

THE TWIN SISTER LAKES
COTTAGE ASSOCIATION
"VIEW THROUGH THE CULVERT"
2005 EDITION"



The View through the Culvert is the Official Newsletter of the Twin Sister's Lake Ratepayers Association.

Welcome to the 2005 Newsletter:

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to another great cottage season on Twin Sister's Lake. The Executive of the Twin Sister's Lake Association have met throughout the fall and spring and think that we have a great agenda planned for this years Association and for the Annual General Meeting which, by the way, is scheduled for August 13th at 10:00 a.m. at the Pomeroy Landing between the lakes. Remember your lawn chairs and please consider bringing a pot luck desert item.

The Association needs to refresh it's Executive membership. Directors are needed for at least two positions on the Executive. Hans Noll has served the Lake Association now for 15 years and while we will miss him dearly he feels that the time is right for someone to replace him as an East Lake Director.

The Executive has also decided to appoint a Director to the

Association who will be responsible for overseeing the fisheries and environmental issues that we have deemed so important to our Lake community. This Director will a) evaluate the strength of the fisheries, b) continue our work on educating the public who transport their boats and use our lakes in defence against perils such as Zebra Mussel, c) to keep an eye on environmental and other pollutants being put into our waters, and d) to conduct water quality and clarity tests as required.

This sounds like a lot but in reality it is not a largely time consuming job. We have already posted signs at the Public Landing and all of us that use the water have an equal role to play in protecting the fish and natural habitat.

If you think you would like to become involved as either of the two Director positions we would love to hear from you either before or at the Annual General Meeting.

Jack Watkins
President

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Previous Association Concerns:

1. Taxation

At last years Annual General Meeting we had discussion on whether the Twin Sisters Lake Ratepayer's Association should join the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA) lobbying group known as WRAFT (Waterfront Ratepayers Association for Fair Taxation). WRAFT is preparing to lobby the Ontario Government for a more fair method of taxing waterfront seasonal properties such as our own.

Following your direction at that meeting we did join WRAFT.

While it has only been a year since our joining this movement and the movement itself is relatively young we are beginning to see some lobbying pressure being put on the province to consider alternate assessment processes. This will not be an overnight change and your Executive on your

behalf will keep a vigilant eye on the performance of WRAFT and the Ontario Government. For now we certainly support WRAFT.

You will recall that I suggested at the AGM that we should locally organize with all of the other Waterfront and Cottage Associations in the Township of Marmora and Lake to meet annually with the Municipal Council to review the taxation levels and services in the Township.

In April I received a letter from CAO Frank Mills of Marmora and Lake Township advising that for 2005 the Municipality has been able to hold the taxation levels at the 2004 rate. I do not know of any other Municipality in this part of Ontario that could make the same claim and I believe we all have a debt of gratitude that the Township of Marmora and Lake Council has been able to achieve these results.

On your behalf I wrote a letter of appreciation to the Reeve and Council congratulating them on this outstanding

achievement and thanking the Reeve for following through on his election promises of holding or reducing taxes in the Township.

I think it would be unrealistic if we were to expect a no tax rate increase year after year when inflation alone is driving all costs at a rate of approximately 3%. We also have to be sure that municipal services levels are not diminished simply to maintain a good reporting score for the taxpayers. I can honestly say that I have not seen a drop in any municipal services to our community although outside of road maintenance we are not large users of municipal services.

All that being said I did not feel there was a need for the annual taxation review with Council for 2005 given the stellar position of holding tax levels at 2004 levels.

A meeting will be considered in the spring of 2006.

Issue 2: Road Work

At the 2003 and 2004 Annual General Meeting

there had been discussions brought forward mostly by the Municipality of their plans for road improvements in the Township of Marmora and Lake. Shortly after these discussions I was aware that substantial roadway upgrades did occur in other cottage communities such as Dickie Lake and Crowe Lakes. I also saw improved road surfacing in and around Marmora.

We saw some hard top surfacing in the area of the Knoll home (White home with red tile roofing on the North Marmora Road) in what was always an area of road washout in early spring and during hard rain storms. The hard top surface has worked well in this area even with the heavy loads of logging trucks using the Twin Sister Lake Road.

Some members of the Association have expressed a desire to have more hard top surfacing completed in our Twin Sisters Lake area road systems. In 2005 the Municipality is planning on completing about 4 kilometers of oil-stoning of the Vansickle Road.

We all know that we cannot hard top the long swamp area of the Twin Sister's Lake road system since this is a corduroy road built on logs and actually floating. Hard top surfacing would break apart each shift of the road and I think the presence of the corduroy structure is one of the unique and historical qualities of our lake.

Next we have to come to an agreement on whether the hard topping of roads is in the best interest of our community or not? I have my own views that I will express on this point and please take them as being my views.

Hard top surfaced roads are expensive to install and very expensive to maintain. Hard top roads take away from the rural nature of "going to the cottage" and when I think of traveling to a cottage I don't see paved roads as being a great advantage over gravel roads. I would sooner like to see the gravel roads continue to be maintained, upgraded where needed and when necessary dust treated and snow cleared.

Hard top roads will also bring an increase in public travel to our Lake. They would increase the general public use of our lake and provide greater access and use of our waterways for a variety of purposes.

If we improve our road systems to the point where it draws more and more vehicles to our area we are likely to face the increased possibility of theft, break-ins and strongly increase the potential that some boater who is just coming for the day isn't going to properly wash their boat from their last zebra mussel lake visit and instantly we have a bigger problem that we cannot fix.

I consider the ecosystem of our lake almost perfect right now. I don't think our lake is fished beyond the point where the fisheries have any difficulty replenishing the few fish that are caught each year and our shoreline and waterways are not cluttered with garbage. This is largely due to the fact that every one of us has the same stake in

our cottage community. As soon as we open the road system up to more transient traffic and make it "easier" to get to the cottage we will be making it easier for everyone to come back to our Lake. As well these people do not have any stake in the preservation of the quality of our lakes. You will see more garbage and we will see more people on and around our lakes.

Break-ins on our lake are very rare and certainly less than what other cottage communities experience. Thefts are so low that many cottagers don't even take in their small outboard motors all season long, canoes and kayaks can be left in open view, and if you forget to lock your cottage or storage shed the only break-in you experience will likely come from squirrels and chipmunks.

I think we have it very good at our cottage folks. I think a huge part of our unique cottage lifestyle is due to the fact that our area does not have well developed road systems that open us up to more public

travel. At the same time it is sufficiently serviceable to allow us access to our cottages year-round.

It might be selfish on my part but if someone wants to come to our cottage community to see what they can steal in order to support their money or drug and alcohol needs, or to just get free liquor for the evening, or to come to an area where it is easy to put your boat into the water regardless of the fact you just brought it out of a zebra mussel inhabited lake I would sooner see them go elsewhere.

If people are coming to Twin Sister Lakes because it is an area where the OPP simply does not patrol unless called, and to an area where you can boat and drink liquor at will, I would sooner have them do their illegal drinking and boating in another area where they won't be bothered by bumpy and muddy roads where they won't have dust on their vehicles, and where they can launch their boats at an easier municipal launching site.

Personally, I enjoy the fact that I know who is not from our lakes, I enjoy the rough and rural like road that keeps my speed low enough to see a deer and avoid hitting a fawn, or a road system that makes me drive slow enough to know that even if I do collide with another vehicle we will both be traveling slow enough to survive the crash, and I enjoy a municipal boat launch that is kept in such poor shape that it is almost impossible to launch much more than a canoe or small fishing boat safely.

For me, dust and gravel and a poorly maintained public boat launch is just fine!

Issue 3: Water Quality

We have great news to report in terms of water testing of both the East and West Twin Sister's Lakes. In 2003 we commenced detailed water analysis of our lakes and these results showed all of the lakes were healthy and significantly absent of nitrates and other unnatural contaminants. This is the first time the lakes have been scientifically tested

since Queen's University and the Ontario government discontinued the annual and semi-annual testing of water quality in our lake.

At the 2004 AGM we discussed these results and also asked the membership to direct the Executive as to how often this type of lake water testing should occur. The discussions concluded that we should do a second testing in 2004 and if the results were the same or better that we would not again test the water for another two years (2006).

The Executives Vice-President Kirk Johnston and his very worthy assistant John Davies conducted testing in August 2004 (same period and locations as the previous years) and that analysis proved that the water quality had actually improved even from the previous year.

Therefore, following your direction, the water quality on the lake will not again be tested until August 2006.

Thank you to all for making certain that you

are not impacting negatively on the quality of our lake waters.

Issue4: Logging Operations

We are seeing a decline in the number of logging trucks hauling logs out of the North Country above our lakes. This is largely due to their having removed the trees that were of greatest value to them over the past three years. They are also now hauling their forest products out of the bush toward Coe Hill before traveling with our Ontario trees to the mills in Quebec.

To say that this three year period was without proper government involvement would be an understatement. Furthermore, the actual conditions in which the lands were left was mostly at the whim of the loggers. I have watched the destruction of our forests closely. I must state however, that for the most part the logging was done as responsibly as we could expect from an unregulated private firm. They have left the roads in better shape than they started since they had to

widen and improve the logging roads to allow for the passage of long trucks.

For those who snowmobile and ATV, you now have a better surface for your enjoyment. The environmental impact on creeks and ponds appears to be minimal and the wetlands are still abundant with natural habitat. I cannot find evidence of pollution that is attributable to the logging crew members, and the connecting municipal roads appear to have been maintained despite the heavier than usual truck weights that passed over them.

If we have had to survive a logging operation at all we appear to have done so without tremendous impacts on our community. Others may have other views on this issue but it is clear to me that no one was able to stop the harvesting of our trees from occurring and as long as people will sell their lands or at least the logging rights to commercial tree cutters then we are at the whim of these companies. Even with our local MPP being the

Minister responsible for the environment there was little to no monitoring by that department of the environmental impact that logging of our forests could or did have. Logging or any other commercialization of our community will always be a focus of your Twin Sister's Lake Cottage Association. We will continue to be vigilant of any activity that has the potential to threaten our community in a negative manner.

Issue 5: Political Issues and Involvement

The Twin Sisters Lake Cottage Association is from time to time asked to become more politically active in the community. An example of this expectation is inside this newsletter where a Ratepayers group is being organized for the whole of the Township of Marmora and Lake to ensure the Municipal and other government agencies are properly accountable to the ratepayers.

The Executive and the Twin Sisters Lakes Ratepayers Association are supporters of

accountability at all levels of government but we have taken the position since the formation of the Association that our purpose is not to become a political lobbying group.

Twin Sisters Lakes Ratepayers Association (this is the proper title) was incorporated on February 20, 1976 and the first slate of officers were Charlie Young, Henry McFarland, John McGregor, Ron Pomeroy, Charles O'Neill, Ken Beckett and Dr. D.K. McAteer.

At the time of Incorporating up to and including today the objective of the Corporation of the Twin Sister Lakes Ratepayers Association is "to establish an organization representing the environmental interests in Lots 23 to 32 inclusive in Concessions 1 to 6 inclusive in Marmora Township and lots 1 to 3 inclusive in Lake Township in the County of Hastings in the Province of Ontario, to fully represent these ratepayers, to promote and develop the interests of all members of the association in their

relations with one another and with the protection of land and the environment."

The Constitution also states the goal of the Associations includes "to establish and maintain a code of conduct between members and the general public and between members of the association with respect to the protection of the environment, fish and wildlife and the upkeep of the quality of wildlife in recreational areas, to promote friendly relations with other organizations involved in the protection of the environment and to provide means for negotiation and liaison with other bodies, to provide and to take all such actions as may be deemed necessary in order to preserve the quality of life in the Township of Marmora and the Township of Lake which may be interfered with by nature or by man."

Clearly the Twin Sister Lakes Ratepayers Association is a naturalist organization and not a political organization and the Executive in 1976 and

all of the subsequent Executives have maintained the intent of the original founding principles of that original Constitution.

Given the nature of our Constitution I believe it would be contrary for any member of the Executive or for the Twin Sister Lakes Ratepayers Association as a whole to sign petitions or to direct our membership to sign petitions or make other approaches to governments or to direct our membership on which political candidates to support.

In the past municipal election the Association was approached by members of other Lake Associations to support "their" candidates and have a direct say in the local government. The Executive refused and advised that our membership will be voting as individual taxpayers and each is free to choose their candidate. We did not as an individual Association take part or be represented at any "all Candidates meetings" strictly because it would

contravene our 1976 Constitution.

In this years “View Through the Culvert” We are allowing the placing of information on an environmental concern affecting the Marmora-Lake community but the Executive at our July 2nd meeting determined this would be as far as we would go in bringing the information to the membership. It is not against our Constitution to include this information in our newsletter but it would be against our Constitution to join and publicly and financially support the new Ratepayers group as an Association. I am therefore leaving it to each member of the Association as a Township Ratepayer to support or not support this new Ratepayers group but your Association will not be joining the Ratepayers group in any other capacity.

Issue 6:

Real Property Assessments of Lake Properties:

While an issue of Real Property Assessment is directly related to Municipal Taxation it is not one and the same.

The Ontario Municipal Property Assessment Corporation has been actively assessing lakefront properties on both Crowe and Dickie Lakes no doubt for the purpose of bringing the property values in line with current market values. This assessment activity will result in increased taxation assessments on several lakefront properties.

These assessment practices have already occurred in Peterborough County and a July 7, 2005 Peterborough Examiner news article quotes Reeve Ron Gerrow as stating “ Cottagers (in Havelock-Belmont-Methuen Township) want a tax cap from the county because soaring waterfront property values mean some assessments could more than double.

There already exists a 10% tax cap on multi-residential, commercial and industrial properties.

According to the Examiner article the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation is expected to announce later this year (2005) that waterfront properties have increased 40 to 60% according to Reeve Gerrow.



In Havelock-Belmont-Methuen waterfront property owners make up more than 70% of the taxpayers in that township. I would suggest that this is also true in Marmora and Lake.

To better explore the issue your Executive is inviting the Municipal CAO and Reeve and representatives of the Ontario Municipal Property Association as our guest speakers at the Annual General Meeting on August 13, 2005.

We hope you will see the emerging property assessment process as an important issue and one in which you will be better prepared for with current information.

I hope a review of some of these current and past issues being addressed by your Executive is informative and in line with what you also see as the issues affecting our life on Twin Sisters Lakes.

Much of our work depends on your \$10.00 per family donation to the Association and the volunteerism of the Executive and others. Please support us in our efforts by making sure your membership dues are kept up to date. They can be paid directly at the Annual General Meeting or through our website at www.tslra.ca.

Jack Watkins
President and
Newsletter Editor.

The Beauty of Twin Sisters Lakes:

The following letter was received from Melanie Hicks of the West Lake.

“Every time I come here, I am amazed at the beauty of this place. As a naturalist I see so much more than a vacation get-away.

This area provides wonderful habitat for many, ourselves included. That’s part of the beauty here. The variety of song birds, shore birds and waterfowl. The presence of mammals big and small. The number of amphibians and reptiles are terrific. Even the abundance of our insect population is important. We have a very special environment here, one that is hard to find these days. We have a diversified environment. Every species in the ecosystem contributes to the health and stability of the environment. Certain species help to indicate just how well the system is working. For instance the high weed content of our lakes indicates a healthy water system, as pollutants and acid rain kills off these plants. This also tells me there is healthy fish population although I’m

not sure of that because they seem to always outsmart my lures. Our abundant frog population is an excellent environmental indicator. Frog population cannot be sustained unless there is a healthy environment. The mixed forests around us provide habitat for many living things. Every time I visit I look forward to finding something new, something I’ve never seen before and Mother Nature most often provides. Also provided are things that are common, everyday. Things such as Herring Gulls perched on the rocks, the Ruby-throated humming birds fighting over food territory, chipmunks, squirrels and birds of all types by day, beautiful sunsets, beaver and muskrat swimming by, owls and whip-poor-wills by night. The fact that these things are common is amazing. I hope that we all can see the true beauty of this place. I also hope that this beauty is always here, for all to enjoy both present and future”.

Melanie Hicks.

Julie Maynes Gives Marmora A New “TWIST”

When I heard that Porch and Parlour, a store featuring home décor and gifts, was outgrowing its space in downtown Marmora and expanding into the space next door (formerly the Marett Department Store), I became curious to know more about the owner, Julie Maynes and the people who are helping to make Marmora an even more desirable destination for residents, cottagers and tourists.



Julie grew up in Marmora, where her family owned Stedmans Department Store. She attended elementary school here and High School in Madoc. I was not surprised to hear that Julie then studied Art at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick. Her creative flair is obvious as soon as one enters the store. Julie and her husband, Trevor Winn, have two children, Hannah age 5 and Matthew age 11.

Julie always felt that Marmora had great potential for development and along with a number of other industrious and visionary residents of the town, became very involved in her community. Julie is particularly excited about the “Main Street Program”, a provincial government pilot project involving Marmora, Madoc, Tweed and Stirling, which will provide wonderful opportunities for the whole area. The Community Futures Development Corporation will assist by providing funding and interest-free loans.



When you visit “Twist”, you will be delighted to see the beauty of the 19th century building with its spectacular tin ceiling and innovative waterfall, visible from the street.

The store aims to feature vintage inspirations with products that are retro, while at the same time modern and useful. Included are nifty gifts, costume jewelry, furniture and a clothing line.



Julie stressed that a number of people have worked with her and been a great support, not least of which is her husband, Trevor, who worked on the

renovation of the building. Two of the valued people you will see at "Twist" and 'Porch and Parlour" are Jane McCoy and Bea Bair who have been very involved in the process of developing the stores and in supporting Julie and her work.

On behalf of the Twin Sister Lakes Ratepayer's Association, I would like to acknowledge the work of Julie and the many others in town who are working so hard to promote the growth and development of the community.

Barb Craig
East Lake

**Twin Sister
Lakes: A Special
Appreciation
from Ray Ash**

Sue and I miss the Twin Sister Lakes and all the good times we had there. Most important are the people and everyone on both lakes are very special people. For all the years that most of you have been there look around, look at what you enjoy week

after week of your lives, listen to the sounds of the trees and the birds and the wild life that you enjoy.

The Twin Sister Lakes are very special , so are the people who visit there year after year .It truly is a little piece of heaven on earth , ask the Heavens. Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall The Twin Sisters Lake community has it all

Jack , it is people like you and the Executive and all the people who attend the meetings year after year that give the lakes such beauty . It is because of the people like you guys that care and do everything you can to keep the natural beauty of the environment around the lakes . Don't ever stop

Hi Mrs. Pomeroy.

We miss you all (and the lakes)!

Ray and Sue Ash

**WE NEED
ENTRYS FOR
THE TWIN
SISTER LAKES
PHOTO
CONTEST**

At the 2002 Annual General Meeting the Executive introduced the idea of a photo contest at Twin Sister Lakes.

Each year we ask all lake residents to participate in this great adventure.

We need you to submit your best photos in one, two, or each of the following three categories:

- **FUN AT THE LAKE**
- **PETS OR WILDLIFE AT THE LAKE**
- **SCENIC VIEWS OF THE LAKE**

The way the contest works is as follows.

Photos can be submitted to Director Bonnie Daynes up to and including the morning before the opening of the Annual General

Meeting. The photos can be on any size of formatting and they will be judged just prior to the Annual Meeting by our worthy Judges, Bonnie Daynes and Marilyn Pomeroy.

The winning photos and photos receiving honourable mention in each category will be displayed at the Annual General Meeting. One of the submitted photos will be chosen as “Best Over-All Photo” for that year. Your photo will be framed and a recognition plaque will be mounted on the frame. The photo will be returned to the winner for hanging at your Cottage to show your winning entry to all your visitors for years to come.

Like all endeavours, this will only work if you participate. The photos must be taken in the current 2004-2005 year. You cannot submit photos from previous years.

This is a fun thing to do and we hope that people do participate to show everyone those special photos from our lake.

Computer printed photos are acceptable since

many people have now opted to digital photography. Computer enhanced photos create an unfair advantage and we ask that the photos be submitted in their original format.

Please bring your photos to the Annual General Meeting or submit your photos to Bonnie Daynes or any member of the Lake Executive.

The “Same Old Isn’t The Same Old” at the Marmora Independent Food Store:

Through the course of the spring the Marmora IGA Food Store was almost instantly converted to the Marmora Independent Grocers store. The ownership has not changed and remains in the capable hands of Kelly Welch but that is all that hasn’t changed.

The new store is now part of a large chain of independent grocers who offer personalized services but with a major food store

backing, in fact the largest food store in Canada ..the Weston Group.

What this means for local consumers is that the Marmora Independent Food Store can now offer the “Presidents Choice” fine line of food products. This change brought us instant access to more weekly specials that we commonly see under the “President’s Choice” label. President Choice products endeavour to offer quality food alternatives to national brand food producers. It creates competition that in almost all cases results in better pricing of food products for consumers.

For instance, a Catelli brand spaghetti at \$1.49 will now compete on the shelves with a President’s Choice Spagetti brand at just 99 cents. That creates a one-third savings to the consumer.

The change involved several internal dilemma’s for Kelly and his crew of 44 employees but they seem to have mastered the transition without any flaws. The whole

store pricing system, payroll system, stock supply and management system and all of the store's "visuals" changed almost overnight. The stock on shelves did not deplete but when you walked into the store one day you were buying IGA brands and within a matter of days the store was totally re-stocked with the Independent Grocer's products.

In talking with Kelly Welch he explained some of what was required from a management point of view and he commented humourously that "I guess you really can teach old dogs new tricks" as he kidded about a very tense couple of weeks that were now nicely in his past.

I think those of us that have shopped in the store recognize the products we are buying are better priced and there are far more specials. When it comes to spaghetti my 99 cent pasta tastes just as good as the \$1.49 spaghetti and I am happy any time to be getting that kind of value for my money.

We wish Kelly and crew all the best in the future and hope the transition to an Independent Grocer is rewarding for everyone.

**THE ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING IS
SATURDAY,
AUGUST 13th 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.**

