

CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG

Newsletter of the Otty Lake Association

June 2000

"Otty is one of the cleanest lakes in the region and we want to keep it that way"

PLAN TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING JULY 8

The Otty Lake Association AGM will take place on Saturday, July 8 at 9:30 AM upstairs in the Perth Library on Herriott Street. Members will have a chance to get up to date on lake activities and association work underway on their behalf. The Committee looks to the members for feedback and direction, so please join us for another informative meeting. Memberships and this year's new "OLA Info-Packs" will be available. To save costs, copies of the 1999 AGM minutes will NOT be available, so you might like to bring your copy with you.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *Brian Perkin*

The recent drinking water contamination tragedy in Walkerton underscores how fragile our water resources can be. It has raised a red flag on testing and reporting of water quality and jammed laboratories with thousands of samples from municipalities and individual well owners. Poor septic system, manure runoff and pesticides can be the culprits that endanger safe drinking water and cause damage to Ontario's lake and waterways.

The safe water quality theme will be echoed on other parts of this Newsletter with good reason. IN March, even before the Walkerton disaster, the OLA was considering ways to report information on water quality 'hot spots' that might appear during the annual summer water tests on the lake. Lorne Gold and the OLA Environment Committee have done an excellent job in maintaining annual test results, and with some 27 years of records, there may be enough history there to note when specific areas post abnormally poor water quality results.

Our lake is an ever-changing body of winds, waves and water and re-testing specific sites of concern may not produce the same results the next week or even the next day. But the information gives us some idea of what is happening along the 32 test sites on Otty Lake.

The OLA would like to know if members wish to be informed of abnormal test results in their areas. There are many questions to the issue. **What would constitute 'abnormal' results? Who should be notified? Who would do the notification? And what could be done to improve the water quality in any such area?** These are questions up for discussion at the AGM on July 8. Please give the questions some careful thought and consideration, and plan to attend. We look forward to your suggestions.

Captain Allen Otty, R.N. by Barbara J. Griffith

79 pp, illus, references, notes. Privately printed 1999.

"When the question 'Who was Captain Otty?' was posed in the Newsletter of the Otty Lake Association, I took up the challenge to tell his history. Now, over two years later, many pieces of the puzzle have fallen into place." Thus Barbara Griffith opens her introduction to her intriguing account of the active life of the enigmatic Captain Otty. Her research brings to life a man born in Yorkshire who spent 45 years in the service of the Royal Navy and died at 74 in New Brunswick. She tells the story superbly and her account of harsh military life and the development of settlement in eastern Canada in the early part of the 19th century, based on her research in British and Canadian archival sources and an extensive list of references, makes absorbing reading. The work includes copies of military documents pertaining to Allen Otty and a painting of the Captain.

According to the author, she made this study for her own enjoyment and as a contribution to local history. She has deposited copies locally in the Perth Museum, the Public Library and at Algonquin College. Though it was not intended to be sold, Barbara has intimated that if significant interest is shown, she will consider having it reprinted and made available for sale (tentatively @ \$25 plus postage). Those interested should contact the Newsletter editor, Keith Fraser, 571 Fraser Ave, Ottawa K2A2R3, 728-3950 or jkfraser@cyberus.ca.

There are presently two criteria for determining the rate schedule for Hydro service to rural area customers, including those who occupy shoreline properties on Otty Lake. The first is a question of whether or not the usage is seasonal or full-time. Obviously this has to be determined on an individual basis and then only on the initiative of the property owner. If your property is your principal all season residence but you are rated only 'seasonal', you should apply to Hydro for what they call 'Residential' status with consequent reduction in power costs.

The second criteria relates to the customer 'density' determination. Although everyone pays the same kwh energy costs, the monthly 'fixed' service charges for 'normal' density customers are appreciably higher than those imposed on the customers of 'high' density status ostensibly on the grounds that service to the former is more costly to Hydro. Since it appears that a few Otty Lake property owners have persuaded Hydro to accord them 'high' density rating whilst many others are still considered 'normal', we are pursuing with Hydro (now named Hydro One Networks Inc) how these matters are dealt with and will report further when our inquiries have progressed. In the meantime, Hydro One (which will continue to deliver power to us and make service charges even though as from another supplier) is coming under regulation of the Ontario Energy Board. We are urging the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA), of which we are a member, to make submissions on the density issue to the OEB in hearings which will shortly take place.

OTTY LAKE MAP

Our thanks to Guru Guruprasad for collecting and collating new municipal address information for a soon-to-be updated Otty Lake map. Guru did lots of 'back roads touring' to hunt down the information at considerable risk to his vehicle's transmission. We thank him for his detailed work and contributions as he steps aside from his Services Chair position. We invite anyone with a keen interest in mapping to come forward and help with the production of this popular map.

ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH *Lorne Gold*

Your Association has been monitoring the water quality of the lake for the past 27 years at 32 sites uniformly distributed around the shoreline of the lake. Normally, one or two water samples are taken at each station each month during the summer, for a total of 96 to sometimes more than 192 samples each year. The samples are delivered to a testing laboratory on the same day they are obtained, for measurement of the fecal count.

The fecal coliform count was the normal criterion for judging water quality at the time the program was started. Some time later, the e-coli coliform count became accepted as a more appropriate criterion. We were told however by people with knowledge of water testing that the fecal count is a good indicator of the e-coli level. It was decided to continue using the fecal count as a measure of the water quality in order to maintain continuity in the program. Public beaches in the Ottawa area were closed in the past when the fecal count persisted at a value above 100 counts per ml. The same criterion is used now for the e-coli count.

We have now finished the first phase of the analysis of the measurements made for Otty Lake. This involved calculating the average fecal coliform count at each testing station for each year. This average is what is called the geometric mean, obtained by a calculation procedure that is appropriate for measurements that vary from 0 to more than 100. For this report, the average fecal count for the stations for the summer were added together and the total divided by the number of stations (32) to obtain the average summer value for the lake. The result is shown in *Figure 1*

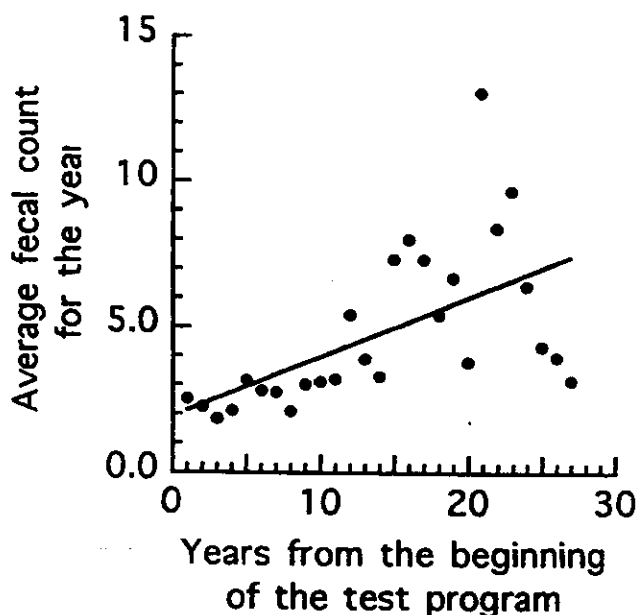


FIGURE 1

It can be seen that there has been a general increase in the average summer fecal count for the lake over the past 27 years. The line through the summer average values indicates the average rate of this increase. With the increase in the average summer values, there is an increase in the variability of individual summer averages. During the past seven years, it has varied from a high of about 13 counts to a low to about 3 counts per ml.

Practically all of the average summer fecal counts are less than one tenth of the value that is considered unsafe. Otty is one of the cleanest lakes in the region and we want to keep it that way. We can now begin to determine possible reasons for the gradual increase in the average annual fecal coliform count to guide us in the action that should be taken. For example, we can see if the gradual increase correlates with the time that development began in an area and with the increase in development over that past 27 years. It is of interest that the past three years have had quite low fecal counts and this has coincided with warm, dry summers, suggesting that the amount of runoff might be important. Also we have a better basis to discuss with experts and the Township Councils what the results of the program are telling us about the water quality and what action we should take to keep it safe for recreation.

Figures similar to Figure 1 have been prepared for each station. They will be on display at the AGM with a map showing the location of each station. Come to the meeting to see the results for your area.

RIVER SAMPLING

Monitoring water quality and invertebrate sampling in the Tay River watershed will be continuing this summer, with help from senior governments to hire students. Visit the web site www.twpbbs.com/tay-water/index

REFLECTIONS OF COTTAGE LIFE

Susan McNichol, Curator, Perth Museum

The Perth Museum presents the exhibition "Reflections of Cottage Life" from May 30 to September 23. Through the use of artefacts and photographs from the museum's collection as well as many other items on loan from local cottagers, this exhibition will tell the history of the lakes and waterways in the Perth area that have served as summer residences for many Perth families for over 100 years.

It will include items such as enlarged black and white snapshots of families enjoying summer at the lake from 1906-1933, playing tennis, bathing, canoeing, boating, relaxing on hammocks, tea at the Links o' Tay (Ontario's oldest golf course), and more. Authentic Lanark County rustic twig and wicker

furniture will be on display along with bathing costumes, fishing gear, paddles, trophies, creel and picnic baskets, games and books, all the paraphernalia collected over generations of summers at the cottages on local lakes such as Otty, Christie and the Rideau. Also on display will be the work of the Tay River Watershed project, the history and ecology of the watershed and how it affects us all.

The museum, celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, is open Monday to Saturday, 10-5 and Sundays 1-4, and is located in the Matheson House on Gore St E.

One of the advantages of being disorderly is that one is always making exciting discoveries
(A.A.Milne)

WATER POLLUTION AND THE NEED FOR LAND USE STANDARDS *Dave Code*

The recent tragic case of water contamination in Walkerton is a reminder to us on Otty Lake of the need for vigilance and attention to the care of our own water resource: the lake itself.

However, it is equally important to ensure that conditions in the lake community are healthy, that the foreseeable causes of pollution are not allowed to come closer to our lakes and rivers. Farm uses that result in deposits of manure on the ground are obvious examples, as they carry bacteria including various forms of e-coli. This is why, beginning in the early 1970s, the Otty Lake Association has been cooperating with the Township of North Burgess (now BBS) and North Elmsley (now D/NE) and local Planning Boards and Conservation Authorities, to develop building and land use standards – and to ensure that they are enforced. Some of the key provisions of these standards, in effect since 1984 or earlier include:

Sewage systems and all other structures (except marine facilities) should be at least 100' from shore
A building should cover not more than 20% of the lot. There are other minimum distances from lot lines, roadways and other features. These standards are spelled out in Official Plans and Zoning By-Laws of the municipalities.

Now that the supply of shoreline property is scarce at Otty Lake, the OLA is concerned that residents – and would-be residents – might purchase a lot that is unsuitable for development (e.g., too small, too rocky or too wet) or plan to build a structure that cannot meet the provisions of the Official Plans and By-Laws. It would be embarrassing, as well as expensive, to build where it is not permitted, and then find it is unlawful – and may be ordered destroyed.

So OLA members and their friends are strongly urged to check the facts before they buy a property or plan to build, or if they plan to demolish an old structure (for which a permit is

also required). Advice is available from the Chief Building Officials at BBS 267-5874 and Ray Scissons (D/NE) at 267-6500. Or, if preferred, call a member of the OLA Land Use Committee: Tom Foulkes (267-6251 or 283-2706) Dave Code (267-5053 or 722 0339) Don Hill (267 3869).

Sometime within the next year, the OLA intends to issue a new and more comprehensive guide to the land use rules for building, locations of dump sites, phone numbers of key officials at Township Councils, Ministries of Natural Resources and Environment, Police and Fire offices and other information.

SUPPORT FROM THE RIDEAU

The Alliance of Rideau Lakes Associations (ARLA) has recommended that local municipalities become more active in ensuring that septic systems comply with regulations, in particular for new construction, renovation or change of ownership occurs.

PLANT PERENNIAL PRAIRIE FLOWERS AND MOW NO MORE Amy Pokorny

The tall grass lands of our Canadian prairies are called savannas. They are Nature's way of preserving moisture and, dotted sparsely with trees, have many varieties of wild flowers among the grass. There's a growing tendency to replace hard-to-keep, unproductive lawns with such a cover, which includes various relatives of *rudbeckia*, *sunflower*, *comflower*, *liatris*, etc. Some self-seed, some are perennials. It takes a couple of years to establish, both in terms of labour and cost. However, in the long run it will more than pay for itself. Except for watching out for tall tap-rooted perennials (*thistles*, *burdock*, *curly dock*, etc.) Such a patch of wilderness looks after itself. No more gas pollution or higher hydro costs from the weekly noise of the lawn mower!

If you decide to go natural, you'll have to get rid of your present lawn – or most of it. For large areas, you'll probably need a rototiller. For compacted soil or a site with weedy brush, you might even need a bulldozer. For the average smaller areas, you can use various kinds of plastic coverings or mulch to suffocate grass and annual weeds.

Our local Horticultural Society, under the direction of Sylvia Van Oort, last year planted

spring bulbs (daffodils) and day lilies in front of the Great War Memorial Hospital where there used to be a lawn. You could phone her for advice (267-7365) or call a **Master Gardener** (Bob Birse 264-9061; Dean 278-1203; Peggy 267-6168; Amy 267-1626).

BOATING SAFETY COURSES

The new Boating Safety Regulations require that all individuals born after April 1, 1983 will require 'proof of competency on board' to operate a boat fitted with a motor. This came into effect September 15, 1999. Anyone under 12 years of age must be directly supervised by a person 16 years old or older to operate a boat with a motor of more than 10 hp. Persons 12 to 15 years old must be accompanied by someone 16 or more years old to operate a boat with a motor of more than 30 hp. Those under 16 years are prohibited from operating a personal watercraft (PWC).

One day courses are being offered that include instruction and the Canadian Coast Guard accredited examination. The possibility of making such a course available to OLA members will be raised at the AGM. If there is sufficient interest, we will be looking for persons to make the arrangements and coordinate the program. The cost for a complete one day course is about \$75.

BARBEQUE SAFETY TIPS

1. Propane tanks should be stored upright in the shade outdoors.
2. Check the venturi tubes in the BBQ regularly and keep them free of spider webs, earwigs or other debris that may block the flow of gas.

SECOND HOMES SURVEY OF CANADIANS

- 13% own a second home
- 10% use it every weekend
- 34% drive 100 km or less to it
- 71% feel part of the second home community
- 88% feel it is important to be near water
- 40% plan to retire to their second home!

FOCA

Visit the web site of the
Federation of Ont Cottagers' Associations
www.foca.on.ca

RIDEAU CANAL WATERWAY

Webb site
www.rideau-info.com/canal

)LAKESIDE PRECAUTIONS Amy Pokorny

There are many ways to avoid poisoning our lake or your well with pesticides. The first name of the game is to get hold of a good book on *Controlling Pests and Diseases*. The one published by Rodale has excellent pictures as well as instructions. Where possible, one manually skims aphids off lupin stems, lays out crushed egg shells or derris powder to discourage slugs, or entraps and poisons cutworms in a saucer of poisoned molasses. *Rotenone* is not a poison to humans. Insecticidal soap is not poisonous and can be used on most infestations but you should wash it off fifteen minutes after treatment. Many caterpillars (larvae), eggs and scale fall to the ground below the rosebush or apple tree. You must be sure to clean up all debris of fallen leaves as well as picking and burning any diseased parts of the plant. This will break the reproductive cycle of critters that overwinter in the ground.

Poison Ivy at the edge of steps or a swimming area can be discouraged by a cover of plastic which lets the sun burn the plants. You can also slowly suffocate it under a very dense mat of mulched leaves. If you feel obliged to use *Round-up*, wear two pairs of gloves, the inner ones plastic and the outer ones cloth. Wet the glove and manually pull your glove up the stem and leaf, thus using a minimum of poison. The suffocation and sunburn method of mulching takes several months, depending on moisture and heat. Make sure foliage is flattened so as to be deprived of oxygen.

It is most important and interesting to spend a few hours studying insects. Most of them are beneficial predators of plant-eating pests. Lovely lacewings prey on scale insects, leaf hopper larvae, ants, aphids and eggs of other insects. If you have children or grandchildren at the cottage, get them interested in finding a praying mantis. Both the adult and its nymph feed voraciously on aphids, beetles, bugs, leafhoppers, flies, bees, wasps, caterpillars, butterflies and each other. If you can find its egg case, store it for the winter and next summer guarantee yourself a goodly supply of predators better than poisons. Don't be afraid of spiders. Even those that don't spin webs are great predators

CONTRIBUTIONS TO CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG

Looking over the 24 page newsletter of the *Greater Bobs & Crow Lakes Association*, I was struck by the number of persons contributing not only reports but also notes on names and wildlife. From time to time I have tried to encourage OLA members to contribute items to the Newsletter. I repeat this appeal and suggest that photographs of Otty scenes would also be welcome. We will try to discover more archival photos such as those in the last Newsletter (Ed.)

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Poem by Bilbo at Revendell in *The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.J.R. Tolkien

I sit beside the fire and think
of all that I have seen,
of meadow-flowers and butterflies
in summers that have been;

Of yellow leaves and gossamer
in autumns that there were,
with morning mist and silver sun
and wind upon my hair.

I sit beside the fire and think
of how the world will be
when winter comes without a spring
that I shall never see.

For still there are so many things
that I have never seen;
in every wood in every spring
there is a different green.

I sit beside the fire and think
of people long ago,
and people who will see a world
that I will never see,

But all the while I sit and think
of times there were before,
I listen for returning feet
and voices at the door.

The Perth Horticultural Society holds its annual sales in May and in September at the Stewart School on Wilson St. with usually a Master Gardener on duty to give advice. Otherwise, contact Bob Birse (264-9061) or Amy Pokorny (267-1626). Samples of many of the shrubs and ground covers can be shown or explained or given to you by Amy

MARINE THEFT PREVENTION DATA SHEET

Complete this form for each vessel you own and keep it in a safe place, preferably along with a photo of the vessel and its equipment

OWNER IDENTIFICATION

Last Name.....First Name.....Date of Birth.....
Address.....City.....Prov/State.....
Telephone (home).....(business).....
Insurance Company/agent.....Telephone.....

BOAT INFORMATION

Manufacturer.....Year built.....Length.....
Model.....Colour.....
Hull material.....Type of propulsion.....
ID marks or features.....
Home port.....

POWER UNIT(S)

MFG.....Serial#.....Model#.....Year.....
MFG.....Serial#.....Model#.....Year.....

ACCESSORIES & EQUIPMENT

MFG.....Serial#.....Model#.....Year.....
Value \$.....Description.....

MFG.....Serial#.....Model#.....Year.....
Value\$.....Description.....

MFG.....Serial#.....Model#.....Year.....
Value \$.....Description.....