

Clear Lake Cottagers' Association of Field

SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER

The Board would like to wish everyone the best for this New Year and take this opportunity to give you an update on the actions of the Board since our annual meeting on August 3rd 2008. We have met 4 times prior to sending out this Newsletter.

On August 11th we met to elect the officers for the Board. The following members were nominated and accepted the position of:

President	Lois Dobson
Vice President	Derek Stewart
Past President	Pat Sayer
Treasurer	Jenny Navid
Secretary	Bob Jolley
Membership	Jenny Navid and Carole Anne Friedrich
Members at large	Claude McGrath, Barbara Bain, Howie Longfellow and Len Tighe

As you are aware the role of the Board is to act as an advocate, usually with local government, on issues that are of concern to our membership. Many of these issues come up every year and it does feel as if we are keeping our shoulder to the wheel but the cart rarely moves. However, in the spirit of, "nothing ventured, nothing gained", here is a report to date.

ROAD RECONSTRUCTION

When Mr. Ethier spoke at our Annual Meeting, he agreed that the Clear Lake Road needed a major overhaul and that there might be some money available to do this. Claude agreed to take the lead with Mr. Ethier to see if there was any commitment to road work. Claude did follow up with an email sent to Guy who provided him with a verbal response. Guy reported that the only planned work for the immediate future was the paving of a section of Clear Lake Rd from Hwy 64 to Maple St.

The municipality has initiated a budgeting program that makes the Field Road Supervisor responsible for submitting requests for road repairs in the area of Clear Lake. The elected members establish priorities based on the reports from supervisors and engineers. Pressure on elected members from constituents can also influence decisions.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

We have in the past sent out suggestions for "Green Practice", especially as it relates to products used in the house and on lawn and gardens. Of particular concern are the phosphate in soaps and the chemicals in fertilizers. We encourage you once again to not use these products that will run into the Lake.

We are more and more aware that protecting the environment is a complex issue and we would like to partner with West Nipissing to support good practice. For example, concerns were expressed at the Annual Meeting that several bays on Clear Lake were inundated with sand and silt when culverts were replaced. This activity took place when bass were spawning. There is legislation in effect that requires lake front properties not to change or modify the natural properties along the water's edge so that plant, animal, bird, and aquatic life will not be disturbed.

We understood that West Nipissing had a Committee of Council for environmental matters and Carole Anne agreed to take the lead on connecting with this committee. She did contact West Nipissing and was informed that at this point in time the committee concentrates on landfill issues. There was a suggestion in the official plan that the municipality intends to implement an environmental committee and Carole Anne will pursue this with Council.

In the interim we should all think "green" and ensure grey water and septage do not make it to the lake. We will attend the Sturgeon Falls Gardening Show on 25 April 09 to provide our information on good environmental practices with interested water front gardeners.

THE SEPTIC SYSTEM SAGA

The Board made considerable efforts in 2008, as a follow up to our 2007 presentation to council. You will recall that The Conservation Authority's response in the summer of 2008 was a poorly designed voluntary user pay program that did not address our concerns. Residents refused to participate and not surprisingly the program failed. At the August AGM. Councilor Ethier admitted that council has a dismal record of responding to our inquiries. Despite his commitments to do better, the situation has not changed, council remains totally unresponsive. On October 08, the Board addressed concerns during a meeting with David Ramsay, MPP. Mr. Ramsay said he would get back to us to clarify why agencies were non-responsive and to outline areas of responsibility. To date we have not received a response. A second request has been submitted. Clearly, municipal council continues to see septic re-inspection as a "back burner" item not worthy of action or expenditure. Ontario has now implemented the Clean Water Act to protect municipal drinking water. Despite the fact that West Nipissing was not included, our council appears to remain silent on that issue as well. Is it all about money – or is political safety taking precedence over protection of our water sources? If money is the concern, things will only get worse with the economic recession. Despite the obstacles that lie ahead, your Board will continue our advocacy role. In the meantime, if government won't step forward, residents will have to do the lion's share by taking proactive steps to protect our Lake for the future.

SPRING CLEAN UP

Volunteers will gather at the "bulletin board" Saturday May 2, 09 at 10:00 a.m. to pick up bags, gloves, etc. Carole Anne will see Gaston for a key to the landfill.

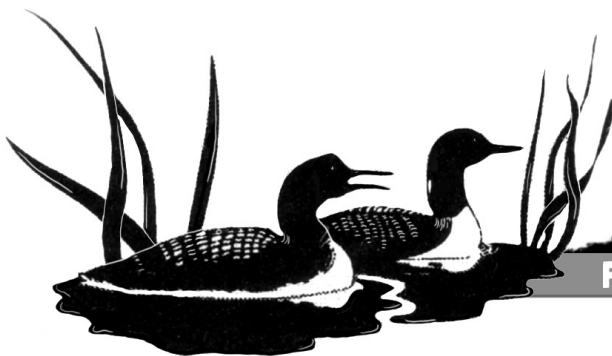
Everyone welcome!

REPORTED BREAK-IN

One resident has reported a break-in during the winter. Residents are reminded to be vigilant and report any suspicious activities, strange vehicles etc. to the police along with licence plate numbers if available.

THE CLEAR LAKE COMMUNITY THANKS

- Carole Anne Friedrich and Claude McGrath for spearheading the clean up crews on our cottage road.
- The guys who place and remove the buoys every spring and fall.
- The residents who keep an eye on their neighbour's property during the off season.
- Liane Longfellow for designing this newsletter and Bob Jolley for preparing the content.



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