

THE TWIN SISTER LAKES
RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION
"VIEW THROUGH THE CULVERT
2004 EDITION"



Paul Wilbur (8) and Eric Wilbur (7) show their 15 ½ inch Largemouth Bass caught at their cottage on the last day of their vacation to our lake.

The Twin Sisters Lakes Ratepayers Association annual newsletter is a combination of stories, items of interest, and snapshots of history of the Twin Sisters Lake community located north of Marmora, Ontario in Hastings County.

Welcome from your President:

I don't know whether it is a function of aging or just my becoming more aware of the unmistakable lure of cottage life but I just can't imagine life getting any better than what we all find at Twin Sisters Lakes.

The instant that I arrive at the lake the first chore is to open the front drapes to view this spectacular place. There is the rugged nature of the shorelines and the abundance of wildlife.

Every morning the lake springs to life with the chatter of birds, squirrels, chipmunks and the peaceful cry of the loons. At night, we settle in to the chorus of bullfrogs and whippoorwills. There is definitely no place quite like Twin Sisters Lake.

It seems almost sacrilegious to start up a boat motor or watercraft and break the peaceful silence but there is the "just for the moment" thrill for a young person who laughingly flies off a quick moving tube, a delight in hearing a young boy shouting "I've got a bite", or watching parents and grandparents teach the newest water skiers how to drop a ski and go slalom for the first time.

It is easy being the President of the Twin Sister Lakes Ratepayers Association. My primary focus is to make certain everyone and everything is predictably in it's place so we can all enjoy our cottage experiences.

With your support our Association monitors fishing populations, maintains safe water qualities, we try to keep lake

water levels as close to natural as possible and we constantly educate about the dangers of unwanted species of fish and zebra mussels.

In return your Association Executive does not ask for much. We just need your support in attending our Annual General Meetings, we need your fresh ideas and your help from time to time.

Oh yes, did I mention that small \$10.00 per family annual donation that is needed to make all of this activity happen?

The Twin Sisters Lake Ratepayers Executive astounds me with their fresh new ideas. Quietly they make certain that all of the important maintenance jobs are done such as posting signs at the public landing, maintaining and storing emergency oxygen bottles, completing and recording water testing reports, checking for water clarity, and constantly verifying our waters are free from unwanted species of fish and weeds.

All in all, I think they have done a great job in 2004!

Enjoy your time at the lake and respect each others use of the water but most importantly just have fun.

Jack Watkins
President

**THE ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING IS
SATURDAY,
AUGUST 14th, 2004
AT 10:00 A.M. AT
THE POMEROY
COTTAGE
BETWEEN THE
LAKES. HOT
DOGS AND
DESSERT WILL
BE SERVED
FOLLOWING
THE MEETING.
COME AND SAY
HELLO.**

**REMEMBER
YOUR LAWN
CHAIRS**

Feature Stories:

MYSTERY SOLVED!

By Barb Craig of the East Lake

Since buying a log cottage many years ago we have had our share of challenges with the invasion of bats, ants, mice and even birds flying through our windows.

In the spring of 2003 we were confronted with a new challenge. We arrived at the cottage, unpacked the car, and immediately flopped on the couch. Suddenly, we noticed the windows were covered in a film ofmud? The

windows looked as though there had been a mud storm. Perhaps a bear had wiped its big paws across the glass? There were big claw marks on the window sills as well. However bears can't fly so when we saw the bedroom window upstairs we knew it had to be something else.

After washing the windows from top to bottom, we were dismayed to find them just as dirty and just as muddy when we returned the next weekend. This time we noticed gigantic amounts of bird dirt on the deck, chairs and window ledges. As well, the screens on the front and back doors had been ripped apart.

Week after week, this scenario repeated itself. The mystery creatures also ate the wood and caulking from around the windows and even pecked little dents in the windows.

We consulted a pest expert, pulled down the blinds, removed the loon decoy sitting in the window, stained the window ledges, nailed plastic owls everywhere and tied plastic bags to the railings. We repaired the screens numerous times, at some expense, and finally we just took the screens out as they kept getting attacked over and over.

Very early one morning my suspicions were confirmed when I heard the familiar "wonk wonk" of the Raven and then the flap, flap of his enormous wings, as he flew away from the bedroom balcony.

Alright, now we knew it was a Raven attacking our place, but why just us? And why now after all of the years we have lived here? We know Ravens are very clever and devious, and they

generally don't like people, so we had to assume that this is why they only attacked our log home when we were away.

No one we spoke with had any answers or knowledge about our predicament.

Finally, at the end of summer, we consulted with the staff at Drummond's Hardware in Marmora. They suggested using the pricey red reflective tape used by some people to keep geese away from their shorelines.

On Labour Day weekend, with the help of our former neighbour, Moe McAteer, we strung the shiny red tape all over the windows like party streamers. In fact, many passer-bys in the lake asked why we had not invited them to our celebration!

Well, that was the end of the Raven attacks at our cottage. After we left for the city, our neighbours across the bay, Ray and Suzy, reported that all week a flock of Ravens circled our cottage but did not land. They obviously feared the reflective tape waving in the breeze. Now, a year later, we remain Raven-free.

While we know what it was that attacked our cottage, we will likely never know why.

**The theme of the 2004
Annual General Meeting
will be the Fairness of Lake
Property Taxation:**

By Jack Watkins

Cottage Associations across Ontario have been asked to consider supporting the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA) drive to have the Ontario Government examine the fairness of the Current Value Assessment (CVA) system used by the Province in assessing taxes on properties.

Through FOCA there has been a sub-committee formed under the acronym of W.R.A.F.T. which stands for "Waterfront Ratepayers After Fair Taxation".

The movement originally started in the Muskokas where the absence of available waterfront properties and mass development of the existing lands have escalated the value of waterfront properties. Families, while not having any desire to sell their long time held family waterfront properties have been forced from the waterfront due to the escalated taxes that occurred when their properties were assessed at current market values.

This same scenario is played out in varying degrees in communities across Ontario. As more and more people look for waterfront properties (like our own) our property values go up as each new sale is recorded in the Land Registry Office. With few properties actually being available to purchase our cottage property values are increasing strictly on a limited supply and high demand economical basis. Consequently, our assessments will continue to rise as well even though we have no intentions of selling our cottages.

At our Annual General Meeting on August 14th, Reeve Terry Clemens, CAO

Frank Mills from the Township of Marmora and Lake and Christine Burden from the Municipal Property Assessment office in Trenton will discuss how assessments and tax billings are assessed in our community.

The membership will be asked to take a position following the discussions as to whether we join WRAFT or not. The fee for joining will be \$200.00

WRAFT has published a brochure indicating it's primary focuses as being to:

Develop broad understanding among waterfront property owners of the inequities in the present tax system

Build a strong and unified coalition of concerned waterfront associations across Ontario

Fundraise to provide the necessary resources for a full scale effort to convince Queen's Park of serious inequities in present pure assessment-based methodology for distributing property taxes.

Research alternate methodologies for distributing property taxes in Canada, the U.S. and Europe and evaluate the best alternatives for use in Ontario.

Engage professional lobbying and public relations expertise to tell our story to the government and the public.

Continue to press for removal of education assessments from seasonal property taxes.

Their website is www.wraft.com.

I do feel that we need to continue to educate ourselves on property taxation and develop local strategies that would ensure our level of taxation remains fair.

Recently, everyone owning property on Twin Sisters Lake received 2004 tax bills from the Municipality. These billings contain the Current Value Assessment (CVA) impact. We are beginning to feel the upward pressure on property taxes from this assessment system.

Our Association would be less than representative of your interests if we did not take some action on the controversial and complicated issue of seasonal property taxation.

I will need your input at the Annual General Meeting to make certain that the Twin Sister Lakes Ratepayers Association Executive is given a clear direction in representing your interests on this important matter.

At the Annual General Meeting we will also have a presentation by Ken Phillips of the Crowe Valley Conservation Authority speaking on a variety of topics including the work of the Conservation Authority, the identification of new invading species and vegetation and the processes involved for doing work in and around the waterfront. He is a very interesting and knowledgeable speaker.

See you on August 14th at 10:00 a.m. at Pomeroy's Landing.

Twin Sisters Lake **Ratepayers Association New** **Website**

Thanks to the great efforts of Kirk Johnson of the West Lake we now have our own website at <http://www.tslra.org> . Kirk is building this site as a new means of communicating with our members on issues and developments affecting our lake community.

Thanks Kirk for your effort and we hope you enjoy our new website and visit the site throughout the year.

You might also want to check the website at www.marmora.org/twinsisters.html. This site promotes the Marmora area for business and tourism. Thanks to Vic and Diane Provost for your work on this website.

Feature Stories:

East Twin Sister Lake **Development-1946 to 1964**

(By
Charlie/Fred O'Neill-East Lake)

I have been asked to do a history of the development on the East Twin Sister Lake. I do qualify for this task as I first came to this lake as a 4yr old in 1946.

My father, Charlie O'Neill (who passed away in 1996 at the age of 93) originally owned the west 100 acres of Lot 29, 4th Concession, which encompassed 50% of the shoreline.

From the original 100 acres, he sold lake frontage, and in most cases with the option of constructing the proposed building.

As a boy growing up, I helped with the erection of most of these cottages built on the lake from 1951 onwards and including 1963. Listed below, in order of construction, are the cottages.

McAteer- Dr Doug and Margery (1946) located at the east end of 'O'Neills' Bay". Designed by the owner, it has a large stone fireplace in the center with a wrap-around screened porch.

Pollak-Frank and Myrtle/Westfall- Paul and Betty (1951) located at the edge of O'Neills Bay, south shore. Two bedroom and open kitchen/dining/living area plus front screened porch.

Charles O'Neill -my father (1953) located at the pine point of O'Neill's Landing. Standard 2 bedrooms, open living area and the obligatory screened porch across the front.

Note: We were the only farming family in the area who had a summer cottage. The farm was only 3 miles away. This cottage was moved along the beach in the 70's, rebuilt as a two storey 2 bedroom and now owned by my sister, Charlene O'Neill Morgan.

Young- Charlie and Joan (1954) One storey cottage erected by owner and nicely situated behind a grove of Norway pines.

O'Neill - Bill and Maureen (1956) One room cottage that grew into a full-sized cottage. Situated in the bay next to Young's' on the south shore. Built by owner.

O'Neill- Pat and Mary (1957) A cottage-style roof construction with future expansions. Built by owner next to his brother, Bill.

Heaven-Bill and Dorothy (circa 1956) Small boathouse built right on edge of south shore and used for many years. Still in good order. Builder/s unknown.

McCarthy -Dr Tom and Bonnie- (1956) Originally a large 3 bedroom building with two-sided screened porch also built very close to the shoreline. It has since been replaced by a 2 storey squared log building using the footprint of the original.

Gilgen- Russ and Anna Mae (1957) One storey 2 bedroom open plan, almost identical to Pollak/Westfall cottage. It is situated on the hillside and was renovated extensively when Russ and Anna retired. Now owned by their son, Russell and his wife Denise.

Potter-Ed (1958) Large one storey with cottage roof, similar to the McAteer roof. It had a kitchen, living room and 3 bedrooms. Now owned by the Heaven family.

Barry-Larry and Olive (1963) Sited on the top of the hill. Originally open plan concept with sleeping loft. Renovated by successive owners.

(Part Two will cover development from 1964- 1984. Stay tuned for the 2005 Newsletter edition!!)

OXYGEN BOTTLES RELOCATED TO SUMMER STORAGE UNIT BETWEEN THE LAKES

As of the Victoria Day Weekend the First-Aid Oxygen Bottles have been placed in the white refrigerator storage unit on the north side of the Culvert between our two lakes. The oxygen bottles are available to all cottagers in an emergency and any cottager wanting a key for the storage unit is asked to contact Charlie O'Neil, Director of the Twin Sister Lakes Cottage Association (Phone: 613-472-1541).

Charlie is responsible for the oxygen bottles. The Oxygen Bottles are easy to use but they do take some understanding. Charlie O'Neil would be glad to demonstrate the use of the Oxygen Bottles for any lake members at our Annual General Meeting.

If you are not able to be at the meeting please contact Charlie O'Neil at his cottage on East Twin Sister Lake for a demonstration or key.

PHOTO CONTEST TO HAVE AN EASIER SUBMISSION PROCESS

This will be our second year for the Twin Sister Lake Ratepayers Association to operate a photo contest. The submission criteria are simplified for this years contest. In 2004 you can