CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG

Newsletter of the Otty Lake Association

OCTOBER 2000

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *Brian Perkin*

I hope you enjoyed at least a few of the rare sunny days this past summer. Otty Lake levels stayed high all season with no real shortage of rainfall. There was lots of activity below the surface as well. In a follow up to a story in the *Spring Newsletter*, here's an update on this summer's 'weed war' in Mary Miller Bay (Carson's Bay).

In an effort to remove the tangle of weeds choking the bay, Fern Thompson and a group of lakefront neighbours had enlisted the services of Otty Lake resident Norm Wright who had recently purchased a 'silt-vacuum' machine. After obtaining permits from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, work started on the lake in early summer.

The machines were able to suck a large amount of silt and weeds from the foreshores of many of the properties and pipe it to a dispersal field on shore. (Regulations stipulate lakefront owners can clear a 50x100 foot area). Norm and his crew ran into problems as the vacuum choked on submerged logs, garbage, plastic pieces and a pair of pliers that not-so-conveniently jammed tight inside the 6-inch pipe, costing them a half-day's work.

They also encountered some large rubber matting laid in the bay years ago. There was close to 4 feet of silt on it and the vacuum head would jam when it hit the rubber. As a result, not all the silt could be removed and some weeds have returned. Fern Thompson warns against laying plastic to combat weeds, as it doesn't solve the problem and the continuing silt buildup makes it impossible to remove the plastic later on. Another variable was this summer's high water level, meaning that the machine could not reach deep or far out enough as might have been possible.

Nevertheless some residents have been able to enjoy deep weed-free water for the first time in years. There is no way of telling how long the weeds will be controlled. Some areas vacuumed several years ago are still clear and weed-free.

Let's not give weeds the advantage. Lake residents are urged to stop the use of all chemical fertilizers. Runoff feeds the plants in the lake and sets the stage for yet another 'weed war'.

OLA MEMBER COMMENTS

"People on the lake should be reducing their lawn chemicals. I hope the Senate passes a bill restricting their cosmetic use."

"I would be pleased to have a septic system survey. How about a survey of lawns adjoining the lake?"

FOCA - OUTBOARD MOTOR EMISSIONS

The Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA) reports that their call for emission controls has been heard by the federal government. Environment Canada has started emissions testing on outboards.

Unlike cars, marine engines have never been subject to emissions regulations and as a result are considerably less clean and efficient. The technology behind two-stroke engines has remained relatively unchanged since the 1940s. According to estimates, a 70-hp two-stroke motor emits the same mass of hydrocarbon pollution in one hour as a new car driving 8000 kilometres.

Environment Canada's Environmental Technology Centre in Ottawa has begun testing outboard exhaust. Their tests show that 2-stroke models produce 12 times as much hydrocarbon pollution as the newer 4=stroke models, and five times as much oil and grease pollution. Further comparisons of the emissions from a light-duty van, a 9.9 hp 2-stroke outboard and a 9.9 hp 4-stroke outboard show that the 2-stroke produced 50% more carbon monoxide than the 4-stroke and nearly 60 times more than the van. The 2-stroke also emitted 15 times more unburned hydrocarbons than the 4-stroke and nearly 125 times more than the van.

Environment Canada is currently developing an action plan to deal with air pollution from mobile sources such as outboard engines as a step toward improving air quality in Canada. The days of the 2-stroke outboard are numbered.

HIGH WATER WOES *Dave Code*

Did you have difficulty doing repairs to your dock this summer? Couldn't find your favourite beach? Well, yes; the water level in Otty Lake was high this year.

And it stayed high. Never, at any time all season did the level get down to the Datum Line (normal average for July 1st) On July 1st it was 6" above Datum sand it remained like that for most of the summer. By October 1st it was still 4" which is about a foot above normal for that date. There have been other years of high water, but never since measurements began in the early 1970s was there a year in which the level never got down to the 'normal' level or Datum.

Reasons? There were several possible explanations. One is that the summer of 2000 was cool and wet, though not unusually wet. Another is that the Tay River was also very high - although with a normal hydraulic head of 24" or more between Otty Lake and the Tay, this should not have mattered. More significantly, parties of canoeists who made the voyage down Jebb's Creek and up to Perth, found the creek was cluttered with heavy weed growth and debris from the lake. This resulted in a complete stoppage of the natural flow for much of the season.

The weed growth is both cause and effect. Slack water allows the weeds to multiply, and weeds prevent the flow. In the summer of 2000, Jebb's Creek was showing signs of neglect.

REGATTA WINNERS *Dave Code*

On Sunday, September 2, the annual Otty Lake Regatta convened in light wi/nds. Top three finishers were: First place - Dale Friesen and Erica (age 8), in a Laser II. Second place - Lorne Roseborough and Peter Code, Kestrel. Third place - Dave Code and Winnie (age 7) in a Laser I.

Others, who provided an excitingly close finish, were Brian and Jessie Robertson, Albacore; Craig Robertson, Laser I; Herb Robertson, Laser I: Doug Overhill, Hobie 14; Brian Burrell and Gillian, Princecraft. In accordance with tradition, the handicap race was followed by a social hour ashore.

HYDRO DENSITY RATING *Don Hill*

As previously noted, most Otty Lake residents, whether *seasonal* or all year *residential*, were being billed at a *normal* (lowest) density rating with the result that they were paying a service charge portion of their Hydro bill appreciably higher than that prescribed for customers having a *high density* rating. Within the last year or so, a few Otty Lake shoreline residents, apparently on the basis of personal representation to Hydro, were successful in securing a change from *normal* to *high* density with appreciable reduction in power costs. It seemed to your Association that there was potential unfairness resulting from this situation because of the apparent eligibility of many other Otty Lake customers for a similar change.

Your Association is now pleased to report that following numerous exchanges with officials of Hydro One (the service and distribution enterprise resulting from the break-up of Ontario Hydro), and following completion by them of a density rating review, about 500 Otty Lake area customers, including substantially all lakeshore residents whether seasonal or residential, can expect an upgrade to high density status as of their next billing cycle. In the case of seasonal customers, this will mean a reduction of approximately $14.00 (GST incl) in their monthly service charge. As well, residential customers will receive a corresponding but lesser reduction in service charges. **If your previous billings have been based on normal density and you do not receive high density status in the Hydro One billing you will receive this month with consequent reduction in the service charge portion of your account**, you are invited to discuss the situation with

Darlene MacMillan (1-800-419-5208 extension 3306),
a Customer Consultant with the Customer Relations Centre of Hydro One

For all other inquiries, or to report an outage, please continue to call the Markham Customer Communication Centre at 1-800-664-9376.

BEAUTY AND ENERGY EFFICIENT *Amy Pokorny*
for year round Otty residents

Those who live all year near Otty shores must wonder what we can do about windbreaks, since we don't want to completely lose our view of the water. Actually, if you live on the north or northeastern side, evergreens are a simple answer against the north wind. Cedars and white or red pine are easily available. G Howard ferguson (Kemptville, 1-888-791-1103) can usually provide you with small native trees and shrubs. Non-native Mungo pines, either daraf or taller, have a low, dense growth, hood for slowing up cold winds.

Many of us haven't realized that a planting of densely branched shrubs close to and all around the house foundation provides an insulating cushion of air, thus reducing energy costs. However, it is important to find out which shrubs demand maximum sunlight and which tolerate medium to minimum. Also make sure you know the ultimata

height and breadth of each interesting species. EcoPerth encourages the public to use as many as possible of our native Lanark County spacies, such as highbush Cranberry and Nanny berry. These are both species of viburnum and rather tall (about 12 feet) for bungalows or for beneath windows. Also they provide shelter and food for birds.

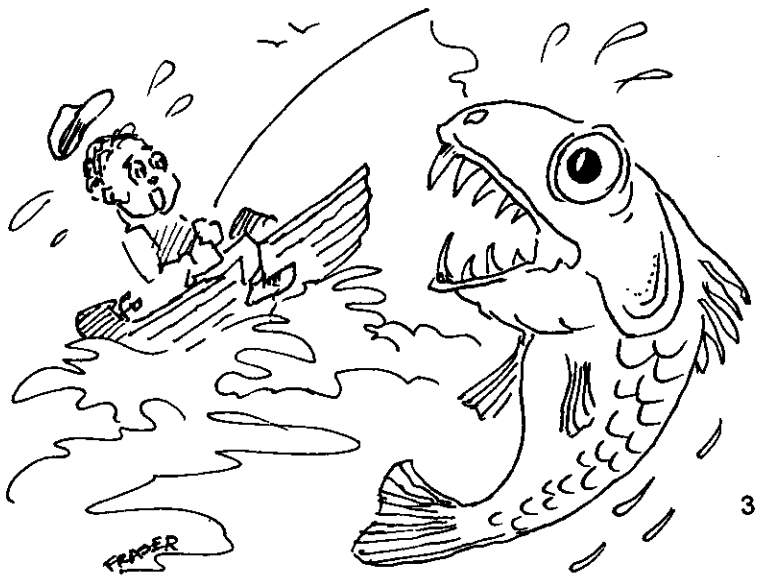
In choosing shrubs, you'll probably select ones that are 5-6" tall, so they cover the foundation. They should be bushy, not single stemmed when mature like a tree. Our local nursery, Hillside Gardens, provided me with several pages of names and descriptions of interesting shrubs. A big Toronto nursery, Sheridans, has a gig catalogue.

Before making your final choice, make a rough drawing with reasonably accurate measurements of your house, and a description of height and locations of basement and house windows. List which plants grow densely, are a suitable height and spread. Hopefully this will include a few with gorgeous blooms, glorious autumn leaf colour, popular bird food and interesting leaf texture. Avoid choosing single samples; usually little groupings of three small and an occasional clump of taller materials, as in a natural field hedge.

CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER

The Rideau Waterway from Kingston to Ottawa, including the Tay Canal up to Perth, has officially become 26th Canadian Heritage River (the 6th in Ontario) in a joint announcement in late August. It means that the Rideau formally becomes what we knew all along, one of Canada's best rivers and therefore one of the world's best.

Reports and contributions for the Spring issue of Captain Otty's Log should be received by the Editor by March 1st



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MY SHORELINE CREDO

Valuing shorelines in their natural condition, acknowledging that they are among the most productive ecological zones on earth, and being aware that shorelines are home to many of our species at risk for some part of their lives, I affirm my personal responsibility and commitment to:

✔help protect or restore shorelines in their natural condition

✔continue to lear more about shorelines and their importance to all of us and to wildlife

✔share with others what I know about shorelines
promote the significance of natural shorelines to my health and to the health of land and water based wildlife from the microscopic to the large

✔understand the cultural and historic roles of shorelines

✔express a sense of caring for shorelines and remain aware of what is happening to them

✔visit shorelines from time to time to restore my spirit and to remind myself of why I care about *them*

THE FARMER COTTAGES

Bob Wylie

In the early years of the Colin Farmer cottages, Mr Farmer felt that a Sunday morning church service should be provided. He invited Rev. R. H. Wylie to lead the worship among the trees.

This picture, taken in 1942, shows Ernest Miller in the back row, third from right, the farmer who saw his lakefront acreage become a summer haven for at least 40 cottages, and Rev. Wylie in the right foreground. Identified in the front row, LtoR, Freda Wylie,(1), Pearl McTavish (3), Marguerite McLaren (nee McTavish) (9). Back row, LtoR, Mrs Farmer (5), George McTavish (7), Don Wylie (11) , Ernie Miller (12), Jimmy Miller (13), Bob Wylie (14). To the best of my knowledge, the only remaining members on the lake are Marguerite Mclaren and Bob Wylie.

WATER QUALITY MEASUREMENTS - 2000

date	12, Jun	4, Jul	24, Jul	8, Aug	21, Aug	5, Sep
station						
1	6	1	0	0	2	1
2	0	1	6	3	6	1
3	1	0	5	2	0	15
4	0	1	0	2	0	1
5	0	0	1	0	0	0
6	1	0	0	3	0	1
7	1	1	3	0	0	0
8	14	1	0	0	1	2
9	32	2	2	20	3	1
10	0	0	0	3	1	2
11	0	0	0	1	0	1
12	0	2	0	1	1	0
13	7	0	4	1	4	1
14	0	1	2	2	0	3
15	1	0	1	0	0	2
16	1	4	0	2	2	5
17	2	0	2	2	270	7
18	1	1	0	1	4	4
19	2	0	1	1	2	3
20	0	1	1	5	3	2
21	20	2	0	230	0	8
22	0	3	1	5	4	5
23	3	2	0	0	0	3
24	1	0	0	2	1	8
25	1	4	1	7	2	1
26	0	0	10	1	2	7
27	2	125	2	7	115	1
28	2	5	1	5	0	18
29	5	0	6	8	1	1
30	1	0	1	3	2	3
31	1	2	1	12	1	3
32	2	0	0	22	1	1

A motion was passed at the AGM in July that the summer fecal count measurements be published in the Newsletter. They are presented in the table on the left. The date of the measurement is given at the top and the station number on the left. The map on the back shows the location of each station. A "0" in the table indicates no fecal colifom was detected in the 100 ml sample that was analyzed. The high, erratically occurring values are probably due to animal activity

The average summer fecal count for the lake can be calculated from the values in the table. These values for the first 27 years of the survey were presented in the June issue of Captain Otty's Log. They increased from a low of about 2 per 100 ml in 1973 to a high of about 13 per 100 ml in 1994. The average summer fecal count has decreased rapidly since 1994 and this past summer it was about 2 per 100 ml. the lowest it has been since 1975!! Prior to switching to the use of e-coli as a water quality indicator, the criterion for the closure of beaches in Ottawa was a fecal count reading of 100 per 100 ml for more than one consecutive set of samples. Our measurements indicate that **Otty is still one of the safest lakes in the region for summer recreation!**

We now have a welcomed and interesting question - **why has the average summer fecal count decreased so much in the past 5 years?** Did the conversion of so many summer residences to permanent homes, with septic systems at least 30 m from the lake, have an effect? Has there been a significant upgrading of septic systems in the past seven years? Have we increased the band of natural growth on our shores? To what extent might the dryer summers in 1998 and 1999 and the cooler, wetter conditions of 2000 (resulting in reduced use of the lake) contribute to this happy condition. Even the average summer secchi disk reading improved. The average depth for last summer was 4.4 m; the average for 1999 was 4.1 m.

We are considering conducting a survey next summer to help answer some of these questions. A questionnaire is being prepared to help you record, on a volunteer basis, important information about your septic system. BBS Township is considering a septic system re-inspection program and the nature of our study will be determined by what it decides to do. We will encourage Drummond North Elmsley to undertake a similar program.

It was not all good news for our lake last summer. Weed growth was excessive and there were incidents of itch, probably due to a parasite carried by snails. We will try to get information this winter on what causes these conditions.

OTTY LAKE WATER SAMPLING STATIONS