

CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG

Newsletter of the Otty Lake Association
June 1998

President's Report

Lorne Gold

This is a year of major changes for owners of lakeshore property. In addition to amalgamation of townships, the provincial government has downloaded many responsibilities onto municipal governments. Uncertainty about the financial implications of the new responsibilities has left us still in the dark regarding our taxes for this year. The former townships of North Elmsley and North Burgess are now Wards of the new townships of Drummond North Elmsley and Bathurst Burgess & Sherbrooke. Unified official plans and bylaws for the new townships have still to be prepared and it is my understanding that the bylaws of the former North Elmsley and North Burgess will apply until this is done. The townships will now carry greater responsibility for the management of development and use of Otty Lake, and for the application of environmental regulations. Clearly, it is in the interest of property owners to know about the changes that are taking place and to be prepared to take action to protect and enhance the quality of our lake. The Board of the Otty Lake Association is committed to keep you informed on what is happening.

Another change that will occur will be in the legislation covering the use of boats. The Canadian Coast Guard is to issue the new regulations in July. It is expected that there will be stronger regulations governing licensing of boats, age and qualification of operators, and safety requirements. We are in urgent need for someone to monitor this fast changing situation, including the requirements to qualify as a boat operator, particularly for young people. The Coast Guard will begin this summer the accrediting of courses that will be required to qualify as a boat operator. Let me or one of the Board members know if you can help us prepare for this new situation for our most popular summer activity.

I mentioned in our last Newsletter that a note on water levels would be distributed by the Area Counselors. It was decided to reproduce it in this Newsletter to ensure that every property owner on the lake would get a copy. We would greatly appreciate your comments and any information

you can provide to make it more complete. There will be an opportunity to discuss it at the AGM. The Environment and Health Committee is beginning a study of the factors that affect the water balance for the lake. The Board is still looking for individuals to serve on a small committee to look at, in particular, the effect of Jebb's Creek on water levels. For this committee, we would like two individuals concerned with high levels, two with low levels and two with the possible effect of the creek on water quality.

As you can tell from the above, we are in need of your strong support for the challenges that lie ahead. I strongly encourage you to contribute in any way you can to our efforts to keep Otty Lake a safe and healthy place for our recreation.

Have a most enjoyable summer.

Water Quality *Wendy Hassard*

As we are all concerned about the deteriorating quality of our lake water, cottage owners should be aware that to keep a septic system working well the tank needs to be pumped every 4-5 years, and more often for permanent homes. This allows inspection of your septic tank to make sure it is working effectively. Systems that work well lessen the strain on the quality of our lake water. Pumping services are listed in the yellow pages in the Perth & Ottawa phone books. One such service that some folks have used is the Perth and District Septic Service at 267-3350. The cost for a pumping is about \$85.00.

Why not get a group of your neighbors together and have everyone's tank pumped the same day? Some septic services will give group discounts so everyone saves money. You also have the comfort of knowing that all the septic systems along your stretch of shoreline are in good condition.



Loon Survey

Does the call of the loon bring visions of summer relaxation and contact with nature? Are you willing to contribute a small amount of time to recording the comings, goings and increases in population of the loons that make Otty Lake their summer home?

If so, please contact your Area Counselor or a Board member. We were unable to contribute to the national loon survey last year and would greatly like to be part of this worthwhile program this year.

LAKE HEALTH REPORT

Water Clarity and Phosphorus Levels

We have just received the results of water clarity (secchi disc) and phosphorus measurements for 1996 and 1997. These indicate that Otty Lake is "moderately enriched" re phosphorus levels.

	Secchi Disc Depth			Phosphorus Level		
	Max	Min	Mean	Max	Min	Mean
	Metres			Mg/litre		
1996	4.9	3.4	4.2	.036	.006	.021
1997	5.8	2.9	4.4	.014	.002	.008

Faecal Coliform Counts *Bill Schriever*

The regular water sampling for faecal coliform analysis carried out six times last summer at 22 stations around the lake was continued in 1997. There were slightly fewer readings exceeding 10 but still some very high readings mainly in the northeast part of the lake. It is too easy to conclude that this is a new trend, or a permanent improvement over the previous 25 year deterioration of the water. Our lake is certainly not drinking water, but to put things in context, beaches in Ottawa are closed if the figure reaches 100. Septic tanks must be inspected regularly to make sure they function properly: leaky tanks, particularly steel tanks, should be replaced.

Otty Lake Water Levels and Jebb's Creek

Jebb's Creek, the only outlet for Otty Lake, is about 4.5 km long and flows from the northeast end of the lake to the Tay River. For about 2/3 of its length, it passes through private property; for the remainder, through the Perth Wildlife Preserve on the Tay River, owned by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

There have been three periods with characteristic water levels since development began on Otty Lake. Prior to 1966, it was normal for water levels to be considerably lower than now. One property

owner reported that his father built a dock in the 1930s. When he was a boy in the 50s and 60s, there was always a beach beside it which was dry except in spring when it had a skim of water. A second individual recalls that in his youth it was not uncommon for Jebb's Creek to be dry at its outlet at the Tay River. He also remembers that Mud Lake at the south-west end of Otty Lake was regularly so low that it was impossible to go by boat to McLaren's Lake. There was a duck blind at the lower end of Mud Lake and in the fall it was possible to walk along the shore of the lake to the blind.

These conditions changed in 1966 when a dam was built at the outlet to Jebb's Creek. According to information in the files of the Otty Lake Association, this was to prevent ling fish from entering the lake. More than 4,000 fish were removed in 1966-67. Since the construction of the dam, the beach at the first individuals's dock has been under water continuously and the dock fully submerged for large parts of the year. It is now possible to cross Mud Lake with relatively large boats all summer. Ducks no longer feed in the fall at the lower end of the lake because the water is too deep. The duck blind, which could still be seen in the early 70s, has disappeared.

The second period is from 1966 until the removal of the dam in the fall of 1980. It appears to have caused higher average water levels that created difficulties for many property owners, including flooding of property and possible submergence of some waste disposal systems in low areas. In addition, it prevented the flushing action that was normal for Otty Lake in the spring, resulting in a build up of silt at the inlet to the creek, an increase in the biological demand in the lake and, ultimately, depletion of oxygen in the deep cool water of the lake. The deterioration in the health of the lake began to affect the fish population.

In response to this situation, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) and a cottager carried out an inspection of Jebb's Creek in the spring of 1980. A report, based on that inspection, recommended that the dam be taken out and accumulated debris, beaver dams and other obstructions removed to allow maximum flow in the spring. The dam had been very poorly constructed and it was suggested that a measure of control of lake levels might be obtained with a well designed and constructed dam that could be opened in the spring to allow a proper flushing

action. It also stated that a maximum effort by all trappers along Jebb's Creek was essential to prevent a rebuilding of beaver dams and feed beds.

At the Otty Lake Association 1980 AGM, authority was given to the Board to cooperate with the MNR to remove the dam and reestablish the natural flow of water in the creek. The MNR cleared the creek during the summer and the OLA removed the dam in the fall. The RVCA, in cooperation with MNR, conducted a twelve week major cleanup of the creek (November 1982 to February 1983) under the Federal/Provincial Job Creation Program. Because of the cost, no action was taken on the design and construction of a new dam.

The third period is from the removal of the dam to the present. Following the advice of the MNR and the RVCA, debris and obstructions have been removed periodically by concerned cottagers on a voluntary basis from the creek to maintain a natural flow.

In 1990, a verbal agreement was made with the RVCA for it to be responsible for clearing debris and opening beaver dams on Jebb's Creek from the bridge on the Rideau Ferry road to the Tay River, and the OLA to be responsible from the bridge to the lake. At the same time, the OLA Board decided to pay an individual to open beaver dams in its section of the creek, mainly because of the flooding of property that often occurred in the fall and early spring. This work has been done in cooperation with the RVCA and has been an item in the expenses report to the AGM since that time. Removal of debris from the lake to the bridge has been carried out irregularly on a volunteer basis by concerned property owners.

Water levels and flushing action for the lake have been more satisfactory since the removal of the dam, but the average water level did not return to the lower values that appeared to have existed prior to 1966. One reason may be an obstruction built into the creek during the construction of the bridge over the Rideau Ferry road. Details on changes to the creek bed at that time have still to be determined.

There is uncertainty, however, about the degree of control that the flow in Jebb's Creek has on lake levels. Because of the size of the lake and the normally low rate of flow through the creek, water levels are quite responsive to rainfall. In addition, it is possible that the rate at which water

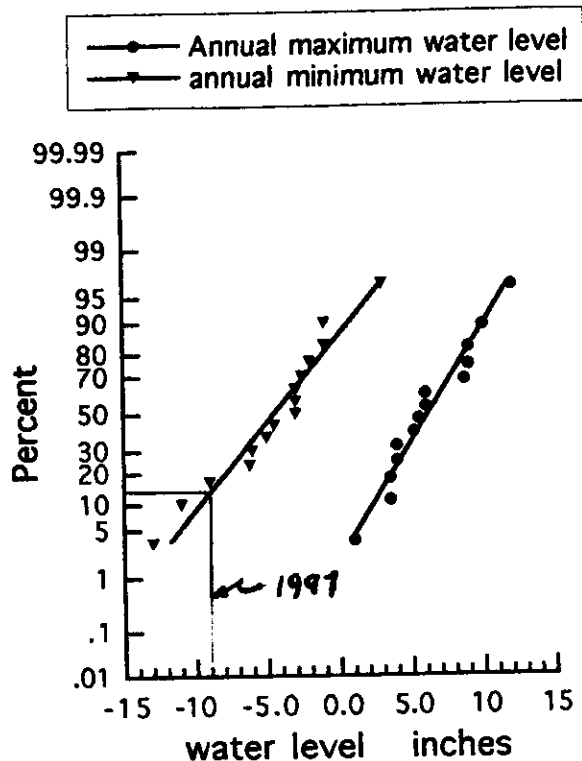
is lost through evaporation in warm, sunny weather is appreciably greater than the rate of loss through the creek for the same period. The flow through the creek, even when free of all obstacles, may not be sufficient to prevent high water levels in wet weather, and flow plus evaporation may cause unusually low levels in prolonged dry weather. The high water levels in the fall of 1996 and spring of 1997, and the low water levels in the summer of 1997, may be examples.

In early September 1996, debris was cleared from the creek and beaver dams were opened from the lake to the Rideau Valley Conservation Area. No activity was carried out by the RVCA. In spite of this work, by November 1996 the lake level was sufficiently high to cause flooding of some property. A concerned property owner determined that the flow of the creek appeared to be restricted by a beaver dam near the outlet of the creek into the Tay River. He obtained the approval of the RVCA to open the dam and this appeared to reestablish the flow and reduce the threat of flood damage. In the spring of 1997, the lake level was still high. By early June, it had dropped 6 " but was still 3 " above the normal July 1 level

The summer of 1997 was warm, with lower than normal rainfall in the Perth area, and higher than normal winds. Water levels during the summer were lower than had been experienced in recent years. The property owner with the dock built in the 1930s reported that 1997 was the first year since 1966 that the top of the dock was above water for much of the summer; the top of the dock was always well clear of the water in the 1950s. The beach near the dock which prior to 1966 would be dry for much of the summer was still covered by a few inches of water in 1997.

An analysis has been made of maximum and minimum water levels for Otty Lake for 1981 to 1997 (except for 1991, 1992 and 1993 for which readings were not available.). The result is shown on the graph. Readings for each year are plotted on a normal probability plot. The minimum water level for 1997 was -9" relative to a reference datum established before 1980. What the graph shows is that the changes in the maximum and minimum levels from one year to the next are what would be expected if they were controlled by natural processes. There is a probability of about 15% that the minimum water level for a summer would be the same as in 1997 or lower. There have been two occasions since 1981 when the minimum water level was lower than -9" (one year -11" and another -13 ").

OTTY LAKE
maximum and minimum water levels
Relative to Dave Code's reference
1981 - 1997
(1991, 1992, 1993 missing)



It is clear that there is still much to be learned about what affects the water levels for the lake, the relative importance of each effect and the extreme high and low levels that can be expected from time to time. The OLA Environment and Health Committee is giving attention to these questions.

This record has been prepared for discussion purposes. Corrections or additional information that would make it more complete would be very welcome. Names of those who may have first hand knowledge of earlier conditions for Otty Lake and Jebb's Creek, including photographs, would be greatly appreciated. If you have corrections, additions or names of possible sources of information, please submit these to
Lorne Gold 1903 Illinois Ave Ottawa ON K1H6W5
(613) 733-2449 Cottage (613) 267-7657

OUR TRILLIUM FOREVER Amy Pokorny

There should be songs about our lovely local drifts of trilliums. The commonest, most beautiful species is the Large-Flowered White Trillium (*T. grandiflorum*).

In southern Ontario and Quebec, it takes over our deciduous woods. Sometimes we happen on the occasional example of other species: the smaller, daintier Painted Trillium (*T. undulatum*); the Purple Trillium (*T. erectum*) which also goes by names such as Stinking Benjamin, Ill-scented Trillium and Squawroot; the Nodding Trillium with drooping, smaller blooms modestly part hidden by the leaves.

Trilliums grow from a tuber-like rhizome. Like other members of the lily family, the root (or bulb) is perennial and requires, after bloom, nourishment for the following year. This is built up from its leaves which don't die back until late summer and explains why picking a bouquet is absolutely destructive. The whorl of three leaves is so close to the bloom that you can't really pick the flowers without breaking off the whole stem. It is not unreasonable that trilliums and many other spring flowers are protected.

To establish a show of trilliums on your cottage site, you can either buy nursery plants or carefully collect seed yourself. Our white trillium seeds are ripe when the berry is purplish black or crimson. As the flower ages, it becomes pink.

Mutations of our prize white trillium occasionally occur; a plant with a green set of petals, another with stripes or more oblong leaves, or four petals and sepals.

The name *trillium* comes from the Latin via French - the parts of the plant (leaves, sepals & petals) come in threes (tres). Trilliums flourish by the thousands in rich deciduous woods, not well in acidic soil under pines. They bloom in May when the trees are leafing out. This means they would be happy among broad-leaved shrubs. Among my bushes, this has worked well for *liverwort*, *bloodroot* and *dutchman's breeches*.

FIRES AND WHAT TO DO

Residences on Otty Lake
for **FIRE EMERGENCY** calls, dial **267-2030**
and be ready to
provide the following information.
Your sign number
Your road or street name
Your municipality
Your telephone number

You should volunteer information if there are injuries or special needs. You will be asked for details as to the nature and extent of the fire.

The fire reporting number is included in a brochure *Protect Your Country Home or Cottage* which will be included with the next municipal tax bill.

Burning

As of the date of this newsletter, there is a complete **ban on outdoor fires** due to the dry conditions and the extreme flammability of the ground cover. This includes rock pits and outdoor fireplaces. The Fire Dept will publish updated information on the status of the ban in the local newspapers. A **fire permit** is necessary for all burning and must be obtained **BEFORE** burning. **Permits** may be obtained from the fire hall on Sherbrooke St, Perth; from Gary Pierman 267-5846 in Burgess; or from John Leeftang 267-4427 in Elmsley.

911 System The 911 system will be placed in operation in 1999. Until then, call the **267-2030** number from your lake location to get immediate response. To save time in an emergency, it is suggested that you post fire & police numbers & your location information, on or near your phone

WANTED: QUILTERS

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET TOGETHER WITH OTHER QUILTERS DURING YOUR HOLIDAY AT THE LAKE? WE COULD WORK ON OUR OWN PROJECTS, SHARE IDEAS, SWAP FABRIC SWATCHES OR JUST GET INSPIRED. IF INTERESTED, CONTACT VICKI HOUGH, 434 MARK ST, PETERBORO K9H1V9 or OTTY LAKE 267-4421 or e-mail VICKI E. HOUGH@pcbe.edu.ca

WILDLIFE AND THE ICE STORM

Small birds - no evidence of mortality due to the ice storm.

Game birds - *Hungarian partridge* (hun), introduced between the 20s and 40s, do well in the Perth area. The thick ice layer prevented scratching for weed seeds and grains and there is some concern. *Bob White* quail were common but were virtually wiped out after a severe ice storm in the 70s; being presently introduced. Also some concern; MNR would welcome reports of sightings. *Wild turkeys* were reintroduced to Lanark County; call MNR re sightings. *Ruffed grouse* feed on tree buds in winter; the ice melted from the trees within a week so grouse did fine.

Raptors - *Red-shouldered Hawks* require thick forest interior. Many large crowns were broken. Let MNR know of return to past known nesting areas.

Deer - no major impact

Mice and voles - Probably suffered but difficult to measure. Very important in the food chain.

Predators - Foxes and weasels rely heavily on mice and voles. Weasels expected to be hard hit.

Rabbits, squirrels - no detrimental effects

ICE BREAKUP ON OTTY LAKE

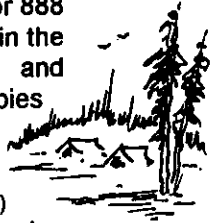
Early dates of ice breakup on Otty Lake for the period 1949-1973 (contributed by Bob Hassard from records kept by the Wood family who owned the Hassard property)

Average date: Apr 19 Earliest: Apr 6, 1968

Latest: May 3, 1972

ICE DAMAGE

Everyone suffered tree damage from the Jan 98 ice storm. You may be interested in Extension Notes on **CARING FOR ICE-DAMAGED TREES** (doc. # AGDEX 320), available from LandOwner Resource Centre, PO Box 599, 5524 Dickinson St, Manotick K4M1A5. You can visit or order it on www3.sympatico.ca/lrc. Tel. 613 692 2390 or 888 571 4636. We tried to get copies to include in the INFO PACKAGE but it is out of print and unavailable. Counselors have reference copies



CAMP WHISPERING PINES

Beth Peterkin (Scouts Canada, Rideau District)

G'day from your neighbours at Camp Whispering Pines! We are members of Scouts Canada and our camp is located at the south end of Otty Lake with access from North Burgess No. 5 (you've probably seen our signs). This is a wilderness camp on land leased from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

Whispering Pines was established by Rideau Lakes District many years ago and we have enjoyed excellent rapport with RVCA. Our District includes the geographic area from Merrickville in the east to Arden in the west and stretches from Perth to Westport. Our membership numbers change somewhat from year to year but average about 500 youth and adults. We have section programs for youth from 5 years to 26 years and yes, Scouting is co-ed!

Each of our groups has claimed 'ownership' of a particular campsite within the confines of Whispering Pines. We also have some visitor sites for Scouting groups from outside the District who join us for some events. Guiding groups have made use of the camp. The camp is equipped with a hand pump for water and several kybos (outhouses) but has no established buildings. We are careful not to damage the environment and work closely with RVCA to ensure that animal and plant life is not disturbed.

Like most of you, we sustained much ice storm damage. The camp was closed until damage could be assessed and cleanup completed to ensure safety. A combination of professional help with chain saws and many willing Scout members

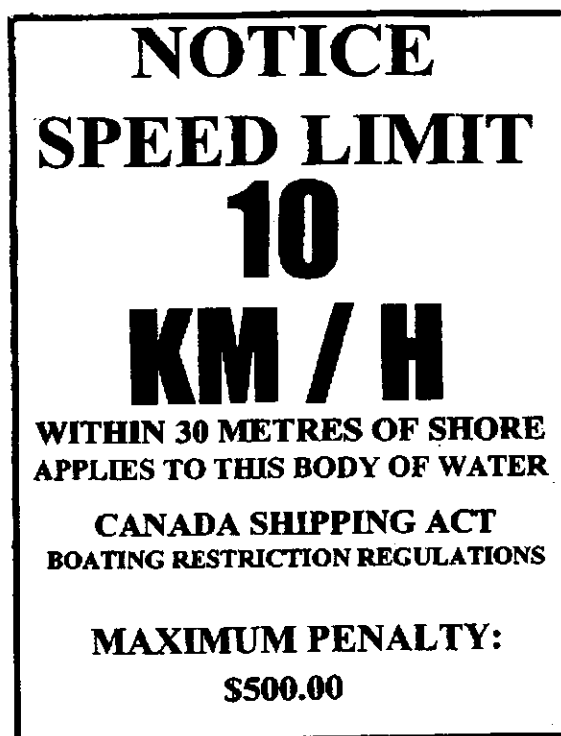
to remove broken limbs meant that our spring camps were able to go ahead. Many hands make light work.

Camp Whispering Pines brings back terrific memories. Many legends have developed over the years and maybe in future newsletters I will share the stories of Pocahontas' grave, the elusive whifflepoof, Charlie the raccoon, the black rat snake in the kybos, the mysterious black box from outer space...

Until then, let's be neighbourly, respect each others' property, take care of our beautiful lake and share information through our association and this newsletter. Have a great summer and wave when you see us on the lake!

SPEED SIGNS

In Ontario, official highway speed limit signs are black letters on white and can be posted only by government employees. FOCA's "Speed Limit Notices on the water" have black letters on white with a red border and red 10 KM/H directive. These may be posted by anyone on private property, docks, public launching ramps, marinas, etc. The signs are 25" x 19", with lettering clearly visible from passing boats, and look like this:



These waterproof, weatherproof signs are available @ \$8.50 + GST, postage & handling (\$4.00 for 1 to 4 signs) from: FOCA, 215 Moorish Road, Ste 101 Scarborough ON M1C1E9.

Tel 416 284 2305 FAX 416 284 7108

FEATHERS

HUMMING ALONG

Cathy Kari

The Hummingbird is one of the most amazing birds. While some birds such as kestrels can hover while flying into the wind, a hummingbird can remain in place as long as it wishes in still air by moving its wings in a figure 8 at very high speed with its body at about a 45 degree angle to the ground. The shoulder joint is extremely mobile and the wings move through 120 degrees with each wing beat, permitting the bird to generate lift during both forward and back strokes. On the forward stroke, the airspeed of the wing is increased because it is moving through air that has been pushed towards the rear by the previous backstroke.

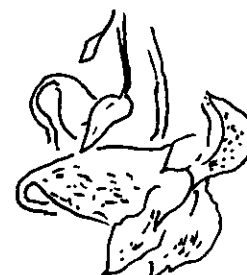
The only hummingbird likely to be spotted at Otty Lake is the **Ruby Throated Hummingbird**, named after the brilliant patch of red on the male. The throat of the female is white and both are metallic green on top. To best appreciate the colour is to see the birds in the sun when the green and red appear to flash. When you see one hover, try to count its wing beats. Better still, ask one of your children to try. If you could count that fast, you would find that the wings of a hovering hummingbird beat at about 52 times a second. When moving backwards, they beat at 61; when moving forward, at 75 times a second.

The Ruby Throat weighs very little, between 2 to 10 grams (.07 to .35 oz), has a very high metabolism rate (even when resting, 12 times that of a pigeon) and must consume its weight in nectar every day. When actively looking for food or nesting material, the metabolic rate rises 8 times and the bird is actually only a few hours away from death. Periods of bad weather threaten hummingbirds severely, even at their much lower resting metabolic rate.

These tiny birds eat insects, especially spiders, and nectar. They use spider silk in the construction of their nests. They can be attracted at Otty Lake by flowers such as *trumpet creeper*, *nasturtium*, *jewelweed*, *sage*, *bee balm*, *fuchsia*, *gladioli*, *columbine*, *petunias*, *larkspur*, *hollyhock*, *zinnia* and *morning glory*.



COLUMBINE



JEWELWEED OR
TOUCH-ME-NOT

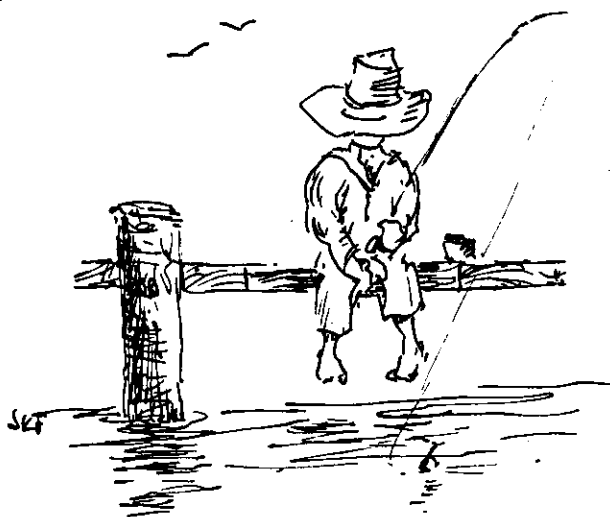
An inexpensive feeder available at hardware stores is even more bird-friendly and can help them during bad weather spells. Fill the feeder with a solution of one part sugar (not honey) to four parts preboiled water and store in the frig. Change the solution every 2-3 days, cleaning the feeder with warm water. If black mold appears, add a few grains of uncooked rice and rinse with vinegar. Place feeder in the open, preferably in the shade in hot weather. Birds will feed quite near if watchers remain quiet. Start feeding in May; males arrive before the females and migrate earlier in the fall, so don't stop feeding too soon.

NOTE An interesting pair of ducks visited Otty Lake in early spring - small, mostly white with black backs and heads with white patches behind the eyes. These were Buffleheads, enroute north to their breeding grounds



MEMBERSHIP Dick Atkinson (267-4587)

I would like to thank you for supporting the Association and to thank those who make my job easy by sending a fee cheque in the mail. With a cheque, the listing is readily kept up-to-date, accurate and easy to process to the treasurer. If you prefer, you may pay your fee at the AGM on July 11 or give your cheque to your Area Counselor. Between 4 and 10 newsletters are returned each mailing due to changed addresses. Please keep OLA in mind when you are sending your address changes.



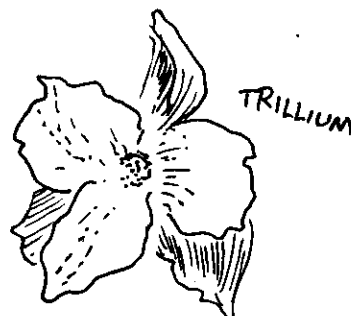
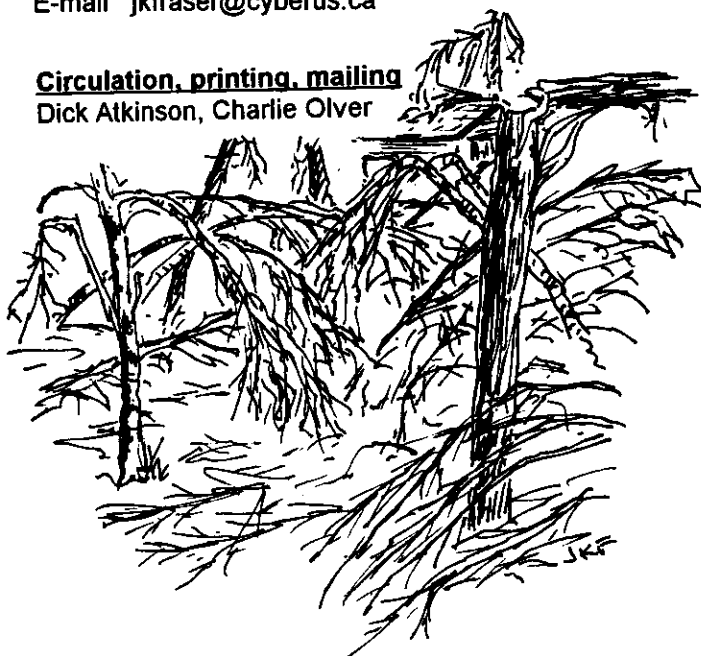
The mailing labels for this newsletter are current as of May 31. If your fee was sent after this, it won't show on your label. I have inserted a note with this newsletter if my records show that your 1998 fee has not yet been received. The computer checksum shows one less fee posted than received, so let me know if yours is the fee that wasn't posted.

I will make a membership report at the AGM and I look forward to answering any questions and receiving any suggestions you may have.



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1998 05 25 / RDA \otlboard.wpd

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Sub-Committee reporting to Environment and Health

Water quality, water levels, flow and effect of Jebbs Creek

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(Vacant)		(Vacant)
(Vacant)		(Vacant)
(Sub-Committee is currently being formed)		

(v) Communication and Education

Susan Code (C)	267-2595	Randie Fawcett	264-1976
3 - 2 Bolton Street	267-1399	Box 2070	
Perth K7H 2W1		Perth K7H 6M9	

Keith Fraser 728-3950

Charles Oliver	526-5090	Bernice Wanless	267-4690
9 Boone Cres	264-8772	R R # 5	
Ottawa K1V 9M5		Perth K7H 3C7	

(vi) Services

Chairperson (vacant)		Bob Ferguson	828-9610
		15 Dickson Street	267-6395
		Nepean K2H 7H6	

Eddie Edmundson	264-0395	Wendy Hassard	416-223-8027
R R # 3		Bob Hassard	267-2127
Perth K7H 3C5		67 Lurgan Drive	
		North York M2R 1K7	

(vii) Nomination

David Code (C)	722-0339	+ 2 Members at large
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