

# Captain Otty's Log



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Karen Hunt*

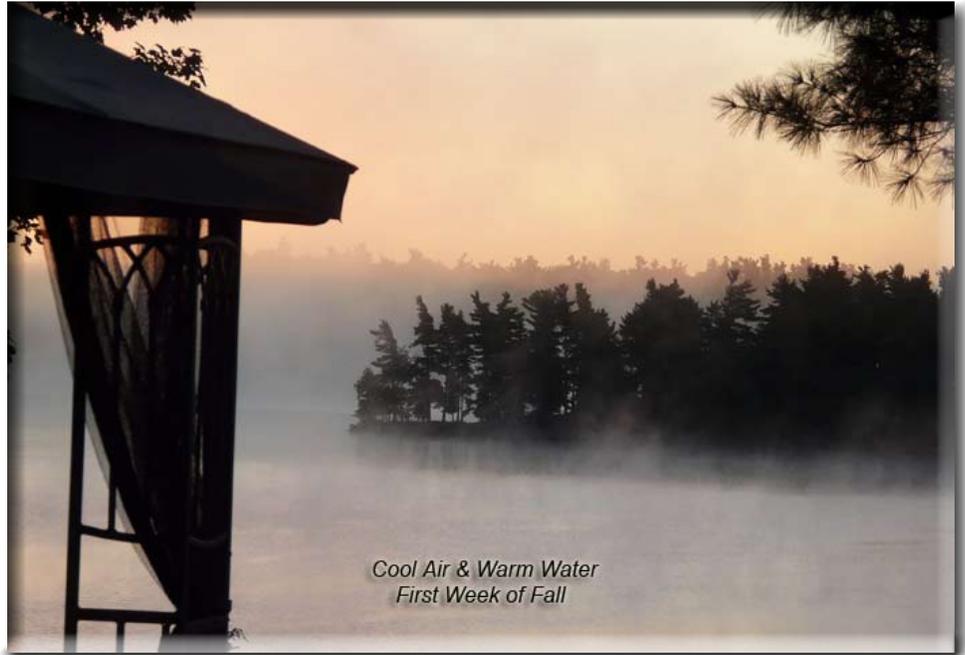
**G**reetings everyone! As I write this note in mid-September we are entering a third week of glorious sunny weather: a gift from Mother Nature after a summer with a lot of rain and little sunshine. Boaters, canoeists and kayakers have enjoyed these extra days on the lake.

It's been a full spring and summer for the Otty Lake Association. With the Otty Lake Management Plan completed and approved by the membership in 2008, we have begun to implement the recommendations of the Plan. This focus continues to guide the activities of the lake association.

On a related note, the Otty Lake Management Plan continues to receive attention within and outside the Rideau watershed. Over the summer, David Reesor and I have been contacted by groups on lakes that are just beginning to develop lake management plans and want to learn from the Otty Lake process and outcomes. We continue to learn and grow too and working with the broader Otty Lake community is critical. I encourage each of you to be involved and to participate in the activities of the Otty Lake Association. We need to work together. Together we can do our best to ensure the long term health of the lake and our lake community for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. One of the Area Counsellors expressed it very well recently when she said, "Different areas of the lake have different concerns but there needs to be mutual respect among all members of the lake and all voices need to be heard". I want to assure you that the Otty Lake Association is listening.

## Welcome and Thank You

OLA Board Secretary Shari Beattie has provided an overview of the July 11, 2009 AGM later in the LOG but I did want to take this opportunity to comment on one aspect of the AGM. Bill Hale, Willie



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## Public Boat Launch Poses Problems

Don Beattie

Tay Valley Township has received complaints from property owners near the Otty Lake public boat launch used by lake residents and day visitors.

Day visitors park their vehicles and trailers near the launch while on the lake. Traffic has increased markedly during the past couple of years with as many as three boats lined up to be hauled out of the water. Nearby property owners have noted that users often leave their engines running for long periods and block the turnaround area with vehicles and trailers.

Tay Valley Council discussed the boat launch on August 25. Councillor Brian Campbell presented diagrams of the launch area layout and described the problems. The Council felt that new restrictions would be unenforceable, but that signs could be posted discouraging users from leaving their engines running or blocking the turnaround area.

On September 3, the Board and Area Counsellors of the Otty Lake Association met and suggested that the signs would be a good idea. They also suggested a portable toilet (nearby residents should be consulted) and, in the longer term, a new location for the boat launch that would not distress nearby residents. The suggestions have been passed on to Tay Valley Councillor Brian Campbell.

## Annual Sailing Race

David Code

The Labour Day weather was good for the annual Otty Lake sailing race. The starting wind was perfect and the contestants were ready for the challenge. They followed the course once around the marks from the Code dock, east past Carson's Bay, across to Farmer's Point, crossing the long reach to Flett's Rock, then home to the start.

Those sailors who missed the best wind at the beginning had a tough time catching up in the dying wind, but most managed to complete the course.

The order of finish was Dave Code in first followed by last year's winner Craig Robertson, with third place going to Catherine Code. Also finishing were Lorne Roseborough and Mr. Mears in a sunfish.

The refurbished trophy will be on display again at next year's race.



*Hey... this one's break-dancing*

about invasive species, how to identify them and how to keep them out of our lake.

The OPP Marine Patrol was there to answer questions about boating and the law, including what items boaters must carry with them when on the water.

Picking the best cup of worms to take for the Kids Fishing Derby provided a great time



*Take it from Uncle Wally, kids - Fish love the juicy worms*

## Bugs, Wading and Worms Family Environment Day

Darlene Bishop

Otty's Family Environment Day on July 25 saw new and longtime lake residents together for a terrific day.

Thanks to the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, both young and "more mature" participants enjoyed learning about water bugs and how they tell a story about the health of the lake. The kids thought the bugs were fun to watch and catch doing the "water bug dance". We also learned



*Observing water bugs during Family Environment Day*

for the children, guided by the expert advice of OLA's Wally Robins.

All that learning, dancing and fishing made the barbeque, snacks and muffins taste all the better, especially thanks to having OLA's master chef Dave Bell at the grill!

Thanks to everyone who participated. Those of you who unfortunately missed a beautiful, fun filled day, see you next year!



## Great Year for Loon Chicks

*Bill McLeish*

I discovered while doing the annual Otty Loon Survey that 2009 was a great year for chicks!

I counted four couples with offspring – one in Parks Bay with one chick, one in Echo Bay with one chick, one around Loon Island with two chicks and the fourth with two chicks in Mary Miller Bay near Jebb Creek.

It is interesting that most started at the east end of the lake, but as the summer wore on, several things happened. First they seemed to spread out further from their nesting places, which I suppose is not unlike humans. Second, the family structure noted in the spring seemed to break down by August, with juveniles accompanied by mothers (presumably, although I was unable to do gender checks), while fathers were elsewhere on the lake. There were three adult loons in the center of the lake near Code Island.

During this year there have been hordes of gulls gathered on the lake. Perhaps emboldened by their vast numbers and appetites, the gulls are reported to have attacked loons. Rather like submarines being attacked by fighter jets, the loons used their diving ability to relieve the situation, although I bet they wished they had teeth!. A bit of research on the web suggests that this bombing is a ploy by gulls to steal food, an immoral act called “kleptoparasitism”. Gulls dive-bomb loons from the air in the hope that the loons will release their food as they dive under water.

It appears that it is not only Otty gulls that are immoral.

It was a good year for loons and I am proud of my association with them.

## Septic Re-inspections

*David Reesor*

In 2008, Drummond/North Elmsley (D/NE) implemented a pilot septic re-inspection program for Otty Lake. The Health Unit carried out the inspections. There were some start up challenges and communication issues but by the end of September 2008, 43 inspections were completed out of the target of 50.

There are over 200 septic systems in Drummond/North Elmsley on Otty Lake. The plan is to have all of them inspected over a four year period. In 2009, due to internal changes, the Health Unit was not able to participate in the program.

Reeve Aubrey Churchill and his Council have been committed to the program from the start and they knew that lake residents viewed septic re-inspection as a priority. There was overwhelming support for the program in the property owners survey completed as part of our Lake Management Plan.

D/NE contacted the Mississippi Rideau Septic System Office and after a presentation to Council and discussions, a plan was developed for re-inspection for 2009. This was a positive development as the Office also does the re-inspections in Tay Valley Township. Now all inspections on Otty Lake are handled by the same agency. In addition, the cost of 2009 inspections was significantly lower than the cost in 2008. As in 2008, D/NE will cover 25% of the re-inspection cost, the balance being paid by the property owner.

Due to the change from the Health Unit to the Mississippi Rideau Septic System Office, quite a bit of time was lost and there wasn't a lot of time to complete the 2009 program. Letters were sent to lake residents and the program was in motion immediately. By September 10, 2009 the target of 50 re-inspections on Otty Lake was met. As mentioned in a previous article, these inspections not only benefit Otty Lake, they also benefit property owners. The re-inspection ensures that septic systems are operating properly and safely and in many cases system failure is averted by the remedial work that is carried out as a result of the inspection. This can save a property owner thousands of dollars. Many of us take our septic systems for granted (or we just ignore them). This program makes sure that does not happen.

In 2009, 50 systems were inspected and 58% (29 systems) required attention or remedial work. The figures speak for themselves! Hats off to Drummond/North Elmsley Council and the Mississippi Rideau Septic System Office.

Otty Lake thanks you.

# Annual General Meeting Highlights

*Shari Beattie*

Every July at the AGM, Otty Lake Association members have the opportunity to share their memories of the past year and plan for the next. It is a time to say thank you and good-bye to those leaving as past Board and Committee members and Counsellors, then welcome the new slate. Displays are set up by exhibitors, local township officials give updates then remain to answer questions, the Board and Committee Chairs give reports and invited speakers talk on a subject applicable to the group. Members are provided the opportunity to express their concerns about lake issues and to question other members who may have answers. It is a time of expressing how much we care for our lake and our neighbours.

This year's meeting on July 11 brought the same with a few notable exceptions. Two prestigious prizes, the Jerry Strickland Award from FOCA and the Tri-County Environmental Award, both won by the OLA during the past year, were explained and displayed. The energy and commitment of all the contributors to the Otty Lake Association and its Otty Lake Management Plan have resulted in its recognition as a model for lake stewardship in Ontario.

Those arriving early had the opportunity to see the following displays thanks to these individuals:

- Sue Brandum: Well Aware
- Diana and Roger Nuttall: Local Plants
- Gail Read and Rosemarie Hoppe-Wilhelm: The Otty Lake Calendar
- Willie Newsome: OLA shirts, caps and memorabilia
- Foodsmiths: environmentally friendly products
- Wally Robins: fishing workshop sign-up
- Dave Bell, Anne Scotton and Ian McDonald: OLA Membership
- Jamie Saunders (Mississippi Rideau Septic Office): septic reinspections
- Murray Hunt and Pat Larson (RVCA): Otty Lake water quality
- Kay Rogers: Mining Bill 173
- Promotion of Family Environment Day
- D/NE and TVT door prizes.

Outgoing President David Reesor called the AGM to order with more than 100 members in attendance. He thanked the volunteers who set up the AGM displays, provided refreshments, and helped in other ways. He then asked Kay Rogers to speak about the Mining Bill 173.

Reesor then spoke about the activities of the past year, saying that the main focus for the Board has been the implementation of the Lake Management Plan.

The 2008 AGM Minutes, the Treasurer's Report and the 2009/2010 Budget were passed. The Reeves of Tay Valley and Drummond/North Elmsley, Keith Kerr and Aubrey Churchill spoke on activities past, present and future in their respective townships.

Susan Brandum gave the keynote speech on 'Protecting Your Well, Our Shared Water'. Karen Hunt spoke on the 'Implementation of the Lake Management Plan' including education, stewardship and land use recommendations, then asked Wally Robins to describe his upcoming fishing workshop.

David Reesor introduced the newly elected Board and thanked the outgoing members. He also thanked township representatives who attended. Board members responded to several questions from the floor which included inquiries about the presence of algae and lake water levels. The election returned Karen Hunt as President for the next term. Those nominated and accepted as new Board members are: Phil Anderson, Darlene Bishop, Dave Carmichael and Joanne Oatway.

Wally Robins gave the Fish Report and David Reesor the Loon Report on behalf of Bill McLeish. There has been an increase in baby loons spotted on Otty this year.

Thus another year drew to a close, with high expectations for the next.

# Water Quality Report

Murray Hunt

## Algae at Otty Lake

In July I participated in an algae workshop organized by the Rideau Round Table. The workshop was led by Paul Hamilton of the Canadian Museum of Nature, an expert on algae. I brought samples of algae from two locations on Otty Lake for identification. All samples were identified as types of Green Algae. None of these are toxic.

You will have noticed that algae was more abundant than normal at Otty in the late spring and early summer and this was common in lakes and rivers in Eastern Ontario this year. The general consensus of the "experts" was that these algae are the types that form in the spring after ice-out. The view is that the wet and cool "spring-like" weather conditions that persisted in the early part of the summer provided ideal conditions for these types of algae to grow.

Nevertheless, although the conditions in any particular water body will change from time to time depending on weather, the level of nutrient loading in the water body also affects the growth of algae. The higher the level of nutrients, the more algae blooms will be present in the lake. Please do your part to reduce the level of nutrients from reaching the lake. Following are some of the things that limit man-made nutrient loading.

Septic waste from humans is a major contributor of nutrients to a lake due to the proximity of septic systems to the shoreline, so it is important to have properly designed and functioning septic systems. The septic re-inspection program is a key element to identify leaking and sub-standard systems. Get regular pump-outs every two to four years as recommended.

Use phosphorous-free soaps and cleaning products.

Develop buffer strips of vegetation along your lake shore so that the roots of the plants can absorb soluble nutrients flowing in the shallow topsoil

- the plants will impede the direct flow of nutrients into the lake during rain runoff
- leave the leaf litter in the buffer strip- it helps
- bigger is better, 5 or even 15 metres width is often recommended - I realize that is impractical on smaller properties on Otty, but every centimeter helps.

Do not use fertilizers - you cannot assume that all the nutrients will remain in your garden (or your lawn).

## Understanding Lake Water Quality

The Lake Networking Group (LNG) is an informal group of lake associations in Eastern Ontario coordinated by Karen Hunt. The LNG has been encouraging the development of reference material to assist lake stewards and lake residents in the interpretation of lake water quality. Two reports have recently been produced and are available on the OLA web site (<http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca>).

A report produced by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) provides guidance in interpreting water quality. A key element of the report is a comparison of nutrient loading and calcium levels sampled by the RVCA over the past three years at 38 lakes in the Rideau and Tay watersheds. Otty is about average for nutrient loading among these lakes. The calcium levels at Otty are relatively high which means that the lake readily supports a zebra mussel population

(as you have already observed on your shoreline).

The second report was prepared by Dr. Gray Merriam, the Chair of the Frontenac Stewardship Council. Gray is a retired professor in landscape ecology from Carleton University. His report is an in-depth study of understanding the factors affecting lake water quality and was prepared for lake stewards. I recommend it to those wishing to learn more about this subject.

## E.Coli Monitoring

E.Coli. samples were taken again this summer to obtain a general understanding of bacterial levels at Otty and McLaren Lakes. The values are summarized below:

1 sample of 41 cts/100 mL

4 samples between 2 and 5 cts/100 ml

25 samples of 1 or less cts/100 ml

The site with 41 cts/100 ml was re-sampled at a later date and had a value of 1 cts/100 ml.

These results are well within the norm (100-cts/100 ml) that indicates, on a general basis, that the lake water is safe for swimming and limited household use.

However, drinking untreated lake water is not recommended. Please see the OLA web site for the results of other recent years.

## Other Monitoring

The OLA continues its participation in the Ministry of Environment Lake Partners Program, sampling for Total Phosphorous as an indicator of nutrient loading. The results will be posted on the OLA web site when available. The OLA also continues its support to the RVCA in its water quality, invasive species and macroinvertebrate benthic monitoring programs.

## *President's Message con't. from P. 1*

Newsome, David Code and Patricia Bjorgan stepped down from the Board this year. We all extend a sincere thank you to each of them for their commitment to the work of the Otty Lake Association. There was a change in the presidency as well. David Reesor is now the Past President and is the Chair of the Land Use Committee. David's enthusiasm and open, positive attitude were great assets to the OLA as we completed the Lake Management Plan and started on the work of implementing the Plan's recommendations. Thank you David for your leadership and steady hand on the tiller during your time as President of the Otty Lake Association. To the new members of the Board, Joanne Oatway, Darlene Bishop, Phillip Anderson and Dave Carmichael, Welcome on Board! As we move forward your contributions are welcome as we work together to represent all members of the Otty Lake Association.

## **Otty Lake Calendar of Beauty**

A highlight of the summer has been the 2010 Otty Lake Calendar of Beauty. Have you seen it? Have you ordered your copies? They're going quickly! We have received many compliments on the calendar from within and outside the Otty Lake community. What a wonderful way to celebrate the special lake that Otty is! Sincere thanks and congratulations to Gail Read who spear-headed this project. Thank you too to the community partners who supported this undertaking – the Rideau Valley

Conservation Authority, the Community Stewardship Council of Lanark County, Drummond/ North Elmsley Township, Tay Valley Township and McLean Insurance.

## **Board and Area Counsellors Meetings**

Traditionally at the end of every summer, OLA Board Members meet with Area Counsellors to listen to comments from area residents that have been received during delivery of the Summer Information Packages, on the dock, out on the lake or from a neighbour over a cup of coffee. Hearing from the community about your concerns helps the Board plan for the work ahead. 2009 was no exception. Actually, the Board met with Area Counsellors both in the spring and again at the end of the summer this year. We heard some residents had concerns about water levels while others did not. Some felt that the abundance of zebra mussels seemed a little less this year. Concerns about potential development, water quality, algae, weeds and the public boat access were also brought to the table.

Regarding the public boat access area, the main concerns seemed to be congestion, motors left running, noise, parking and the lack of a bathroom facility. Vice President Don Beattie, the OLA Board liaison with Tay Valley Township, passed along the Otty Lake residents' concerns about the boat launch area to TVT Council through Councillor Brian Campbell. The Council is looking at options including new signage to try to improve the situation.

Over the coming months we'll do our best to learn more about the other topics that lake residents indicated were of concern to them. We'll keep you informed about what we learn. One of the things that we'll explore this year will be additional ways of communicating with lake residents e.g. a blog.

## **Ontario Mining Act**

Over the past few months there has been a window of opportunity to provide input to the provincial government on the Mining Act. On April 23, MNDM Minister Michael Gravelle announced Bill 173, An Act to Amend the Ontario Mining Act. Although an amendment was welcomed, many felt that Bill 173 still did not fully address the question of SRO (surface rights only) property owners' rights, environmental protection and the importance of municipalities having authority to identify which lands in their municipality should be designated or zoned for mining purposes. Many, including the Otty Lake Association (both as an individual lake association and also as part of the Lake Networking Group), responded encouraging further change. We wait to see what action the Province will take. For more information on this important topic you can refer to the OLA web site at [www.ottylakeassociation.ca](http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca).

## **Shoreline Planting Program**

The spring 2009 shoreline planting program undertaken in

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partnership with the RVCA was great. We had a very successful planting workshop led by Andrea Klymko, RVCAShoreline Stewardship Technician. Twenty-five property owners planted 500 shrubs and trees. Thank you and congratulations to these property owners for their efforts to increase their shoreline vegetation and protect the health of Otty Lake.

The OLA wants to participate in the Shoreline Naturalization Program again in 2010.

We are in the process of placing an order through the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority for a variety of shrubs and trees (including Dogwoods, Highbush Cranberry, Sweet Gale and Black Elderberry) available from the Ferguson Forest Centre in Kemptville. These are locally grown plants native to this region. The plants will be available at the end of April and are provided free to Otty Lake property owners. The cost is covered by the OLA and RVCA's Shoreline Naturalization Program. Plants may be reserved by contacting me at 613 264-9273 or mkhunt@ripnet.com. Information about each of the shrubs in the OLA order has been provided by Andrea Klymko and will be posted at [www.ottylakeassociation.ca](http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca)

**Something New!**

In 2010 RVCA would like more community involvement in the shoreline planting program. Residents will still have an opportunity to order their plants in advance as we did this year. However, on the appointed

distribution day, instead of everyone coming to one location for pick-up, Andrea and a small team of lake volunteers would deliver (by truck) the trees to residents' homes or cottages. Andrea and the volunteers would be available to plant or help the property owner plant the shrubs along their shoreline. This has many similarities to the old MAPLE planting days that many of you will remember.

**Site Visits Also Available**

.As well as the spring plant distribution, RVCA wants to encourage some property owners to participate in site visits this fall. You can request to have Andrea Klymko come to visit your property and offer suggestions about how you could improve the health of your shoreline area. She will also assist property owners in setting up individual shoreline planting projects. Andrea's contact information is 1-800-267-3504 ext 1173 or [andrea.klymko@rvca.ca](mailto:andrea.klymko@rvca.ca)

**Otty Lake Fall Hike**

There will be changes related to the fall OLA hike currently scheduled for Oct. 7 as our valued hike leader Roger Nuttall

is in hospital following surgery. More details about the hike will be posted on the OLA web site as they become available. Our best wishes to Roger for continued successful recuperation. We look forward to having you back at the lake soon.

**Sneak Preview**

We are exploring the possibility that our spring hike could become a BioBlitz. This would be a great chance for a fun community event and a unique opportunity to learn from experts more about the plants, animals and other organisms that are part of our watershed area. Stay tuned! More details later.

**University research at Otty Lake**

The Otty Lake Association has been approached about a university research project being planned by a student from Carleton University who would like to use Otty Lake as her area of study. Discussions about the project are in the preliminary stages. It would be an opportunity for both the student and our lake community to learn more about the lake. We will provide more information as it becomes available.

It looks like a busy year!  
Regards,  
Karen



**Maple Glen Visitor**

It was April 16th when a neighbour called to say we had a black bear on our deck. She was right, we had a black bear on our deck. Makes you think twice about allowing the grandchildren to play in the backyard unattended.

Ralph Buttrum

## OLA Board and Area Counsellors

For a list of Otty Lake Association Board Members and Area Counsellors, check the web-site at [www.ottylakeassociation.ca](http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca). Here you will find up to date information on OLA activities, items of interest to Otty residents, newsletters and lake related photos. Click CONTACT US on the home page to get information on contacting the OLA. We want to hear from you and welcome your photos depicting lake activities.

## Calendar



Thanks to all for the outstanding response to our first Otty Lake calendar and a special congratulations to our resident photographers who have represented our wonderful lake so beautifully! Only a few

copies remain on a first come, first served basis. You may be wishing that you had purchased for yourself or be considering some special Christmas presents.

Cost: \$10 per calendar, \$8 for orders of 3 or more.

Pick-up: Please call Karen Hunt (264-9273) or Gail Read (267-5381).

Mailing: Please send a cheque to Gail Read (126 Sutcliffe Lane, Perth, K7H 3C7), payable to the Otty Lake Association with an additional \$2/ mailing order. (e.g. 3 calendars could be mailed to 3 recipients for just \$30!!)

## Learning About Carrying Capacity

From the earliest days of the Otty Lake Association's lake management planning work, one of the goals has been to understand more about the carrying capacity of Otty. On September 30, OLA President Karen Hunt, Land Use Chair David Reesor and Lake Steward Murray Hunt met with Ministry of Environment and Rideau Valley Conservation Authority staff to discuss the aspect of nutrient loading in determining lake carrying capacity.

There are many dimensions that influence a lake's carrying capacity including nutrient loading, noise, light, boating activity, impacts on shoreline, density of development, etc. The meeting is the first step towards that understanding.

As throughout the earlier lake management work, the OLA will keep residents informed about what is learned and there will be opportunities for members of the community to provide input.

## Captain Otty's LOG

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