



# Captain Otty's Log

The Newsletter of the Otty Lake Association

www.ottylake.org

President - Jeff Ackerman

Editor - Linda Church

## Red Flowers

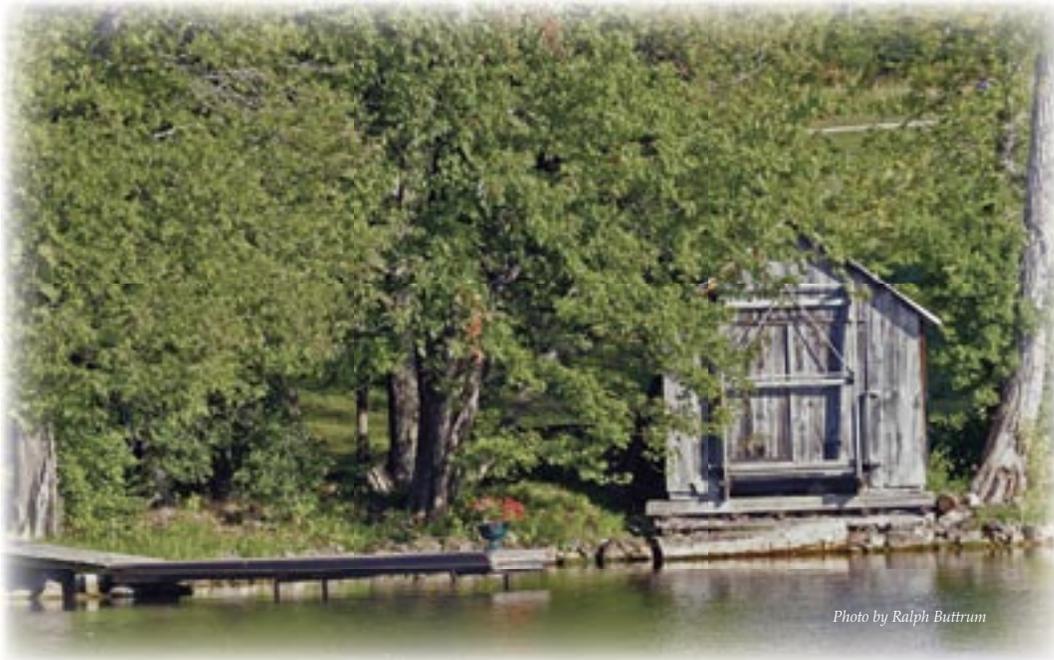


Photo by Ralph Buttrum

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Jeff Ackerman*

**T**he dock is out of the water, the fire wood is in the shed and another summer season has passed into fall.

How fortunate we are to be able to enjoy this wonderful body of water called Otty Lake. I feel just as fortunate for the opportunity to work with all the talented and enthusiastic people in our Otty Lake Association who are committed to preserving the lake and addressing concerns. This year we have many of the same concerns identified in past years: zebra mussels, weed growth, water quality and algae blooms. Through volunteer monitoring programmes and cooperative work with government and other interested organizations, we are learning more about what happens to the lake through natural cycles and what we can do to protect our environment from man-made negative impacts.

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Highlights From The AGM

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The Lake Management Plan (LMP) exercise is an excellent example of community cooperation to address common concerns. We are all grateful to the volunteers who have contributed so much time, talent and work to lead this process. But all the planning accomplishes little without community participation and action. You are providing that as demonstrated by the wonderful response rate to the recent LMP survey. You have given us the data needed to gauge your priorities and to prepare the final draft and implementation plan. The survey results are accompanying this newsletter. Please read them carefully.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those volunteers, past and present, who have worked hard to build an Association that can provide reasoned, committed leadership. You inspire me to strive to carry on a proud tradition of good lake stewardship.

Have a good winter.

## What is Ground water?

Ground water is water from underground reservoirs or aquifers. These reservoirs form in the pore spaces between loose soil materials or in fractures in the bedrock where water can collect. Ground water is the source of water for wells.

*David Reesor*

**O**ur AGM was held on July 14, 2007. There is always excellent support for the AGM and this year was no exception. More than 120 OLA members were in attendance.

The topic of universal interest this year was the presentation of the Draft Recommendations for the Otty Lake Management Plan. Karen Hunt provided the introduction and reviewed the development and distribution of the Report on the State of Otty and its Watershed. The Report was officially accepted by the Membership.

Andrea Klymko, Lake Management Planning Program Manager for the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA), presented the highlights of the Draft Recommendations. Reaction to her presentation was very positive. Andrea also fielded and responded to questions concerning shoreline development and restoration as well as algae blooms.

Reeve Aubrey Churchill, of Drummond/North Elmsley, addressed the group. He indicated that D/NE will undergo an Official Plan review in 2008. Reeve Churchill also indicated that his Council is committed to developing a Septic Re-inspection Program for Otty Lake aiming to initiate the program in 2008. This announcement was very positively received.

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Tay Valley Township Reeve, Keith Kerr, invited OLA members to visit the Tay Valley Township Shoreline Restoration Demonstration Garden located at the Township offices on Harper Road. He mentioned that TVT is in the middle of a 5 year update of their Official Plan. Reeve Kerr also discussed their Septic Re-Inspection Program that is in its 5th year. In 2006, 40% of septic tanks opened had maintenance issues and 5% had to be replaced.

Barb King from the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association (FOCA) discussed the Docktalk program. Lake residents have the opportunity for a confidential shoreline discussion and assessment. A number of Otty Lake residents have taken advantage of this program in 2006 and 2007.

David Reesor thanked the OLA Directors who were not returning to the Board, Bob Melville, Margaret Baxter and Jack Lynn.

Jeff Ackerman was acclaimed as the new President of the OLA. With two volunteers from the floor, Linda Church and Anne Scotton, the OLA Board has a full complement of 15 Directors and Officers for the up coming year.

Plans are already underway for next year's AGM, July 12, 2008. Mark that date in your calendars. We hope to have the completed Lake Management Plan at that meeting!

# A Lake Management Plan for Otty Lake

*Karen Hunt*

It was great to see many of you at the 2007 Otty Lake Association Annual General Meeting where participants accepted the Report on the State of Otty Lake and its Watershed. They also had an opportunity to review the draft Recommendations for the Otty Lake Management Plan.

These recommendations, once finalized, will form the core of our Lake Management Plan. We wanted to ensure that these recommendations took into account the views of the broad Otty Lake community and our community partners. Hence, we realized that we needed to canvas the Otty Lake community and consult again with our community partners.

The draft Recommendations document was forwarded to the community partners for their review and an Otty Lake Property Owners Survey was distributed to all Otty Lake seasonal and permanent residents.

We distributed 535 surveys. At this time, 234 property owners have responded. From the survey responses we know that the Otty Lake community believes that Water Quality is the number one priority. Aquatic Vegetation is number two and Development Pressures are number three. We will focus first on these priority areas.

We also have input from the community on the specific action

strategies that were addressed in the survey. This information will be important as we complete the Otty Lake Management Plan and begin the work of implementation. As an example, it was strongly reflected in the survey responses that almost all of those who completed the survey felt that a septic re-inspection program throughout the Otty Lake community would be an important tool in protecting Otty Lake's health. The municipalities who are responsible for septic re-inspection programs for shoreline properties

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should be interested in this response to our survey.

There were questions about a few of the terms used in the survey questions. You will find definitions of some of these terms included in boxes elsewhere in this newsletter. We hope that this will answer some of your questions.

Another question that accompanied the survey responses was "Where did the survey questions come from?". The survey questions were based on the information in the draft Recommendations document. This document, in turn, was developed using feedback provided by the Otty Lake community and our community partners. In short, the questions came from the community.

More complete information on the results of the survey is included as

an insert along with this newsletter and will also be posted on the Otty Lake Association web site at [www.ottylake.org](http://www.ottylake.org).

Once the community partners have completed their review of the draft Recommendations, the document will be revised and will become the basis of the Otty Lake Management Plan. We hope to be ready with a draft of the lake management plan early in 2008.

The Otty Lake Management Plan will be a living document that will be revisited and revised over time. Our ongoing process involves the community working in partnership with government and community agencies and organizations that have a vested interest in the long-term sustainability of the lake. All must take part in the process, as they care for Otty Lake and its watershed on behalf of future generations.

## CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG BY E-MAIL

Do you want to be among the first to get this newsletter?

Do you want to ensure that you are informed about time-sensitive issues that affect Otty Lake?

Do you want to save trees?

If you currently get this newsletter in the mail, you can do all of the above by contacting Captain Otty at [ottylake@sympatico.ca](mailto:ottylake@sympatico.ca). Just give him your name, current mailing address and your E-mail address and say that you want the OLA to keep you informed electronically.

# AN ALGAE PRIMER

Linda Church

Algae in Ontario lakes has been such a hot topic in recent years that the Ontario Ministry of the Environment developed the What Are Algae fact sheet in 2002.

Subsequently, the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA), with the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, adapted

Several thousand species of algae live in Ontario's waters. Algae are extremely diverse in form, colour, habit and habitat. They can live in water or on land.

the material for an information sheet used at its popular Docktalk workshops. Captain Otty thought that we should pass the following abbreviated version on to you. If you want to delve further into the topic, see the OLA web site [www.ottylake.org](http://www.ottylake.org) and click on ENVIRONMENT for more resources including the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority's report *Algae Problems on Our Lakes – Summer 2007*.

## Types of Algae

Several thousand species of algae live in Ontario's waters. Algae are extremely diverse in form, colour, habit and habitat. They can live in water or on land. There are four general groups. The descriptions below relate to algae found in fresh water in Ontario:

Green algae can be filamentous or free-floating. Filamentous greens (or attached algae) range from several millimetres to a metre in length. In many cases they develop into large colonies of floating or attached mats. They can cause odours in water and clog filters. Examples include *Spirogyra*, *Mougeotia* and *Cladophora*. Free-floating green

algae are important in the aquatic food chain and help to maintain oxygen levels. Examples of these are *Chlorella*, *Pediastrum* and the desmids.

Diatoms are food for many aquatic microscopic animals. Diatoms have silicon cell walls that do not decompose. This is the group of algae most likely to clog filters. Some diatoms produce tastes and odours in the water. Examples of these include *Asterionella*, *Fragilaria* and *Cyclotella*.

Flagellated algae possess one or more flagella, whip-like 'tails' that act as propellers. These algae can sometimes produce strong tastes and odours in water supplies. *Synura*, for example, can impart a cucumber odour to water even when present in low numbers. Examples include *Dinobryon*, *Euglena* and *Synura*.

Blue-green algae, commonly known as pond scum, range in colour from olive-green to red. Some forms are gelatinous floating masses of various shapes. Sometimes, when a bloom of blue-green algae decomposes, pigments are released, giving the water a bluish or pinkish colour. They have a pleasant, grassy odour while healthy, but this may change to an unpleasant odour as they decompose.

## How Can I Protect My Lake?

- Try to maintain a natural shoreline to increase nutrient uptake by plants and to reduce erosion and nutrients leaching into the lake.
- Use low-phosphorus detergents and soaps.
- Avoid use of fertilizers.
- Keep shampoos and soaps out of the lake.
- Learn how to maintain your septic system to keep it functioning properly. Have your system inspected and pumped every three to five years by a licensed contractor.
- Be familiar with your lake's healthy conditions and be able to recognize troublesome symptoms.
- Be a lake steward and join the Lake Partner program through FOCA. The OLA has done this. You can get more information about these programs from FOCA at [www.foca.on.ca](http://www.foca.on.ca).

### What is a shoreline buffer?

A shoreline buffer is a strip of vegetation left unmowed (natural) along your shoreline. This area is called a "buffer" because it buffers the lake from the erosion and contamination caused by storm water runoff containing sediment, fertilizers and pesticides which harm the lake. Nutrient phosphates filtered out of the runoff by plant roots helps to minimize the proliferation of filamentous algae blooms.

# PDCI STUDENTS ASSESS WATER QUALITY OF OTTY LAKE

*Krista Hearty*

After opening our new cottage this spring for the first season of our inhabitation, I couldn't wait to get out there and spend some time at Otty Lake. As a science teacher, I am always trying to find ways to get the students out of their desks and into Nature's classroom. I had a perfect idea for melding those two desires.

The Grade 10 science curriculum for the ecology unit is labelled "Sustainability of Ecosystems" and explores relationships between organisms and their environment. It also addresses the issues of human impact on the environment. I felt that a trip to the Otty Lake shoreline would give Perth and District Collegiate Institutes' 50 science students an opportunity to investigate real life examples of what they had been learning in the classroom.

We set out on a rainy June 5th to explore three locations, chosen for their differences in biodiversity. The following were the learning



goals that were set for the students (it couldn't just be a day at the cottage!):

## *Learning Goals*

1. Give students an opportunity to practice categorizing abiotic and biotic (non living and living) components of the ecosystem.
2. Collect, identify and categorize samples of plants and invertebrates found in Otty Lake.
3. Use the information they collected about the species they found to decide if the lake was healthy or at risk.
4. Identify possible evidence of human impact on the lake and make suggestions on how to avoid or repair the damage.

## *Preparation*

Before the field trip, Karen and Murray Hunt of the Otty Lake Association came into our Grade 10 science classroom to meet the students and bring them up to speed with what was happening with the Otty Lake Management Planning Committee. Karen briefed them on the Report on the State of Otty Lake and its Watershed and Murray

gave them a presentation on the techniques used to study the creatures and plants they were about to find. He explained how to collect the invertebrates properly and gave examples of the indicator species that only live in water of high quality, some that are more sensitive to degraded water quality and some that are very tolerant of poor water quality. The students learned that if they were to find a lot of species that were very tolerant to poor water quality and very few or no species that were sensitive to degraded water quality then the lake may be in trouble.

## *Investigation*

Once at the lake, the students pulled on their hip waders and set off into the still chilly, spring water. They brought in nets full of debris from the lake bottom near the shoreline and sorted out the invertebrates and



## PDCI STUDENTS ASSESS WATER QUALITY OF OTTY LAKE

*Continued from P.5*

plants. Karen and Murray, along with some members of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, helped the students identify the aquatic vegetation and invertebrates using a dissecting microscope. This sparked the interest of many students and at least one student commented that working in this field may be of interest to him. They also collected some aquatic plants and used a plant press made by Grade 12 students to preserve the vegetation for later use.

I collected field notes from the students and had them write a report on their findings. They were to give an analysis of the lake quality based on the species they found as well as give their findings on the differences in biodiversity of the three locations studied.



### ***Findings and Conclusions***

Although their samples were small and could not be used as scientific evidence, the students' general conclusions were that the lake water was of moderate to good quality. Many of them found dragonflies and damselflies, which indicate moderate water quality. Some found mayflies and stone flies, which indicate good water quality. The majority of students commented on the link between human interference with the shoreline and lack of biodiversity. They noted that adding a beach or retaining wall severely affects the number of species of plants and animals that can find a home near the shoreline. Many students were also concerned about the number of zebra mussels found in the lake.

## KIDS' FISHING DERBY

*Jeff Ackerman*

The annual Kids' Fishing Derby on Otty fell on a blustery, rainy day this year, but that did not discourage many hardy "fisherkids" from demonstrating their skills with rod and reel.

Wally Robins was on hand at the Maple Glen waterfront to provide a little fishing education, tips and lots of motivation before the boats were launched and they were off to catch the big ones! When the boats returned to the dock with the catch of the day, a hot lunch and prizes were waiting for all of the young participants.

Many thanks to the fine people of Maple Glen for sharing their waterfront with all of us.

Remember, the Kids' Fishing Derby is an annual event open to all young Otty Lakers and their guests. First-timers and experienced fishers are all welcome. The 2008 date and information will be posted on the OLA web site for next summer: [www.ottylake.org](http://www.ottylake.org). If you would like to help organize activities, please contact the Otty Lake Association at [ottylake@sympatico.ca](mailto:ottylake@sympatico.ca)

Hope to see you there next summer!

### **Who are Otty Lake Watershed Property Owners?**

Those who own land that drains water into Otty Lake.

# 2007 Sailing Regatta

Dave Code

Some years the winds on Regatta Day have been very light, a condition that conduces to inattention. But on September 2 of 2007 that was not a problem.

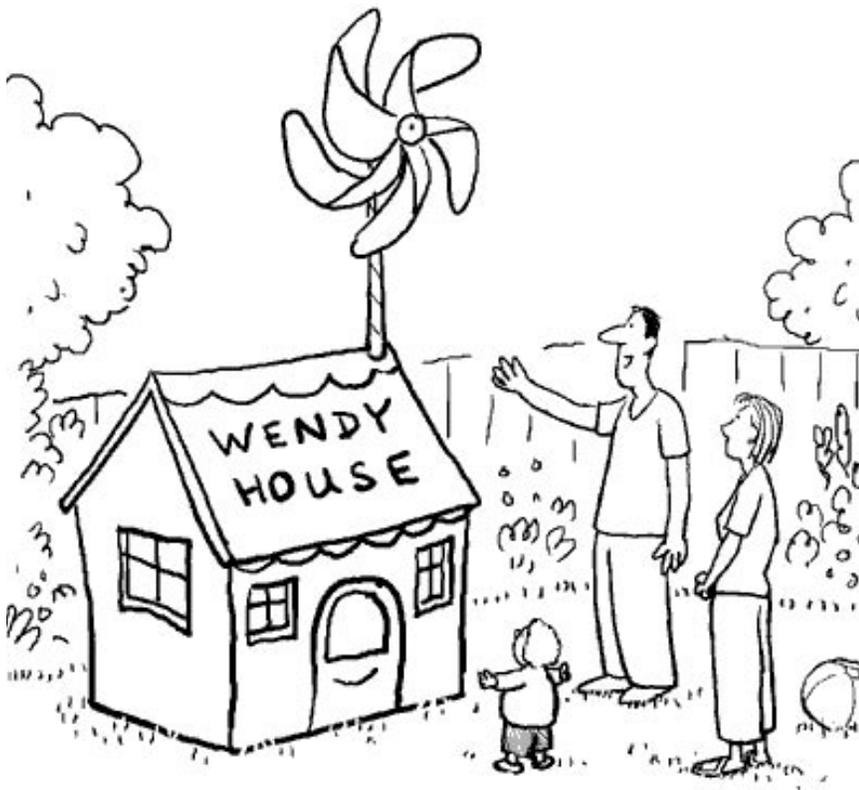
Instead, the winds were high and some of our sailors became re-acquainted with the bottoms of their boats. This being an all-comers event, there was the usual assortment of boats: Laser, Laser II, Princecraft, Haven, and some others who were unable to battle upwind in time to enter the race properly.

When the starting whistle blew, the wind was blowing and gusting, and within a quarter hour the first boat overturned. However, no one was in danger, as Mike Patti's power boat was standing by to rescue these and other sailors. The course was twice around the usual circuit, so they all had a good work-out. It was no easy ride this year.

Competitors included Dale Friesen and Bev (Laser II), Lorne Roseborough (Laser I),

Bob Melville (Laser I), Craig Robertson (Laser I), Dave Code (Laser I), Peter Code (Princecraft) and G. Field. Owing to the strength of the gusty winds, only two competitors were able to finish the race. Craig Robertson placed an impressive first, which won him the Commodore's Trophy, and Dave Code was second.

Refreshments were served on the lawn for all competitors and their families.



As a commitment to the environment it comes with its own wind turbine

# WHAT DO WE HAVE IN COMMON?

What do we Otty Lake residents and cottagers have in common besides fresh water, the sound of the loons and the whispering of the trees?

## SEPTIC TANKS!

Captain Otty's Log is planning an article on this topic for our spring issue. And we want to hear your views and tales about what's new, what's working and what isn't to guide our research. E-mail us at [ottylake@sympatico.ca](mailto:ottylake@sympatico.ca). Share your knowledge and experiences with your neighbours.

### What is Surface Water?

Surface water is the water found in streams, ponds, wetlands and lakes.

## Share Your Thoughts

If you have a story to tell, information or an idea for an article that is relevant to Otty Lake residents and cottagers, please contact the editor Linda Church at [ottylake@sympatico.org](mailto:ottylake@sympatico.org). We are interested in hearing from our readers and potential researchers/ writers.

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Thanks to our contributing writers. The LOG production/distribution team includes Dick Atkinson, Bill Hale, Charles Olver, Debra Olver and Anne Scotton. Layout courtesy of Ralph Buttrum of Perth Digital Imagination.

## 2007-2008 Otty Lake Association Board of Directors

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