

OTTY LAKE NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Otty Lake Association

OCTOBER 1996

Lake Levels - why water needs to flow

Dave Code

Long term Otty residents will have noticed that the water levels during 1996 were higher than normal. What is normal level? Since the early 1970s, when the average July 1 levels were observed and recorded as a reference point or datum line, some residents have kept weekly records. We have found that normal fluctuation can be as much as 26". Though normal spring high may be about 8" above datum, the July 1 level is normally near O, and the late September level about 8" below datum.

But beaver dams and human dams can interfere with Nature's best intention. In 1980 the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) commented on the "unnaturally high and unnaturally stable water levels" of Otty Lake, which results in excess weed and algae growth in the littoral zone (the shallows near shore) and oxygen depletion below the surface layer. MNR advised OLA of the importance of allowing the water to fall in late summer so that the sun could bake the shore, preventing a burst of plant growth there in the following year. In other words - **A HEALTHY LAKE REQUIRES A NORMAL RISE AND FALL IN LAKE LEVELS.**

On the advice of MNR and RVCA, the dam in Jebb's Creek was removed in 1980. At the same time, MNR and RVCA provided work crews to clean up the creek, then clogged with fallen logs, beaver dams and other debris. The result was a cleaner lake as well as a cleaner creek.

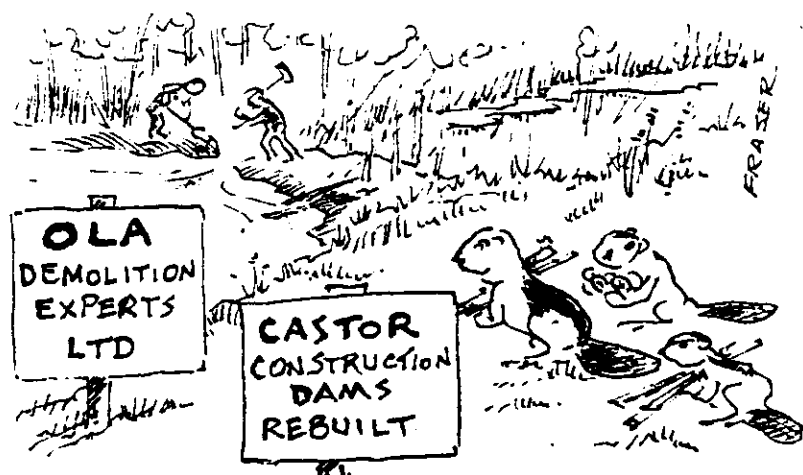
Unfortunately, good works do not last forever. Visits to the creek last summer by OLA members found that algae and plant growth had been very heavy and the water level at September 1 was as high as at July 1. There was no flow. The lake was stagnant. So on September 3, a party of five traversed the creek. Five beaver dams were broken and some minor clearing performed, resulting in a small drop in lake level. But beavers can rebuild in a day and clearing large logs take time and equipment, so this must be repeated from time to time so we can have a healthy lake.

Volunteers would be welcomed. In as little as half a day, a small crew can achieve a great deal. Anyone interested please call **Roger Nuttall** (264-0687) for excursions in November or next spring.

A NAME FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Keith Fraser

I suppose OTTY LAKE NEWSLETTER describes this circular about perfectly but it should have a more catchy name. So here is notice of a naming contest, your choice to be submitted by April 1st, with the winner receiving an Otty Lake T-shirt. I reserve the name The Captain as my choice, after the gallant officer for whom the lake was named.



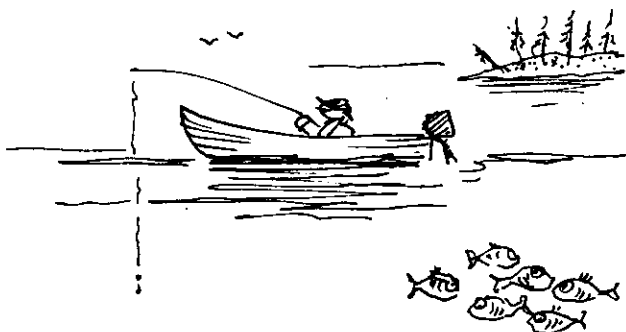
Land Use Planning

Tom Foulkes

The Land Use Committee (Tom Foulkes, Dave Code and Roger Nuttall) would be pleased to have a volunteer from North Burgess with an interest in the development and planning by laws with respect to matters such as setbacks, septic systems and shoreline protection. The committee meets periodically with municipal officials and monitors current and proposed bylaw activity and its effect on the lake.

The North Burgess Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) now meets monthly. As of now, it can be said that present and future lakefront development and upgrades will require a commitment by the owner to refurbish the shoreline as required. Mechanisms are being put in place to ensure compliance. PAC recognizes that water quality is rapidly deteriorating and is examining user friendly ways to upgrade systems and reverse the rise in lake counts.

In 1996, with the addition of Roger Nuttall to the committee, a renewed emphasis has been placed on North Elmsley. The official plan (1978) and zoning bylaws (mid '80s) refer to the Otty Lake subplan with requirements for 100 foot setbacks on sewage systems, 50 foot minimum setbacks on structures, etc. Positive meetings have been held with township officials and councillors and we anticipate a healthy partnership of mutual benefit, in particular to the Otty Lake residents in North Elmsley. In the next Newsletter, we will provide 1996 statistics on variance and severance applications for both townships and actions taken (if any) by your executive.



Report from the President Lorne Gold

Summer has gone by too quickly! I hope everyone had a relaxing time and were rejuvenated by the natural beauty we are so fortunate to have at the Lake.

A highlight of the summer was an Environmental Youth Corps Program shared by five lakes in North Burgess. The objective was to complete the shoreline classification for all the lakes and carry out additional activities to make property owners more aware of the importance of natural shorelines for maintaining good water quality. The vegetation on the shores of Otty Lake was classified in 1987 and updated in the 1993 EYC project. This summer, the students remounted the 1987 photos in more durable albums, identified gaps in our photo record and placed the Otty Lake information on a computer disc. We now have a good reference base for monitoring shoreline changes and for participation in the *SAVE OUR SHORELINES* project of the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation. See the announcement in this Newsletter.

The recently established Policy Advisory Committee recently established in North Burgess Township reconfirmed how important it is for each of us to reduce as much as possible our impact on the lake. Your Executive is considering giving property owners the opportunity to have the performance and effectiveness of their waste disposal systems evaluated on a volunteer basis. This type of program has been very successful in clearing up water pollution in a section of the St Lawrence River. Our water quality measurements show that Otty Lake is now receiving more waste than it can handle. We need the cooperation of everyone to reverse this situation.

Susan Code has been the editor of the Newsletter since 1990. She has decided to

move on to other challenges. Thank you very much, Susan, for the excellent job you have done for us. It is greatly appreciated. **Keith Fraser** has taken over from Susan and is quickly offering us ways in which we can help to make the Newsletter the voice of our lake community. A very sincere thanks to **Bob Waldeck** for three years of service as our liaison with MAPLE, to **Louise and Bob Arseneau** for acting as our FOCA representatives, and to **Wally Robbins** for preparing the report on the lake's loon population for the past two years. We welcome **Wendy and Bob Hassard** as our new FOCA representatives. We are seeking volunteers to be our liaison with MAPLE and to collect information on loons. If you can help with these very important activities, please call me at (613) 733-2449.



Property Identification Number Project

Lanark County is proceeding with its property numbering project, starting from the north and east and proceeding southward. You will recall that the implementation of the 911 system was deferred until this project was completed. Work in North Elmsley was not expected to begin until late summer or fall of 1996 and probably not in North Burgess until 1997. These townships are now considering the bylaws needed regarding the naming of roads. Earlier OLA asked for your input on the names for roads in your area. These were placed on the area maps provided this summer. Please check if they are correct and inform **Eddie Edmundson (264-0395)** or **Lorne Gold (733-2449)** of any errors. It may still be possible to give names to unnamed roads at the public hearings for the road naming bylaw. Get in touch with your Township Clerk on the procedure.

Membership Report

Dick Atkinson

On behalf of the Counsellors and Board, many thanks for your support and for sending your 1996 Fee (label says 1996 or future year). I hope it is just an oversight if you have not sent your fee; please look for the insert in this Newsletter.

Fees received by Sept 30 were posted to the mailing labels. (Area 1 residents whose fees came via their Road Assoc were last updated on July 31). If your fee was sent after these dates, your label will be updated for the Spring 97 Newsletter.

This year, a 11x17" Lake map and a 8½x11" Area map were distributed by the Counsellors. Please let me know of any errors or updates.

*In the Spring 97 Newsletter, you will be asked if you prefer a larger 22x30" Lake map instead of the 11x17". Larger maps will be available in June at a slightly higher cost. These will likely have a replaceable list of names so they may be used for several years. Report any errors to **Dick Atkinson (613) 825-5619***

*An information package, assembled by **Randie Fawcett (264-1976)**, will be delivered to every resident in the summer of 1997 and the Lake Maps included for members. Your suggestions for package material would be appreciated and comments welcomed.*

Water Quality - Clarity & Algae *Lorne Gold*

Secchi disc readings and chlorophyll concentrations are two measures of water quality. Clarity of the water is determined by measuring the depth one can see in the lake by using the Secchi disc. The chlorophyll concentration indicates the amount of algae in the water. Together they provide a very good indication of the overall condition of a lake, particularly with respect to its suitability for cottaging and recreation.

Algae are simple, small green plants. A certain amount of algae is essential for a properly functioning and healthy lake system, providing for fish and other aquatic life and helping to replenish the water with oxygen. Too much algae, however, can spell trouble. Most forms are almost invisible, but

increasing amounts cause a lake to become progressively greener and more turbid. Increased turbidity results in a decline in water quality (shown by a decrease in the Secchi disc depth) and a loss of aesthetic appeal. When algae are very abundant, a light breeze can concentrate floating algae along shorelines and into bays, interfering with recreational activities, especially swimming.

We have participated for several years in the Cottagers' Self-help Program run by the Ministry of Environment & Energy (MOEE). Secchi disc readings and chlorophyll samples have been taken at two sites on the lake between June and September. These are sent to MOEE, who carry out the analyses and include the results in an annual report for all participating lakes. Following are the results for Otty Lake for 1995:

Secchi disc: Average 4.1 m
Maximum 5.2
Minimum 2.7
Average 1971-1994 4.18

Chlorophyll: Average 2.33 ug/l
Maximum 3.6
Minimum 1.6
Average 1971-1994 2.83

Lakes with Secchi disc readings between 2 and 5 m and chlorophyll readings between 2 and 3 ug/l are considered in good condition.

The findings of a recent study that a decrease in the Secchi disc reading of **one metre** resulted in a decrease in property values of 10 to 15% is a strong incentive to keep our water clear. You can help by minimizing the flow of nutrients from your property. **Proven steps to achieve this are:**

- * **Keep cottage and lot improvements well back from the lake**
- * **Be certain your septic tank/waste water system is installed and working properly**
- * **Practice water conservation**

* **Wash dishes by hand in the sink - automatic dishwasher detergents have phosphorus**

* **Don't use fertilizers near the lake**

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR Keith Fraser

With this issue, the Newsletter comes under the subjection of a new editor. The primary objectives remain the same - to provide reports on the status of and trends in the lake's environmental quality; activities of the OLA committees; liaison with township councils and other lake associations; changes in regulations; hints and suggestions on cottage living.

I must assume that each of us is interested in the lake and its immediate environs beyond these primary objectives and I believe that the Newsletter can and should be a useful way to promote a greater knowledge of the history, geography and ecology of our lake. Accordingly, I intend to initiate a few regular columns and hope to persuade OLA members to contribute.

FEATHERS

This column would be used to report sightings (Arm Robinson saw a flock of wild turkeys last spring), viewing locations (visit the osprey nests at the Beveridge Locks), observations of dates (arrival of loons) and puzzling questions (where did all the robins go last summer? Why have we never heard whippoorwills at our south shore cottage?). Surely many OLA members have kept lists of birds observed at Otty Lake. We invite contributions from members and a volunteer columnist, who would begin the compilation of an Otty Lake bird life list.

FUR

Our list of mammals observed over 32 years comes to 15 (beaver, chipmunk, deer mouse, groundhog, mink, muskrat, porcupine, raccoon, red fox, shrew, skunk, red squirrel, gray squirrel, flying squirrel, deer). Surely members can add others. And the trends in numbers raise questions: last summer, from our observations, was a poor year for groundhogs and deer mice. We had many visits from raccoons until maybe 10 years ago. Why? Contributions and a columnist invited.

FROGS AND THEIR ASSOCIATES

Bullfrogs are much fewer than 30 years ago - apparently a global phenomenon. But this year we had more tree frogs and leopard frogs than ever before. So next year should be a good one for snakes, which have been less common recently; we saw a water snake for the first time in five years. Plenty of painted turtles, but nary a snapper in our bay this year.

Observations on insects and plants - these would be interesting columns. A fish section for the fisherfolk.

1996 REGATTA *Dave Code*

On the Sunday of Labour Day weekend, a band of intrepid sailors assembled and on command of the official starter, crept over the start line (it was a day of light winds). The variety of boat included Laser, Laser II, Albacore and Mistral. A handicap system ensures that performance results will recognize the sailors, not just their boats.

Defending champ Craig Robertson in his Laser I fought off challenges from all others for 5 legs of the course but on the 6th was overtaken by an aging Laser and its even more aged skipper. The final result: First - Dave Code (Laser) Second - Craig Robertson (Laser I) Third - Peter Code and granddaughter Laura McLean (Mistral). "I Tried" ribbons were awarded to Herb Robertson, Dale Friesen & Brian Burrell, Brian & Jessie Robertson.

The trophy is a handsome (some would say unusual) concoction of wood, brass, silver and unidentifiable materials and has been awarded annually since 1968. Tradition requires the winner to improve it, hence the free form designs never stops. It is displayed at the AGM.

The Return of Sashi

In the early hours of July 21, Sashi went missing from Cherrie Island. The lost tabby miraculously returned in the wee hours of August 6. The owners, Pamela and John Connor, wish to thank those who escorted Sashi back home and also those who participated in the search - Rhonda & Dick Atkinson, Walter Robbins, Randie Fawcett, Amy Pokorney, Mark Semple, Susan Code, Tom Foulkes, Sue De Hart, Judy & John Burns and the many others.

AIR PHOTOS AND TOPOGRAPHIC MAP OF OTTY LAKE *Keith Fraser*

Four air photo coverages showing Otty Lake are filed with the National Air Photo Library, 615 Booth St, Ottawa K1A 0E9 (613) 995-4560 OR 1-800-230-6275 FAX (613) 995-4568

1959 (May) A16527-166 (Very good quality photo)

1964 (?) West half of Otty Lake only

1976 (April) A24316-55 1995 (April) A28176-88

One print (10x10") \$22. + \$4. service charge per order + taxes.
Double size print (20x20") (50x50cm) scale approx. 1 mi. = 4 in.
\$30 + \$4. + taxes. Other enlargements (15" @ \$26., 30" @ \$45.
With quantity orders, charge is a flat \$4. per order. For mounting, recommend you order photos flat, not rolled. Specifications in bold are recommended.

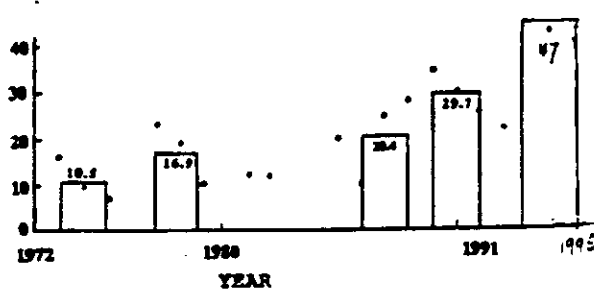
Otty Lake is on the NTS 1:50,000 map PERTH 31 C/16 East Half 1:50,000, available from Canada Map Office (613) 952-7000.

FOUND: In small bay in Area 4 Otty Lake, a fibreglass canoe. To claim, call 1-613-726-0596

Water Quality - Coliform count

Bill Schriever

Fecal coliform bacterial counts in lake water samples are used as an indicator of fecal matter getting into the lake, usually from inadequate septic systems.



First the bad news! The trend in fecal coliform counts is not only increasing but has been accelerating. See the trend from 1985 to 1995 in the graph. This year again, close to 100 water samples were taken by Dawson Girdwood from June to early September at the usual 32 stations along the shore. These

samples are delivered to Ottawa for analysis by a private laboratory (for which we pay). The 1996 average shows a small decrease (to 41.3) from the last three-year average (47), but this is probably within the normal variation occurring from year to year. But the July and August figures are very high this year.

Save the Lake - it is not a Sewer! Two members of the OLA executive recently made an interesting visit to Clayton, NY on the St Lawrence, where a group called **Save the River - it is not a Sewer** has inspected over a thousand septic systems since 1986. They successfully persuaded owners of septic systems to have their inadequate systems upgraded. They attribute their success to community pressure or neighbourhood influence. In other words, most people wanted to have good systems and therefore asked for the inspection. The group was fortunate in being assisted by a sizeable New York State grant. How can we match that?

However, their experience will give us a push in new directions. The OLA executive will begin a pilot project in early 1997 to try a similar approach. One question remaining to be explored is the feasibility and cost of testing the performance of systems, e.g., with a tracer dye.

SPLASHES

A single housefly can lay 30,000 eggs a year - no telling how many a married one can lay ... Ottawa residents - save your old phone books in January, bring them to the AGM in July for distribution to Perth residents, who find them handy at the lake ... "We never sit down to our pottage, we never go calm to our rest, but lo! at the door of our cottage, the knock of the Guest"

(Elegy from a Country Dooryard) ... Did you know that 1965 pennies are worth almost \$20? ... We weren't too concerned about pollution until we saw a bluebird in the garden only to find it was a robin holding its breath ... Next Newsletter discusses Otty Lake placenames

SAVE OUR SHORELINES

This Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation project is designed to 1) train volunteers to analyse & evaluate shoreline problems; 2) provide conservation services and advice; 3) produce a new environmental tabloid; 4) plant trees, shrubs and native species to naturalize the shorelines; 5) strengthen the lake association networks in the valley; and (6) produce a shoreline restoration video for community use. OLA members are encouraged to make donations (tax deductible) to support this important campaign. Cheques to: Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation, Box 988, Manotick, ON K4M 1A8.

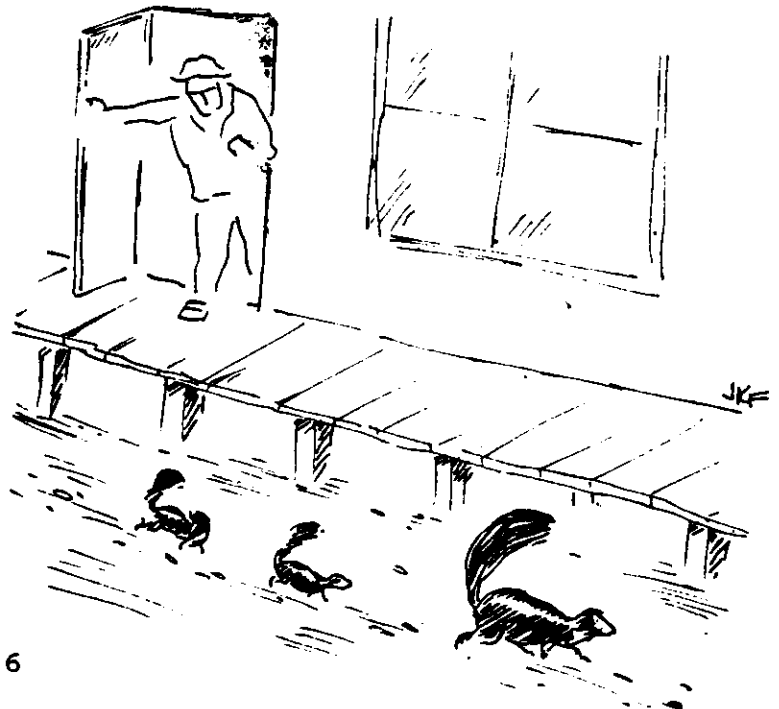
OTTY LAKE NEWSLETTER

Please send contributions and comments to
Keith Fraser, 571 Fraser Ave, Ottawa K2A2R3
(613) 728-3950

FAX (613) 744-0947 Attention: Karen

e-mail 103721.1103@compuserve.com

Circulation, printing and mailing
Dick Atkinson, Charlie Olver



This appeared to refer to the rule that no open fires are allowed in this township, not even for heat or cooking. A permit is always required for open fires. Only fires in grills and containers are allowed, and a fine or fire response charge is made to violators.

"Do you have much trouble with garbage?" I asked.

"Not usually," George went on. "Now, Betty, the middle of the Three Sisters, was so cluttered after campers were there two years ago for a month, that the Ministry had to send in a crew to clean up the garbage and the toilet paper. The sewage and wash water drained into the lake because the island is so small. They posted the Three Sisters to prevent camping there so that won't happen again."

"How about cutting trees?" I asked.

"Oh, I've been lucky with just a few branches broken by kids. But I hear that Jim Cloverleaf lost quite a few live trees recently."

"I heard about Cloverleaf," I said. "Peter Evans from the Ministry took a look at the damage and was asking around so he could explain that a permit is required to cut live trees. He asked residents to make a note of any boats, take the number, describe the occupants, colour of clothes and any distinguishing things that would help identify who is doing this".

There was a pause and the voice finally said, "My time is almost up and I'm going now, but you can come back next year if you want to." Another pause. "By the way, it would be better to look for a snowmobile at Cloverleaf."

The moon was a bright silver by now. When I said goodbye, there wasn't a reply. I put the chair in the canoe and was half way home when I remembered that my book was still on the Island. I didn't go back for it, and I don't know if I'll go back next year either. (Anonymous)

This Special Membership Offer will credit the fee to the 1997 year. This will enable you to receive the Spring Newsletter, future Newsletters and re-issues of the Lake Maps. The \$10 fee provides the 11" x 17" Lake Map, or the \$12 fee provides the 22" x 30" Lake Map.

Special Membership Offer*. 1997 Fees \$10.00 (include \$2.00 extra if you would like the large Map. Please mail to: Otty Lake Association, 20 Mancil Drive, Nepean, Ontario, K2J 2J5

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