



# CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG

OTTY LAKE ASSOCIATION • JULY 2019

## President's Message

from  
*Reid Kilburn*



Find Spring to be such a colourful time of year and I look forward to greeting nature as it wakes up and bursts into life, including the resilient beaver, who like us is surveying his home/cottage and preparing for summer. From all reports Otty has wintered relatively well and the familiar sounds of people enjoying time on and around the lake are returning.

For others living on water in Eastern Ontario and beyond, Spring has not been so welcoming. The Otty Lake Association understands the impacts nature and humans can have on a lake and we have already started our 2019 physical and chemical limnology measurement program. A special shout-out to our Lake Steward, RVCA, our other partners and our volunteers who make this happen. We are fortunate on Otty to have relatively stable water levels and somewhat predictable conditions. Our water level was slightly higher than normal this spring due in part to the reported 70 cm of ice on the lake this past winter. Ice-out this year was April 20th.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the OLA Annual General Meeting at the Perth Legion on Sunday, July 14. Please come out and participate. Remember that this is your association - coffee and displays at 1:00 p.m. followed by the Business Meeting at 2:00 p.m. Over the last few months, members of the Otty Lake Association Board have been working on revisions to the Otty Lake Association Constitution. A potential change is included in this issue of Captain Otty's Log for your consid-

eration. Please take the time to read through the material carefully and contact the lake association with any questions or comments. At the AGM, the membership will be asked to vote on the revision.

The guest speaker at the AGM will be Tobi Kiesewalter, Acting Learning and Discovery Program Coordinator, Ontario Parks. We are pleased to have Tobi speak once again and we are so fortunate to have a Provincial Park with all that it has to offer on our doorstep.

As the water levels of Otty ebb and flow, one could argue so do our politics. The Otty Lake Association's many partners including, for example, our two townships, Tay Valley and Drummond/North Elmsley; Rideau Valley Conservation Authority; Ministry of Natural Resources, Forestry and the Environment; and the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit are all experiencing budgetary pressure, program pressure and in some cases organizational pressure. The Otty Lake Association is an active organization that focuses its energy on water testing, education and conservation. Our ability to deliver the quality programs is very dependent on our partners. Please take every opportunity to be informed of pending change and give thought to how some changes could impact how we manage our lake. Your voice matters. We are protecting our lake for future generations.

Judging from the water traffic the boat launch has been busy, and we have seen a few kayaks and canoes already. Just a reminder to practice safe boating guidelines, respect the legal speed limits and above all consider our fragile shoreline - watch your wake!

The Otty Lake Association is an enthusiastic and active organization



Photo: Len Modderman

guided by a lake management plan facilitated in part by your input. Association presence on Otty dates back to the 1930's. Think about it, in a few years we will be celebrating 90 years of community effort to protect, educate and promote safe recreation on this beautiful lake. A few weeks ago we reached out to you in our efforts to find the next President of the Otty Lake Association. I have enjoyed my four years leading this prestigious organization but I must move on. If anyone is still pondering our request and would like to chat further please feel free to give me a call. As a fellow President of another Lake Association once said to me, the most elusive of titles in any volunteer organization is that of immediate Past President.

Enjoy the summer and see you at the AGM.

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# PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE OLA BY-LAWS

At the OLA Board meeting held on May 11, 2019, an amendment to our Constitution and By-Laws was approved for presentation at the AGM.

The OLA Constitution and By-Laws state that "Proposed amendments to this By-Law must be submitted in writing to the Members at least two weeks before the meeting of Members at which they are to be considered. Their adoption will require a two thirds majority vote of the votes cast at the meeting."

The Annual General Meeting, at which Members will be asked to vote on the amendment will be held on Sun July 14th at 2 p.m. Via this Newsletter, we are advising all members at least two weeks prior to that meeting.

Currently, under Article 5 – The Board of Directors, the By-Law states:

- 1. The affairs of the Association shall be managed by a board composed of 15 directors, 14 of whom shall be elected by the voting members of the Association and one will be the immediate Past President.

The recommended change would state:

- 1. The affairs of the Association shall be managed by a Board composed of a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 members one of whom will be the immediate Past President and the remaining being elected by the voting members of the Association. Directors must be members in good standing of the Association.

Please come to the AGM prepared to vote on this change.

## OTTY LAKE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

The Otty Lake Association's Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, July 14th at the Perth Legion, 26 Beckwith St. E. We hope to see you all there!

The doors will be open at 1 p.m. for you to visit the various display booths. They will be set up until 2 p.m. when the meeting will begin. Some of the booths which will be awaiting your visit are:

- Murphy's Point Provincial Park
- OLA table with information about RVCA's Tay River Subwatershed Report, RVCA's Shoreline Naturalization Program, invasive species information, water quality information provided by Watersheds Canada, opportunity to order OLA clothing
- Tay Valley Township
- Drummond/North Elmsley Township
- PaddlePower

The meeting will begin at 2 and finish by 4 p.m. The usual necessary business will be conducted, followed by our keynote speaker, Tobi Kiesewalter, Acting Learning and Discovery Program Coordinator, Ontario Parks. Tobi will be talking to us about Citizen Science and Biodiversity. Those of you who attended our AGM in 2017 will remember Tobi's very interesting talk about Steve, the Grey Ratsnake.

If, at the time of the AGM, you have not paid your OLA membership (\$20), you will be able to do so at the door. A current OLA membership provides AGM participants with voting privileges. You can also submit your payment when you are visited by your Area Counsellor.

Looking forward to seeing you there!





## USE INATURALIST TO SHARE PLANT AND WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

Many of our neighbours around Otty Lake post some lovely photos of plants and wildlife that they observe. Now, you can easily keep a record of all your observations and contribute to a growing body of knowledge.

To do this, simply sign up for an account on [iNaturalist.ca](https://www.inaturalist.ca). It is free, and easy to use. You will create a record of all your sightings that you wish to document along with any photos you wish to upload. Simply click on the "Sign Up" icon on the main page and you are on your way. There is also a free app for your phone that allows you to observe species even without cellular data or WiFi. You will create a unique user id that can still preserve your privacy.

iNaturalist.ca is overseen in Canada by the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF) and the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) but is part of an international network.

The OLA had been attempting to capture data about Gray Ratsnakes and record the sightings. Rather than trying to coordinate the data, we have chosen to use [iNaturalist.ca](https://www.inaturalist.ca) to record and archive the observations. Therefore, you no longer have to send these along to the OLA email address to report any sightings. Simply make an observation on your iNaturalist account and it can be seen by anyone who chooses to see the observation. If you wish, you can collect all the sightings easily by defining a geographic area or species or observations by select groups of people. Feel free to add any older observations.

This works for any species of plant or animal and not just for the Gray Ratsnakes. The larger community can help you identify plants or animals that you are not sure about. You can also integrate with Facebook and Twitter if you wish.

Log onto the website and have a look around! You are sure to be



*A gray ratsnake at the 2017 OLA Picnic*

impressed with the breadth of data that is available from others just like you.

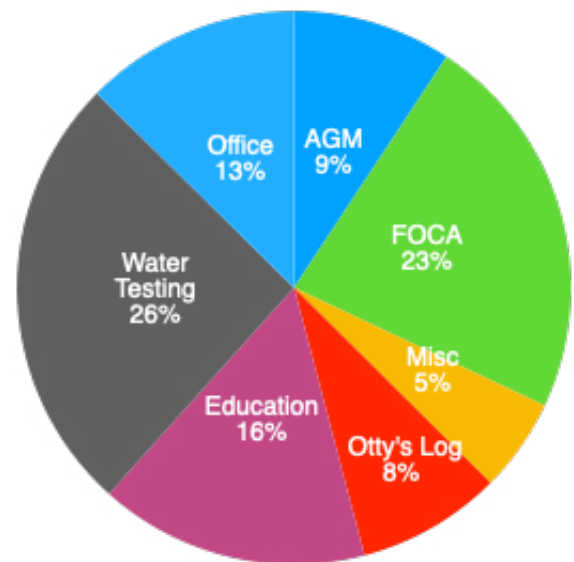
## HOW ARE YOUR OLA DUES SPENT?

As you can see from the chart, the largest expenditures of the Otty Lake Association in 2018 were water testing, FOCA dues and education. Office expenditures (consisting mainly of post office box rental and website costs) and AGM expenditures round out most of the other spending. What is obvious from the chart is that we have cut the expenditures related to Capt. Otty's Log significantly by e-mailing it to most of the residents. Below is a brief explanation of what is covered in each of these categories:

**Water Testing.** This was the number 1 concern of lake residents. The testing includes approximately weekly measurement of water levels, flow rates in Jebbs Creek (the outlet for Otty), ice in/out dates and 58 E. coli samples over the course of the summer.

**FOCA dues.** The OLA is a member of the [Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations](https://www.fo.ca/). FOCA represents more than 500 lake associations and provides educational materials and government representations. Because the OLA is a member association, OLA members are entitled to access FOCA services directly, such as the members-only portions of their website and access to discounts for various products including insurance and Cottage Life Magazine.

**Education.** Included in Education are the various seminars put on by the OLA (such as the Bear Aware, radon gas, and area counsellor information sessions) and the production and distribution of the spring information packages available to all residents.



For the small price of \$20 per year, you get access to all this plus the ability to pick up plants at reduced cost every year that we offer the shoreline planting program. The cost of the plants to OLA member residents is subsidized annually by the OLA.

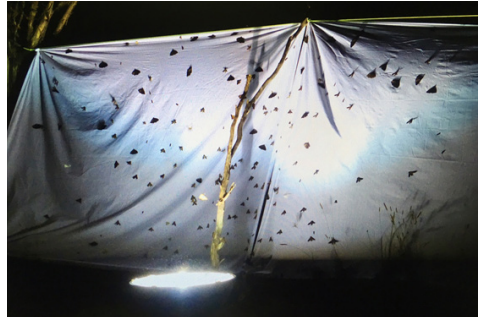
# THE BEAUTY OF MOTHS

Many of us particularly enjoy “getting back to nature” and we each have our own activities to enjoy the great variety of natural life. For some it is listening to and watching birds: the loons, the hummingbirds at our feeders, the migrating geese, the wild turkeys that forage across our backyards, and those red eyed vireos that sing more than 10,000 songs a day! For others it is the spring progression of wildflowers, identifying butterflies and dragonflies, catching fish, or watching the antics of chipmunks, or snakes devouring their prey.

However, I would like to encourage you to check out some of our beautiful nocturnal wildlife that typically goes quite unnoticed, the moths! This is one of those projects that is wonderful if shared with your children or grandchildren, but even delightful to expand your own enjoyment of cottage life. Do you know that there are about 160,000 species of moths on the planet, and interestingly only about 15,000 species of butterflies? Usually we only see a few flitting around our outdoor lights, but here is how you can attract many different varieties of moths, and see them up close, and still enough to see their remarkable shapes, colours and sizes and even photograph and identify them.

What you will need: A large, preferably old, white double bed sheet, some rope for a clothes line, a portable bright electric light on a cable, and possibly some plastic pill containers or glass jam jars to catch them in.

Setup: Find a good spot on your cottage lot that has several large trees, and string up the rope between two trees, like a clothesline, so that it is high enough that the sheet, when attached, just touches the ground (see figure 1). When it is dark, arrange the electric light so that it illuminates the entire sheet and wait for the moths to arrive. If you have one of those very bright battery powered portable lights it often helps to bring down more moths that happen to be flying by overhead, if you direct its beam



*Figure 1. Showing the sheet(s) hung up on a clothesline and illuminated with a bright light to attract the moths. Some of the moths have very drab colouration so that they are quite camouflaged when they rest on the bark of a tree, but occasionally they might have bright hind wings, such as the underwing moths, that are revealed only when they open their wings (see Figure 2).*

vertically up in the sky in front of the sheet. Since nearly all insects including moths see ultraviolet light, you can also use a black light obtainable from most hardware stores to place behind the sheet, which may bring in other species. Some moth enthusiasts also make up a sugary concoction, often referred to as “goop”, which they paint on the bark of a nearby tree to attract nectar-feeding moths. The recipes vary considerably, but a common one combines in a blender, a soft banana, a scoop of brown sugar, a dollop of molasses and a couple of ounces of beer (make sure you drink the rest of the bottle to also enjoy the process!).

In our area you may get to see the giant and incredible beautiful luna moth, which, if you look carefully, has a pattern along the top of its forewings that looks remarkably like a tree branch, complete with buds. Then when it opens its hind wings, two compelling eye spots appear which when they are suddenly flashed, scare off predatory birds (see figure 3).

Leckie is an excellent book to help you identify some of the moths you find. Likewise the website <http://www.insectidentification.org/butterflies-and-moths.asp> is one of many websites that is helpful.

Good hunting, and send in pictures if you find something rare. Please remember to practice catch and release!

Barrie Frost



*Figure 2: Yellow banded underwing caught on Opeongo Point showing moth with folded wings which makes them very difficult to see when on tree bark, and below with wings open revealing distinctively coloured hind-wing pattern.*



*Figure 3: Luna moth also caught on Opeongo Point showing branch and bud pattern on leading edge of forewings and eye spots on hind wings.*

*Note: This story originally appeared in the Eagle Lake Property Owners Association newsletter of June 2017. Barrie, who passed away last fall, was a respected Queen's neuro-physiologist and in retirement travelled to Australia and New Zealand each winter to study a certain migratory moth.*



## OTTY LAKE PICNIC AUGUST 17

The Otty Lake Association will host a fun-filled picnic on Saturday, August 17th beginning at 12 p.m., immediately following PaddlePower!

This community picnic is open to families and friends of Otty, in hopes that we can all gather and enjoy some time together at the edge of our beautiful lake. A variety of games will be available to play. This will be a great opportunity for us all to meet and enjoy our lake together from the shores at the Maple Glen boat launch.

If you are taking part in PaddlePower, you might want to pack your picnic basket in your canoe or kayak so you can head to the boat launch

immediately afterwards. Alternatively, you could consider launching from the picnic area for PaddlePower and returning there afterwards. Please note that there is limited parking at the picnic area.

We would like to leave the site in even better condition than we find it, so please be prepared to pack out what you bring and consider reusable plates and water bottles instead of disposable options.

If you have any fun games you would like to make available for everyone to use at the picnic, please feel free to bring them with you. Please

contact Kyla at [ottylakeloonsurvey@ottylakeassociation.com](mailto:ottylakeloonsurvey@ottylakeassociation.com) if you have any questions!

### Details for the 2019 Otty Lake Community Picnic

#### Where

- Maple Glen boat launch

#### When

- Saturday, August 17th from noon-2 p.m., immediately following Paddlepower

#### Who

- Families and friends of the Otty Lake Association

#### To bring

- Picnic food for you and yours, chairs/blanket

*Kyla Haley*

## LOON SURVEY 2019



Photo: Terry Crabe

The goal of the loon survey is to establish the number of nesting pairs that make their home on Otty Lake. For many years, loon observations for Otty Lake have been submitted to Bird Studies Canada for their Canadian Lakes Loon Survey. Recently (for the past three years) we've recorded hundreds of observations and have used Google My Maps to collect the data visually to make a best guess at the number of pairs on Otty (See link below for last year's map). Our best guess for nesting pairs each of the past three years has been five pairs. At the north end of the lake, we have two confirmed nesting pairs that consistently return to the

same location each year. In fact, one of these pairs was first spotted this year the day after ice-out! At the south end of the lake, we have less information.

This year, we're looking to recruit interested residents/cottagers located mid-lake, on Little Otty, or

in the south who could help us with observations in these areas. Observations need to be made and submitted only once per month. The data you help gather by recording your loon observations (an observation tool would be provided!) will help us be able to differentiate between resident pairs, resident singles, and day-trip visitors who come for the fish! If participating in this way appeals to you, please don't hesitate to contact Kyla at [ottylakeloonsurvey@gmail.com](mailto:ottylakeloonsurvey@gmail.com) for more information or if you have questions!

By the time this edition of the log is published, the loons should be nesting. Times are tough for loons in our area of the country, with docu-

mented decreases in the hatching/survival rates of young. Our own five pairs of loons have successfully hatched and raised only one baby in the last three years. Let's all cross our fingers that 2019 is a productive one for the loons on our lake. If you'd like some ideas on how you can help our loons be as successful as possible, please see the Birds Canada link below. Thank you and enjoy those beautiful birds (from afar!).

Links:

Otty Lake Loon Survey Map 2018 – (hover your mouse over the April/May/June title to see the legend for the coloured dots on the map)

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1AsteXK4z5uIk7lZRd-MZM0XeIUUnBVHap-&usp=sharing>

<https://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/cills/resources/Topsixwaysto-helploons.pdf>

<https://cottagelife.com/outdoors/loon-reproduction-is-on-the-decline-in-canada/>

*Kyla Haley*

## SHORELINE PLANTING PROGRAM 2019



Photo: Pam Weston

The OLA has once again offered shoreline plants to its residents this year, at a reduced rate thanks to our partnership with RVCA, and subsidization by the OLA.

There are many benefits to having a naturalized shoreline. For example, native trees and shrubs around the shoreline of the lake prevent erosion, provide essential habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife, improve water quality and shade the lake to regulate water temperature. For more information on the benefits of increasing the ribbon of life along your shoreline, please visit the OLA's website, <https://www.ottylakeassociation.ca/documents/ReportontheStateofOttyLake.pdf>, and read pages 59 to 64.

Plant sales were swift, and the 265 plants we offered were sold out in no time. Plants will be available for pick up on July 6th, at 183 Mile Point Rd. A representative from RVCA will be present to answer any questions about the plants being picked up. We sold three species of wildflowers (\$2 each), five species of shrubs (\$2 each) and four species of trees (free). Thanks to RVCA for ordering and picking up these plants from Ferguson Tree Nursery in Kemptville. We set a limit on the number of plants each household can order to ensure

as many residents benefit from the program as possible. Wire fencing will also be available to reduce browsing by wildlife and increase the plants' chances of survival. Since the OLA membership dues are subsidizing the cost of the plants, we ask that you join the OLA (\$20 annual membership fee) if you have not yet done so. We'll be happy to accept payment on plant pick up day. Thanks to the Shoreline Planting team – Karen Hunt, Rachel Roth, Linda Tock and Christine Kilburn.

## PITCH IN



Many thanks to residents who cleaned the roadsides during April's Pitch In campaign. Pictured here is John Byers with a load for the DNE landfill site.

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## ELEVATOR PITCH

Our area counsellors have been busy delivering the spring/summer information packages to the Otty Lake community, as well as updating contact information and collecting membership fees. The counsellors are sometimes asked what the OLA stands for. Here is the answer in a nutshell:

With roots in the 1930's the current Otty Lake Association (OLA), which celebrated its 40th Anniversary in 2018, has evolved into an incorporated proactive organization that advocates for the lake and its environment while promoting recreational safety.

The community-developed Otty Lake Management Plan was completed in 2008 and continues to guide us as we promote improved water quality and healthy shorelines. Our partner network supports a strong

lake stewardship program and the ability to implement large scale projects that address the priorities of our member surveys.

Key activities include:

- Water quality monitoring
- Fish habitat enhancement and monitoring
- Loon survey
- Shoreline planting
- Website management
- Annual State of the Lake Report
- Public awareness and educational programs e.g. Bear Awareness, Radon, Lyme Disease and Ticks, Spring Pitch- In Program, Shoreline Handbook
- Community activities e.g. Otty Lake Picnic

The OLA remains focused on enhancing the quality of life on the Lake

through education and advocacy. We are approaching 300 members. Check us out on [ottylakeassociation.ca](http://ottylakeassociation.ca).

Reid Kilburn

CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG is produced by the Otty Lake Association (OLA) three times a year, and is distributed by e-mail or Canada Post to all OLA members. Contributions to the Log are welcome.

Coordinator: Barb Hicks  
Proofing: Don Beattie  
Distribution: Robert Cosh, Shari and Don Beattie  
Layout and Design: David Bromley

To find out more about the OLA, or to see past issues, please see: [www.ottylakeassociation.ca](http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca). Or write to: The OLA, Box 20122, Perth ON K7H 3M6.



## Radon Presentation Hits a Nerve.

The April 1 presentation “Get the Facts on Radon”, organized by OLA board members Robert Cosh and Barb Hicks, and Cathy Franz (a new resident on the lake), was very popular, with approximately 100 area residents in attendance. On average, 19 per cent of homes in this region have a radon gas problem – one of the highest rates in the province. As a result of this interest, Dr. Stewart from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit submitted a proposal to Health Canada, and was awarded \$26,000 funding to increase awareness in our local area about the effects of radon, including November education sessions. Otty Lake resident Kyla Haley has agreed to be one of their community volunteers. The OLA is pleased to have played a role in getting the word out on this important topic.

## RVCA Otty Lake Catchment Report.

The RVCA produces individual reports for the 14 catchments in the Tay River subwatershed. These reports are produced every six years using data collected by the RVCA through its programs as well as local information provided by stakeholders. Otty Lake Association representatives were given the opportunity to review the report before its release. The catchment area includes Jebbs Creek and McLaren Lake. Some of the issues and challenges identified were waterfront development, pre-existing dwellings not conforming to current setback regulations, less than ideal rate of vegetated shoreline, vulnerable wetlands, and water quality. The report is available on the [RVCA website](#) and hard copies will be available at the AGM

## Cottage Succession Overview July

**7.** Sunday, July 7th, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. at the Perth Legion, estate planning lawyer Peter Lillico will explain how to keep the family in the family cottage. Says Lillico “It’s not lack of interest, capital gains tax or other financial pressures that result in most family cottages going up for sale, it’s a consequence of friction within the family that arises from sharing ownership and usage”. FOCA and the Lake Networking Group (LNG) are co-hosting the event, so it is free to LNG and FOCA members. Otherwise there is a \$10 charge at the door for non-members. Pre-register to [info@foca.on.ca](mailto:info@foca.on.ca) or call (705) 749-3622. This is a long standing FOCA project. DVD’s are available for sale through their [website](#).

**Lake Protection Workbook.** The LNG Planning Team has put the finishing touches on their Lake Protection Workbook - A Self-Assessment Tool for Shoreline Property Owners. This user-friendly workbook has 10 sections, each covering an area where the home owner can influence their actions to better protect their lake. Each section begins with an educational page on the topic, followed by a scoring page. Some of the topics covered are Lawns & Gardens, Shorelines and Wildlife. At the end of the workbook, there is a summary score page. The OLA Board will be discussing how to best use this Workbook among residents of Otty Lake.

**FOCA Achievement Award.** The White Lake Cottagers’ Association near Olden in Central Frontenac was presented with the 2018 FOCA Achievement Award at the 2019 FOCA AGM and Spring Seminar. This small but mighty group of just 45 members aims to keep the lake water clean enough to be used by the White Lake Fish Culture Station, an Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests (MNR) facility. Their association and volunteers have spent over 400 hours removing invasive phragmites from their lake. They are also very committed to preventing zebra mussels from entering the lake, and offer their own kayaks and canoes to visitors to minimize the risk. Their lake has been motor-free since 1977. Hear the [CBC radio interview](#) with Jim Rose, President of the Association, and his wife Joan Rose, Environmental Officer for their group that describes their other actions of the group to protect their lake. Congratulations, White Lake!

**Ontario Endangered Species Act under threat.** The Ontario Endangered Species Act is under threat. In early May the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Steve Clark, introduced omnibus Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act, which affects 13 pieces of legislation including the Conservation Authorities Act, the Planning Act and the Endangered Species Act. It quickly went to second reading. Says Ontario Nature, “These changes are sweeping and tantamount to having no Endangered Species Act at all”. Ontario organizations such as Ontario Nature, Leadnow, and Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative, were encouraging Ontarians to voice their concerns to their MPP. There are 243 amphibians, birds, fish, insects, mussels, mammals, plants, and reptiles are included on Ontario’s “species at risk” list.

**Membership Renewals.** By the end of May, 79 membership renewals have been received, and one new membership. Of these, 28 were by e-Transfer. Of the 79 renewals, two were from former Otty Lake residents who appreciate the work of the OLA and also wish to keep in touch. Each time a broadcast e-mail is sent out to our residents, there is a flurry of renewals. In past years, many renewals were received as a result of visits from Area Counsellors at this time of year. The other occasion of multiple renewals is at the AGM.



Photo: Sandra O'Brien

**The River Reed.** The RVCA has launched a new blog The River Reed that will focus on the people, projects and policies making our watershed a healthy, liveable place for people and wildlife. Tips for green waterfront living, inspiration from your neighbours, the recent floods, helping pollinators thrive, and waterfront development trends are examples of the types of posts. Follow along at [www.rvca.ca/blog](http://www.rvca.ca/blog). To subscribe, click on the envelope at the right end of the green bar.

**Area Counsellors Making the Rounds.** Area Counsellors began visiting each lake property during May and June. These dedicated volunteers provide a strong communication link between the Otty Lake Board and the residents within their neighbourhood. They will share a number of informative items, discuss current issues, assist with the collection of membership dues and welcome your questions and comments. If you were not reached and would appreciate a visit or phone call from your Area Counsellor, please contact [Gail Read](#).

**Save the Date for Lake Links.** This annual one-day workshop will be held on Saturday October 26th, 2019 at the Perth Civitan Hall.

# SPOT THESE WATER-SKIING AND TOWING RULES!

Time to review the regulations associated with towing with a boat or personal watercraft (PWC). These rules apply not only to water-skiing, but also to knee-boarding, wake-boarding, tubing and the towing of a person on any other device.

**Have a Spotter.** A spotter should observe the person being towed at all times, and watch for hand signals from the skier. The person driving the boat should only concentrate on driving,

**Extra Seat.** In case of an emergency, there should be a seat on the boat for the person being towed. So for water-skiing or other towing activities, a boat or PWC with room to seat at least three people is required.

**PFDs Needed.** The person being towed must wear a life jacket or personal flotation device (PFD). Note that a 'ski belt' is not an approved PFD.

**Swimmers Only.** All those being towed or spotting should be competent swimmers.

**Daylight Hours Only.** Towing in the dark is not only a scary idea, but is a criminal offense under the Criminal Code of Canada. Take caution to wrap up towing activities no later than one hour after sunset, and for early risers, to begin no earlier than sunrise.

**Remote Control.** The towing vessel cannot be operated by remote control.

**Taking Off and Dropping Off.** You can take off from shore at speed provided you head straight out. [Boat Smart Canada](#) recommends: "When 'dropping off' a water-skier at the dock, do not run parallel to the shore in shallow water. Keep your distance and let the person swing into shore. This will ensure the person being towed does not hit bottom or any underwater hazards."



Photo: Mary Elizabeth Wilson

**Fines.** There are fines associated with failing to observe these regulations. For example, the fine is \$250 for not having a spotter, \$250 for not having a seat for the person being towed, and \$200 for not having an approved PFD or lifejacket for everyone. See other boating fines in Transport Canada's [Safe Boating Guide](#).

These additional tips from [Boat Right Be Polite](#), a brochure from the Lake of Bays Association are worth noting:

- Keep well beyond the 30-metre limit to avoid swimmers and boaters near shore. Your wake is also damaging to docks, moored boats, the shoreline, and wildlife habitat.
- Don't swing your riders in front of other people's docks. Drop them outside the 30-metre limit or come in and out perpendicular to your dock.
- Avoid multiple runs in the same area. Vary your route.
- Keep a safe distance from other tow boats, which stop and turn unpredictably.
- Don't tow around canoes, kayaks, sailboats or small outboards. They may cross your rider's path, and your wake can capsize them.
- Concentrate! Most boating incidents are caused by operators not paying attention.
- Repeated runs in front of the

same residences can be annoying because of swells and noise. Vary your route frequently.

Water Ski and Wakeboard Canada has a [Boat Driving Safety](#) manual that gives specifics on communication signals, basic start, picking up a fallen participant, landing a participant and other more specific safety suggestions. Happy towing!

*Shannon and Barb Hicks*

