of the draft plan of subdivision to the Ontario Municipal Board. Although the OLA is not involved with this appeal in any way, we recognize that the matter is of interest to all OLA members. If you want more information, you may contact:

Anne Scotton (submitter of appeal)  
[ascotton@sympatico.ca](mailto:ascotton@sympatico.ca)

Mary Kirkham (Planning Approvals Administrator, Lanark County) 613 267-4200 Ext. 1520

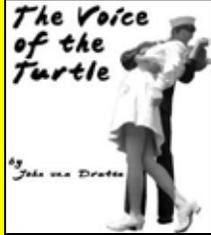
Stephan Katz (developer)  
[skatz@kwc-arch.com](mailto:skatz@kwc-arch.com)

  
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# Code of Practice for Anglers

Wally Robins

At the 2009 October Lake Links Workshop, Dr. Stephen Cooke of Carleton University spoke about the development of a Code of Practice for recreational anglers. This new initiative is designed to protect and enhance our fisheries. Various fishing organizations including local tournament series, groups like Muskies Canada, and recreational angling clubs are involved in this work.

Here are a few ways anglers on Otty can contribute to the spirit of this initiative:

## 1. Report trends and problems

Report observed issues and concerns to local authorities. In particular, notify MNR if you see illegal fishing occurring on Otty.

## 2. Practice Catch and Release or Selective Harvest

Certainly keep a few fish for the dinner table but do not keep larger specimens. A general rule of thumb to use on Otty is that bass over two pounds should be released. Odds are that fish larger than two pounds are females in or approaching their prime spawning potential. Keeping a three-pound bass kills not only that fish but as many as 7-10 years of future generations.

## 3. Get involved

Attend local meetings of Fisheries Management Councils (FMCs). These newly formed groups include MNR representatives, researchers and academics and recreational anglers. The work of FMCs is focussed on the long term health of our fisheries.

## 4. Use fish-friendly equipment

Rubber nets, barbless hooks and lures with fewer hooks are a few examples of how the recreational angler can make a difference to a fishery. The fishing industry also has specific hooks that virtually eliminate deeply hooked fish. Circle Hooks for example, hook fish by the jaw as opposed to in the throat.

## 5. Handle fish with care

Learn how to safely and quickly unhook and release fish. Have proper release tools like long nosed pliers, on board. Keep the duration of picture taking to a minimum. Never drag a fish around on a stringer then release it. Teach others, especially kids, how to safely unhook and release their catch.

# Importance of the Shoreline Buffer or 'The Ribbon of Life'

Andrea Klymko, Lake Planning/  
Shoreline Stewardship Technician,  
RVCA

The shoreline habitat extends from the water's edge to the upland areas along the shoreline. This area is commonly referred to as the "ribbon of life" because of the important role it plays in keeping the lake water clean and healthy, controlling erosion and providing important habitat to many plants and animals.

The protection and maintenance of a healthy shoreline with native trees and shrubs is important to every person that enjoys swimming, fishing or spending time at the lake.

What you can do:

## 1. Protect what is there

- Leave existing shoreline vegetation intact and natural...avoid clearing trees and shrubs and avoid mowing. Ensure proper setbacks of structures and development from the shoreline.

- Keep pollutants such as animal waste, pesticides, fertilizers and herbicides, fuels and oils, detergents, soaps, other household cleaners and garbage far away from the shoreline. Properly use and maintain your septic system, and have it inspected. Do your part to protect the lake's water quality.

## 2. Restore what is degraded

- The easiest way to establish a permanent strip of trees, shrubs, grasses and ground cover along your shoreline is to stop mowing. Plants such as wildflowers, small trees and shrubs will establish on

Con't. on Pg. #5

## OLA Board and Area Counsellors

For a list of Otty Lake Association Board Members and Area Counsellors, check the Web site at [www.ottylakeassociation.ca](http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca). Here you will also find up-to-date information on OLA activities, items of interest to Otty residents, newsletters, and lake related photos. Click CONTACT US on the home page to get information on contacting the OLA. We want to hear from you and welcome your photos depicting lake activities.

## Something to Bear in Mind

Wally Robins

In the past few years, there has been an increase in bear sightings around Otty Lake. This may be due to a corresponding increase in the black bear population or simply because local bears are roaming more broadly in search of food or denning locations.

As man and bears encounter each other more frequently we need to recognize both the benefits and risks this entails. It's exciting to see wild bears. These big, black clowns are always good for a few laughs. At the same time, they are extremely fast and powerful animals that present a very real danger to humans, especially if cubs are involved or if the animal is old or hurt and unable to forage easily. Bears can easily reach 30 mph for short distances. Olympic calibre athletes can't attain this speed. A bear can turn a 50 gallon steel drum into an unidentifiable piece of metal with a few blows. What they can do to a person is unimaginable.

Two years ago, it was reported that a family in one of Otty's subdivisions was leaving food out for a bear. While their intention was likely related to getting pictures of Bruno, their actions were extremely dangerous, jeopardizing adults, children and pets in the immediate neighbourhood. Like many animals, bears are fundamentally lazy when it comes to obtaining food. They stay close to a readily available food source. Feeding a bear is a disaster waiting to happen.

Providing food for a bear also threatens the animal. Nuisance bears are dealt with by MNR. If non-aggressive to humans, they are either live trapped or tranquilized and deported far away from human habitat. This is traumatic for the animal and could in some cases lead to its death. If a bear is assessed as being a dangerous animal, it is killed.

There are other ways to discourage visits from black bears. Buy or build bear proof garbage containers, or keep garbage inside until collection day. Don't put garbage out the night before pick-up. Keep pet and bird feed inside. Clean your BBQ after every use - bears love dirty BBQ units with all their tasty juices and tantalizing smells. If you clean fish or game, do so inside if possible. If not, thoroughly clean the area outside and dispose of the carcasses in a way that doesn't attract unwanted four legged visitors.

Bears have a right to exist, but they are not like the cartoon or movie characters, Yogi and Gentle Ben. Respect bears for what they are, a beautiful animal that can if provoked or encouraged, cause extensive property damage and serious injury or death to humans.



Photo courtesy flickr.com

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## Septic Re-inspection Update

Eric Kohlsmith, who is the Septic Inspector for the Mississippi-Rideau Septic System Office, has provided the Log with an update of last year's re-inspections. His office now does all re-inspections on Otty Lake, which includes approximately 425 shoreline properties. Each year a number of septic systems are re-inspected, starting with the oldest systems.

The part of Otty Lake that is in Tay Valley Township has a three-year re-inspection cycle; Otty was re-inspected

in 2008 and will be re-inspected again in 2011. The part of Otty Lake that is in Drummond/North Elmsley Township was re-inspected in 2009 and will be re-inspected again in 2010 (another 50 septic systems out of a D/NE total of 211 to be re-inspected).

In 2009, Eric's office re-inspected 62 Otty Lake properties that are in Drummond/North Elmsley. Of the 62 properties, 30 required no work (the good news), 30 required remedial work (the bad news), and one property

required replacement of the system. One property's re-inspection record was incomplete.

The health of Otty Lake depends on owners maintaining their septic systems, and the re-inspections may save individual owners thousands of dollars by identifying problems before they become really expensive to fix.

You can contact Eric Kohlsmith at 613 692-3571 ext. 1153 or [eric.kohlsmith@rvca.ca](mailto:eric.kohlsmith@rvca.ca).

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**been described as part contest, part social gathering, part educational event and part citizen-scientist endeavour, all rolled into one.** This will be a special opportunity to learn more about the plants and creatures with whom we share the Otty Lake Watershed. Members of the Otty lake community will be an important part of the 'search team'. With the assistance of some scientists and other experts in a 24 hour biological survey, community members will gather as much information as we can about all the species that can be found on an Otty Lake property that has a very diverse habitat and its adjacent waters.

Plans are unfolding for this interesting event. **Please mark 3 p.m. Sat. May 15th – 3 p.m. May 16th on your calendar.** Individuals can participate for the entire BioBlitz or a smaller portion of the 24 hour period.

**We will need help in many areas to carry out this undertaking – survey participants, group leaders, help with organization and set-up, registration, inputting the collected data, event promotion etc. If you are interested in participating in any aspect of this amazing opportunity, please contact me.**

**Members of the Otty Lake Community care about the health of Otty Lake.** We heard that frequently during the development of the Otty Lake Management Plan. Sometimes to assist in our caring we need good resource information. Last fall, members of the OLA Board had the opportunity to review a really excellent handbook that had been prepared for residents on a lake in the Gananoque River Watershed. It had information about nearly everything that a property owner might need to know while caring for a shoreline property. Topics in the handbook included: erosion, water sources, shorelines, septic systems, invasive species, wildlife, docks, Lyme's

disease and much more. We have been fortunate to receive approval to customize the material in the existing handbooks to meet the needs of the Otty Lake Community. We have also applied for a grant from the Cottage Life Environmental Program to cover the costs. This initiative will be a major undertaking but, if everything comes together, we are hoping to have the **Otty Lake Shoreline Binders** ready for distribution to Otty Lake property owners by the Area Counsellors this coming summer.

### **Who is the OLA and what do we stand for?**

Along with the spring and summer activity planning this is a question that members of the OLA Board have been challenged with this winter. A committee of OLA Board Members under the leadership of Linda Church is currently drafting revisions for the Constitution of the Otty Lake Association to bring that document into line with the Otty Lake Management Plan. The questions that I've asked above are critical to the Constitution and to our Association. If you would like to provide input to the work of this Committee, I would ask you to refer to the existing Constitution posted on the OLA website and send your comments along. If you do not have access to the website and would like a paper copy of the Constitution, please let me know. We are aiming to have a draft of the revised Constitution ready for review by the community in the June issue of Capt'n Otty's Log and a vote by the membership at the AGM on Sat. July 10.

If you have questions or comments that you would like to share with members of the OLA Board you can reach us at [ottylake@sympatico.ca](mailto:ottylake@sympatico.ca). You are also welcome to contact me directly at [mkhunt@ripnet.com](mailto:mkhunt@ripnet.com) or 613 264-9273.

Regards,  
Karen

*Shoreline Buffer con't. from Pg.#5*  
their own quickly and naturally.

- If you want to plant a natural buffer, and don't know where to start - get advice and assistance from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, through the Shoreline Naturalization Program (Contact Andrea Klymko 613 692 3571 or [andrea.klymko@rvca.ca](mailto:andrea.klymko@rvca.ca)) or the Rural Clean Water Program (Contact the Landowner Resource Centre 613 692 3571 or [info@lrconline.com](mailto:info@lrconline.com)). Incentive grants are available for this type of work.

### **3. Why The Ribbon of Life Works**

- Trees and shrubs around the lake provide shade and help regulate the temperature during the hot summer months. Cool water provides a better environment for spawning and survival of fish species.
- Tree and shrub roots, fallen leaves, branches, dead trees, and native aquatic vegetation are all important habitat for the fish and wildlife in the lake, providing a variety of places for aquatic wildlife to hide, breed and feed.
- Properties that slope towards the lake or have manicured lawns provide a direct route for runoff including contaminants and nutrients from soaps, lawn fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides, car and boat wash soap products, faulty septic runoff, and pet waste to enter the lake. This can result in excessive aquatic plant and algae growth. A buffer of trees and shrubs between your home or cottage and the lake will filter many of the chemicals, nutrients and sediments out of the runoff.
- A good buffer along your shoreline protects against increased erosion and sedimentation. The root system in the buffer works to hold together soil that would otherwise wash away and slow the impacts of heavy precipitation events, overland runoff, wave action and boat wake.

# Lake Links Workshop: An Eye Opener

Don Beattie and Murray Hunt

The 8th annual Lake Links Workshop on 24 October last fall was a gold mine of displays and information for everyone interested in being good stewards of our lakes. The Perth Legion hall was packed with cottagers, full-time lake residents, volunteers, and displays from SIXTEEN organizations, ranging from the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) to Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA)'s Septic System Re-Inspection Program.

Lynn Preston, from Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL) and formerly from RVCA, was the emcee, shepherding the crowd and introducing speakers with her traditional good humour. Expert speakers held the group's attention with five presentations and a panel discussion.

Dana Cruikshank, surface water scientist with Ministry of the Environment (MoE), gave a well-organized presentation about the Why, What, Where, When, and Who of water sampling. He also praised the Lake Partner Program, in which volunteers from Ontario lakes monitor total phosphorus and water clarity at more than 800 locations, providing data that can be used to detect long-term trends. Otty Lake is a participant (please see Murray Hunt's article in this issue of the Log).

Dana Cruikshank, Patrick Larson, water resources technician with RVCA and Gray Merriam, ecologist with Frontenac Stewardship Council, then held a panel discussion that included landfill seepage, carrying capacity, zebra mussels, and leaf raking beside the lakeshore (don't do it, the leaves have fungi that absorb nutrients that pollute the lake).

Eric Sager, Ecological Restoration

Program, Fleming College, reported on a 2008 study in the Kawartha Lakes, in which researchers found which measures were being used to control weeds, including biological and mechanical means. One encouraging sign that Dr. Sager mentioned is that in some locations Eurasian milfoil tended to die back after about 15 years.

Mike Yee, biologist with RVCA, spoke about Citizen Science Monitoring, which allows individuals to contribute to scientific knowledge by observing and reporting on the environment around us. The projects include Frog Watch, Plant Watch, Ice Watch, Worm Watch, and Turtle Tally! Not to disregard the sky above us, Mike also mentioned five bird observation programs, and BioBlitz, which OLA plans to promote this year.

Dr. Stephen Cook, professor of Environmental Science and Biology at Carleton University, spoke about angler and creel surveys, diaries, and logbooks. He also described a code of practice for recreational anglers (please see Wally Robins's article in this issue of the Log).

Anne Bendig, management biologist with MNR Kemptville District, described the Broadscale Assessment Program (BAP), which monitors fish in Ontario lakes. BAP will check fish in 255 lakes over five years. Otty Lake is not currently on the list, though Christie Lake will be surveyed in 2010.

Cam McCauley, Frontenac Stewardship Coordinator, Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), described how MNR assess fish communities to evaluate new regulations, evaluate



Lynn Preston and Wally Robins conferring at Lake Links

habitat restoration, and support research.

The presentations contained a wealth of information. The PowerPoint slides of each presentation are at [http://www.rvca.ca/programs/LMP Program/lake\\_links.html](http://www.rvca.ca/programs/LMP Program/lake_links.html).

## Register now to receive your free native plants for spring 2010 shoreline planting

Provided by the Otty Lake Association in partnership with the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA)

Plants must be picked up between 10 a.m. – 12 noon on Sat. May 1, 2010

Andrea Klymko (RVCA) will be available from 11a.m. -12 noon on May 1st to answer questions and provide information on the planting and maintenance of shoreline plants.

Varieties available for 2010 include:

Gray Dogwood, Red Osier Dogwood, High Bush Cranberry, Nanny Berry, Pussy Willow, Sweetgale, Alternate Leaf Dogwood, Black Elderberry, Silky Dogwood

Numbers are limited – reserve your plants now!

Call 613 264-9273 or email [mkhunt@ripnet.com](mailto:mkhunt@ripnet.com)

## From the Well

Phil Anderson

After last year's presentation on wells and well water at the annual general meeting, my wife and I made a commitment to test our well water. We picked up three test bottles, which were conveniently available at the door after the meeting. Thinking back, it has only been 29 years since it was last checked. We had taken a bottle away at a previous meeting but it just ended up in a box somewhere.

Last summer was a great time to do the testing because it is best done after a heavy rain or snowmelt and there certainly was a lot of heavy rain last summer. It also should be done three consecutive times with samples taken one to three weeks apart. We found it easier to fill out the form in advance and have it near our door. When heading towards Smiths Falls we would fill the bottle (to the line on the bottle) and drop it off at the Health Unit on Abbott Street. The Health Unit is easy to find: it's next to the Home Hardware. The door is on the side of the building, and inside on the left there is a fridge in which to put the sample with the filled-out form wrapped around it. The sample should be kept cold. More bottles are available at the Health Unit.

I must admit that the first time did not go "well". Because the form was filled out in advance the collection date was forgotten and the form was returned in the mail with an "Unsuitable for testing" sticker on it. This did not deter us and the next three tests went "well". The forms were returned with a check mark in the box to indicate "No significant evidence of bacterial contamination".

Somehow that does not seem to be enough and now we are researching water-testing packages from the Well Wise Centre:

## Participate in the 2010 Pitch-In Program – April 19- 25

Individuals and neighbourhood groups around the lake are once again invited to "Pitch - In" and help to clean up the roadsides and ditches of the debris that will emerge from under the ice and snow. April 19-25 has been identified as the 2010 Pitch-In Week. The Otty Lake community has done a terrific job of responding to this challenge over the last several years. Tay Valley and Drummond/North Elmsley Townships have been asked to again support this initiative and accept the results of your roadside pick-up for free at their landfill sites provided you use the Pitch-In Program bags in D/NE or the bagtags available at the TVT Municipal Office.

### Shoreline Clean-Up

If your shoreline is still frozen in during the official Pitch-In Week, permanent and seasonal residents are encouraged to apply those same spring cleaning efforts to the Otty Lake shoreline over the following weeks and collect the debris that has washed up on your shore.

[www.wellwise.ca](http://www.wellwise.ca)

5331 Main Street, Unit 2  
Phone 905-697-9011  
Orono, Ontario  
Fax 905-983-9941  
LOB 1M0

The information below is available on the website or the Well Wise Centre pamphlet.

1) Rural Well Owner \$50.00

"Most popular, good general chemistry package"

This package offers well owners the best value for testing their well water for pH, turbidity, nitrate N, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, calcium, chloride, sulphate, electrical conductivity, bicarbonate, sodium, total dissolved solids, hardness, zinc, manganese, copper, iron boron, silicon and lead. Many of these parameters should be tested annually.

2) Metals,  
Minerals and  
Salts \$130.00

"More detailed general chemistry, deep well should be screened for these impurities."

This package tests more than 40 parameters. It provides well owners with a detailed understanding of impurities that may be in the water because of rock or surrounding land uses. This package assesses the same parameters as the Rural Well Owner package and also includes many heavy metals. A comprehensive list of the parameters assessed is posted on line.

All packages are couriered to your home, and picked up from your home and brought to the lab. Shipping cost, taxes and administration are added on top of the prices listed above.

### TELL YOUR FRIENDS

*Have you encountered something beautiful, unusual, fascinating, scary, or hilarious on Otty Lake? If so, please contact the Log editor or anyone on the Otty Lake Association board (please see [www.ottylakeassociation.ca](http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca) for contact information). If you have photographs, so much the better! We are always looking for articles, stories, and photos, so please share them with us.*



50 blocks of ice were cut by Jesse Boyd, Mike Avery and Andrew Rivington



Cheerleaders



Youngest visitor Summer Sullivan, with mother Kara Turner

## Otty Lake Winterlude's 10th Anniversary

Don Beattie

For the 10th year, at the Otty Lake Winterlude games on Saturday 6 February, competition between North Shore and South Shore opponents was just as heated as any at Whistler. Patty Boyd, Mike Avery, Jesse Boyd, Andrew and Marsha Rivington, the Manions, the St.-Jeans, and Robin Kennie put together another memorable day. Starting Friday night, at the adult party at which Dennis Staples and the Doherty Brothers provided live music, every dubious effort was made by the North Shore teams to hamper the South's chances on Saturday.

The family event the next day featured serious athletic competition (if you can call throwing a frozen duck serious). The all-star North and South teams ran neck-and-neck in a series of Otty-unique competitions, including the Ice Block Relay, the Turkey Curl (using a frozen duck as a curling stone, turkeys being too heavy for kids to throw), the Tug of War, and the traditional Three-Legged Race.

Ice-block inukshuks, 2.5 metres tall, lit at night by Olympic red and white lights, welcomed nearly 100 people from as far away as New York's Jake Dunn who came specifically to attend. For 10-month-old Summer Sullivan, the youngest visitor, this year's Winterlude was just the beginning.

A big THANKS to all the organizers for another excellent event.



Rob Beaudoin operating the custom-designed hamburger oven