

# Newsletter

## From the President

Since our first meeting on Labour Day weekend in 2000, when we decided that, yes, an organization for the Pointe au Baril area was needed, a lot has been accomplished to firmly establish the basic roots for a successful association. At our second meeting the Articles of our charter were voted on and passed, a Board of Directors established and some important committees formed.

Our Mission Statement and Objectives were finalized and, I'm happy to say, we've already begun working on them. An outline of these can be found on our website [www. oursturgeonbay.com](http://www.oursturgeonbay.com).

The most crucial issue by far is the condition of the waters found within the shorelines east and north of Brignall Banks. We're fully up on water quality testing now and we're participating with the Townships commendable volunteer programme. Water/boating safety educational programmes will be started this summer.

Association delegates have attended seminars hosted by the Township, the Georgian Bay Association and the Georgian Bay Foundation. These invitations were gratefully received and provided us with critical information on important issues such as amalgamation, water levels, water quality, air pollution, watershed and wetland problems, and taxation. These are all important subjects relevant to the Mission of the Association, and as we found out, critical issues to many other groups like ourselves. We need to be affiliated with these organizations for they offer us tremendous strength and resources.

We've joined the Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association ( F.O.C.A), and will soon be incorporated and insured. I'm excited about the new cottage road insurance programme they now offer members like us. You will be hearing a lot more about this in the future. F.O.C.A too brings us a wealth of help and resource that we vitally need to be successful.

.....Continued on page 2

### ***Members Have Told Us....***

What concerns them the most.

The main issue seems to be **water quality**. Other issues mentioned were **environmental protection, water safety** and **shoreline development**.

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## OUR STURGEON BAY POINTE AU BARIL ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT	Bob Causton..... (home) 905-824-4352..... (cottage) 705-366-2883
VICE PRESIDENT	Cathy Kidston.....(home) 519-836-6897 .....(cottage) 705-773-8299
SECRETARY	R. Keith Gardner.....(home) 705-366-2204
TREASURER	Helen Tedford.....(home) 705-366-2898
DIRECTORS AT LARGE	Andrea Bradford.....(home) 905- 469-3359

### Presidents' Message continued:

Personally, for the Association to be considered a success, we must make a positive and ongoing contribution to the community and to the environment. Something that everyone can benefit from.

Already our first major challenge is upon us. Our water is in trouble.....it's unhealthy now and getting worse! The test results are shocking. Remediation must start immediately. I can't stress this enough. Attend one of our seminars this summer or ask one of our Directors now to explain these results. We need to work together to turn this around and, I've been assured, it can be turned around. We'll be launching an aggressive testing agenda this spring to identify what is contaminating our water. The Township is currently investigating the feasibility of a formal environmental "lake plan" to help us define a proactive plan that can help us further identify problem areas, establish corrective measures and render accountability. Our councillors are working hard to get us the assistance we need to get this started but it will take money and support. For this we need members, lots of them, who will be willing to contribute both through membership dues and voluntary "hands-on" help. This is the only way this project can work...money and time.

Please consider joining our Association and by doing so you'll be helping us help yourself. Talk to your friends and neighbours about joining....call a Director if you need more information than this newsletter provides. Call me. But please do something! Our water is in an alarming condition from Pointe au Baril village right on through to the provincial park.

Together, and I mean you and I, we can make this problem go away. We drink it and we swim in it. Need I say more?

Join us, please.

*Your President, Bob Causton*

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**Unless you have paid your membership...**



this will be your **only newsletter**. See back page for membership form.



# ***WATER QUALITY TESTING and SUMMARY RESULTS***

Members of our association attended a Water Testers Meeting on November 17, 2001. This was a training seminar to discuss testing methods and to review the overall results. We went to learn about water testing but what we really found out was something quite alarming. Aquatic ecologist Mr. Karl Schiefer PhD. was on hand to present the conclusions of test results collected thus far and was very thorough in his presentation of the data.

Over the past few years water samples have been gathered by this group of volunteers, supported by the Township. Until recently Rick Tedford was performing sampling here in Sturgeon Bay (in other words, our waterways around the village of Pointe au Baril and the provincial park). The association has now taken over the equipment and testing will resume in the spring.

Water testing will involve four elements. 1) Conductivity which measures hardness and softness of the water (mineral content) 2) pH Levels which determine acidity of the water 3) Secchi Depth to help establish the degree of phosphorous loading and quantity of plankton present. (Phosphorous and plankton have a direct effect on water clarity and this plays an all important role in the healthy habitat for marine life.) and 4) Coliforms which are the measure of pathogens or bacteria in the water.

Briefly, the results of our water were not very good. Our water tests showed that in some cases it was 4-5 times higher here than most of Georgian Bay or even the Main Channel. The high phosphorous content readings means that our water has become nutrient enriched contributing to a high rate of growth for plankton. Not news to any of us but at least now we're beginning to know why. Phosphorous levels come from septic systems, lawn fertilizers, and perhaps drainage from lakes and streams that feed Sturgeon Bay. This year we will test for the net contribution of these watersheds. We have to accurately determine what is the source of this as it directly affects fish habitats, marine life in general as well as our own enjoyment. Bacterial levels were not all that encouraging either as compared to other sampled areas....even just around the corner at Brignall Banks. The year 2000 bacterial readings indicated a need for caution. Water for human consumption should be treated or boiled. However the point was made that basically our water is still safe enough for recreational use.

The bottom line is that our Sturgeon Bay water needs to be rehabilitated! We have some of the poorest quality water in this area of Georgian Bay. Most of this poor quality is largely due to poor management on our part. Therefore we all need to be more diligent and we need to start now. A more complete water quality report will be presented at our Annual meeting.

The good news is that, according to Mr. Schiefer, once we stop the process the water will recover fairly quickly, as in just a few years. But we must do this together.

Interestingly, an independent private environmental study conducted recently indicated that the area of Sturgeon Bay around the provincial park could sustain at least one hundred more cottages/residences. When you review the test results (available from the Association or the Township) or look at our water on a sunny summer day, this additional capacity is hard to imagine.

To work together we need to encourage more new members to join so we can have a strong association and represent the best interests of the whole community. It impacts our health, the welfare of our families, our fishing and tourism industry, our property values and most of all, one of most essential reasons we all love this beautiful place....the water. It needs our help.

*Our Sturgeon Bay Pointe au Baril Association  
Mission Statement*

The Association is committed to the protection of the natural health and beauty of Sturgeon Bay - its waters, its living landscape of marine and wildlife, plants and topography. Those waters and shorelines of Sturgeon Bay that lie east, north and south of Brignall Banks including the village of Pointe au Baril are the primary focus of the Association. It's members are working towards the common goals of water quality, ecologically sound shoreline development, wetland preservation and boating and swimming safety.

*We Join F.O.C.A.*

We are now full fledged members of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers Associations (F.O.C.A.). This group which includes over 500 associations involving over 150,000 properties involving more than half a million members was established in 1965. A non-profit and voluntary organization, F.O.C.A. represents the largest group of ratepayers in the province and provides members with resources for political lobbying, lake stewardship, full service insurance programs, educational seminars, and advisory panels working towards boating safety, land-use planning, taxation issues, and environmental studies. As our Association grows, F.O.C.A. will be a worthwhile partner for us to help develop meaningful seminars and programs for our area. For more info on this organization check out their website at [www.foca.on.ca](http://www.foca.on.ca).

By the time you read this, our Association will have become a fully incorporated entity and as such can qualify for liability insurance as offered by F.O.C.A. underwriters. This will be our next administrative step towards becoming a self sufficient and fully insured organization.

**Annual Meeting**

Please join us Sunday, August 4, 2002  
At 10:30 a.m.  
At the Pointe Au Baril Community Center  
For our 2nd Annual Meeting

## *We attend the G.B.A. Deer Horn Conference*

On November 3, 2002 Cathy Kidston (V.P.) and Bob Causton (P) attended the Georgian Bay Association's (GBA) annual meeting at Black Creek Pioneer Village as guests representing our association. The G.B.A. is a volunteer group consisting of 23 independent cottage/resident associations that represent over 4,400 families with interests in the eastern and northern shores of Georgian Bay. Simply stated their mission is to "ensure the careful stewardship of the greater Georgian Bay environment and to promote the quiet enjoyment of its diverse and finite space"

It proved to be an educational day as we heard from several guest speakers on the topics of Air quality, Water Levels, the Biosphere Reserve, and Township issues such as amalgamation and hospital funding.

Peter Ketchum, Reeve, Township of the Archipelago shared his personal vision and some options for us to evaluate. Reeve Ketchum suggested several amalgamation scenarios and the possible outcomes of each. For now, it seems as though amalgamation has lost some of its earlier momentum and the players are standing back for a second look. Meanwhile the situation is losing some of its alarming overtones. The Township is working hard to ensure that its contribution to the hospital is fair and proportionate.

Mary Muter, Chair, G.B.A. Environment Committee gave a seminar on air quality and water levels. There is now a permanent air quality monitoring station in Parry Sound. Surprisingly, on some days there can be more ozone here than in downtown Toronto!! Especially out among the coastal islands. As readings are taken further inland they can drop considerably. However when ozone readings are high we have 20-30% less lung capacity, asthmatics are much more at risk and many are far more sensitive to allergens. Much of this smog comes from other places, like central U.S.A., and is settling here only to become more noxious because of the heat generated from our rocky shorelines.

Ms. Muter informed us that Great Lake levels will probably fall another metre over the next 100 years. She gave us an aerial pictorial overview of the disastrous shrinkage that our coastal wetlands have already suffered, the toll on fish, flora and fauna, and the detrimental effects of subsequent dredging at local marinas. The slides were a convincing statement of the damage already done to the eastern shoreline of Georgian Bay and her prognosis was not good. The G.B.A. seem to be the only group actively charting and measuring this impact and taking the message to the International Joint Commission, the government and anyone else that matters. They truly deserve our support. Despite global warming or significantly less rainfall, the primary reason for seriously lower Lake Huron/Georgian Bay water levels is the excessive seaway depth at Sarnia and the loss of silt entering the river due to man-made sandtraps (for more beaches). Those on the western shores think the additional frontage is great and are not too alarmed by this drop in water.

Patrick Northey, President of the G.B.A. and Director of the Georgian Bay Foundation outlined the Biosphere Reserve Application proposal and its progress. This proposal has been ongoing for the past six years and is trying to establish sustainable sensible economic development while protecting our ecological resources. There are concerns that the government is allowing isolated activities before the plan is finalized. Furthermore, designation as a Heritage Coast does not take environmental issues into account. These concerns are vital and need resolution.

It was interesting to learn that the G.B.A. and the many other associations present share many of the concerns of our own association on both a macro and micro level. We were in good company and made several acquaintances that will be of help to us next year. Water quality and air quality reports can be found at [www.georgianbay.ca](http://www.georgianbay.ca)

## ***Exciting New Road Insurance Program***

F.O.C.A. (Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association) has just announced an insurance program for member associations that offers economical Commercial General Liability for cottage roads. The underwriter, St. Paul Canada, will provide up to \$5,000,000 to members for each road at an approximate cost of \$300-400 per annum. Premiums will vary according to the overall length of the road. All administration is handled through the Association and there must be a minimum of at least 75% participation of the residents on each road.

Accidents are always unfortunate, unplanned events, regardless of road or weather conditions. Increased volume, either with cars, ATV's or dirt bikes can only raise the risk factor that those with unassumed roads all share. There are cases already on file in the Ontario courts of settlements that can easily cost each cottage owner much more than what their cottage/property is worth.

Contact us for more details. This is important coverage for anyone on a private road and a very inexpensive preventive measure when shared equally (\$10-\$20 each).



## U pcoming Educational Seminars this summer (Watch for them!)

- 1) **Water quality and Shoreline Management**  
with Andrea Bradford
- 2) **Water Safety and Boating Education**  
with Shane Evoy



# *Please Join / Renew Now!!!*

We would like to extend a warm welcome  
to everyone to join  
**Our Sturgeon Bay Pointe au Baril Association.**

This first newsletter is being sent to everyone in the Sturgeon Bay area. If you know of anyone we missed, please pass it on.

Our membership year runs from May 1 to April 30. Fees are \$50.00 per property, which includes one voting membership. Associate membership (non-voting) is available. Dues are \$25.00 annually. We look forward to your membership in the Association for 2002/2003.

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## **Our Sturgeon Bay Pointe-au-Baril Association Membership Form**

Name:	
Home Street Address:	
City:	Postal Code:
Telephone Number: (    )	
Cottage Address:	
Lot number:	
City: Pointe-au-Baril	Postal Code:
Telephone Number: (    )	
Email address:	

Please complete and return with cheque or money order to:

**Our Sturgeon Bay & Pointe-au-Baril Association**  
**P.O. Box 183,**  
**Pointe au Baril, Ontario**  
**P0G 1K0**

Please add any questions or comments you may have to the back of this form.