



# WEST CARLING ASSOCIATION

9 Christie Street,

R.R. #1 Nobel, Ontario, P0G 1G0

Since 1921

Incorporated 1992

\*Georgian Bay Shoreline Concerns\*

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## WINTER 2010 NEWSLETTER

### *President's Letter*

By Bruce Davidson

I suppose the expression “It’s an ill wind that blows no good” is a fairly apt depiction of events in Carling Township this past year. On the basis of anecdotal evidence alone, I would venture that the summer of 2009 was somewhat different from what we have come to expect in recent years. For starters, boat traffic was way down, at least in terms of the large cruisers that ply the waters from Port Severn to the North Channel. Nor were there a whole lot of seaplanes doing scenic tours out of Parry Sound. I would bet the Island Queen saw a marked decrease in visitors as well. Construction activity on the Bay seemed to be well down, although I expect the backlog of applications from the pre-recession era has cushioned the blow to local contractors. Finally, I believe accommodation providers suffered mightily from a drastic decline in the American visitor market.

On the other hand, several local businesses apparently have done very well indeed in capitalizing on the 2009 buzzword ‘staycation’. Killbear Park would have done much better were it not for the string of wet weekends in the early part of the summer. Nevertheless, Terry Gilbert was all smiles (no surprise) in mid-August when he posted huge lineups at his fish restaurant in Snug Harbour and Bryan Perks told me “If this is a recession, bring it on” for his smoked fish stand outside the Park. The number of sea kayaks and personal watercraft seemed undiminished, although I have no hard data to support that observation.

So where is the silver lining for the rest of us? Well I sure am hoping that, as members of the West Carling Association, you see yourselves as environmental stewards. A significant portion of your dues, as you know, goes to the Georgian Bay Association (GBA) which unabashedly stands to preserve and protect. In this regard life got a whole lot easier this past summer. Not that it’s ever easy, but there is a very welcome change in the air from conspicuous consumption as author Vance Packard coined several decades ago to sustainability as a life style. I am sure the fish, waterfowl and trees welcome this new ethic. It has also given your Directors a breathing spell in which to ensure that the new Official Plan is not going to be compromised or circumvented before it takes its final shape.

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But lest you think that all is fine and dandy, we do not seem to be doing very well on an issue of great importance to everyone on the shoreline – the long term trend to diminished water levels. Despite a huge input of time and money by the GBA, our message that remediation by way of outflow control on the St Clair River seems to have either fallen on deaf ears or tight purse strings. The International Great Lakes Study Board found in May that we had good reasoning behind our claim that several billion gallons of water were permanently being lost every day as a result of the deepening of the St. Clair River but recommended that no remedial action be taken. Can you believe that? Unfortunately that remarkably shortsighted view came during a year of temporary relief owing to unusually high rainfall, which makes our task that much more difficult. As you may be aware, the GBA has since split its responsibilities with the water levels now falling under the umbrella of the environmental charity known as Georgian Bay Forever (GBF). So if you want to lend financial support to the water levels issue, that is the body in question.

While we are on the subject of challenges that lie ahead, you should be aware that, try as we might, the despoliation of our shoreline by wind turbines is an issue that will not go away. Just when we thought that Ontario's proposed tougher new setback requirements might be our salvation, there appears to be a loophole that could jeopardize our position once more. As well, the designation of Franklin Island as a Conservation Reserve continues to be impeded by First Nations claims. Finally, invasive species continue to take their toll, air quality worsens and the fishery is in poor shape. So we have our work cut out for us.

Retiring Directors include Jill Kimberly, editor and publisher of an excellent local cookbook and a driving force in the establishment and continuation of the Carling Market, Scott Tomenson who represented the interests of our membership in the Franklin Island Stewardship Program, and David Rapson, who gave us a valuable window on our southern constituency. We thank you sincerely for your contributions. Our quest for a new Director with ecological skills has been answered in the person of Dick Biggins. We are pleased to now have representation from an organization as credible as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Finally, we warmly welcome to the Board Bill Bialkowski whose mathematical genius has given the GBA/GBF ammunition to fight the water level problem. I am sure you have seen and enjoyed Bill's extensive writings in GBA's Update.

Those of you who attended the AGM this year appeared to enjoy both the convenience and the ambiance etc. We therefore anticipate holding our AGM's at Gilly's in the future so long as Sarah and Terry are not too greatly inconvenienced

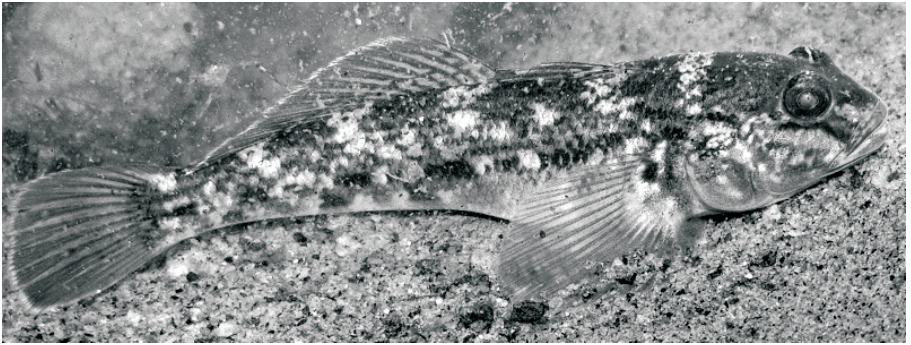
For those of you lucky enough to access your cottages over the winter, enjoy. For the rest of us, I guess we have to count down the days until the spring breakup. Best wishes to you and yours in the meantime.

# ROUND GOBIES INVADE GEORGIAN BAY

by R Biggins

The round goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*), a native of Eastern Europe, has invaded Georgian Bay. It was first seen in the St. Clair River, Ontario in 1990. It now inhabits all five Great Lakes, and in some areas it is the dominant fish species (100 gobies per square meter have been reported). This invasive species, like many others to invade and disrupt our Georgian Bay ecosystem, likely arrived in the ballast waters of ocean going ships.

Round gobies generally grow to less than 18 cm (7 in) and can live five years. They have soft bodies and protruding eyes near the top of their large, round heads. Spawning males are almost solid black, while females and immature males are mottled gray and brown. Gobies look much like our native sculpin, but gobies have one fused pelvic fin on their underbelly. Sculpins and all our native fish have two separate pelvic fins.



Gobies feed on fish, fish eggs, insects, snails, zebra mussels, and other aquatic invertebrates. Although gobies prefer rocky near-shore habitat, they can inhabit deeper waters and other substrates. The female goby deposits her eggs (thousands/year) under rocks and logs, and the male guards the nest/eggs. Spawning occurs numerous times from April-September with many young produced in a short time. (For example: In 2008, I saw no gobies while snorkeling in front of my Long Bay cottage; in 2009, I could find ten gobies/minute in the same area.)

Although the final environmental impacts of the round goby invasion are unknown, researchers report declines of native mottled sculpins and logperch in the St. Clair River. Biologists believe large goby populations may displace some smaller native fish and impact larger game fish by eating their eggs and reducing preferred forage fish abundance. Although walleye, bass, and other native fish will eat gobies, biologists are unsure how this predator/prey relationship will evolve. Whatever the outcome, Georgian Bay has received another blow to its once highly productive and balanced aquatic ecosystem.

What can you do? Round gobies like zebra mussels are here, and we will likely have to learn to live with them. But, there are ways to keep the next biological disaster from happening. Support the Georgian Bay Association's efforts to expand international laws regarding the release of biologically contaminated ballast water into the Great Lakes. Learn more about how invasive species spread, their environmental impacts, and ways to help control their spread. The following web sites contain information on these issues: [www.invadingspecies.com](http://www.invadingspecies.com), [www.georgianbay.ca](http://www.georgianbay.ca), [www.mnr.gov.on.ca](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca), and [www.glsc.usgs.gov](http://www.glsc.usgs.gov)

## **Good news from Georgian Bay Land Trust**

We have succeeded in reaching our goal of \$600,000 to support the purchase of Sandy Island, our number one priority for conservation on Georgian Bay. Without the support of committed Georgian Bayers, we would not have been able to achieve this lofty financial goal. We sincerely appreciate those people who were kind enough to make this project successful. The lead fundraising guru, John Stark of Carling, can take great credit in raising over \$100,000 for this project. The Georgian Bay Land Trust (GBLT) will now work with their volunteer stewardship team to preserve this beautiful island in perpetuity. Last summer's paddle around Sandy Island was a huge success, as people of all ages from the community managed to circumvent the island by kayak and got a taste of the fantastically diverse ecosystem of Sandy Island.

The GBLT also would like to congratulate the winners of the Rocks of Georgian Bay photo contest! Our jury was impressed by the variety of stunning pictures submitted this year – more than 400 in all, making the final decision a difficult one. After much discussion and most likely some restless nights, our jurors chose 25 photographs to be included on this year's Rocks of Georgian Bay poster, the second in a series of posters celebrating the beauty of eastern Georgian Bay and the North Channel.

The poster portrays the many faces of the rocks, from orange lichen-covered crags to smooth whale's backs plunging into the water, each one a snippet of the Bay's beauty. The splendour of the rocks is just one of the many reasons to protect this incredible natural wonder, a cause the GBLT is forwarding through conservation, promotion and education. Our "Unique Trees of Georgian Bay" poster has raised over \$10,000 that directly supports education within our community about the delicate nature of Georgian Bay so they can assist us in caring for these unique properties. We hope this poster will continue to be purchased by those who love the Bay so we may together preserve this place for our families.

The posters are available for sale on the GBLT website ([www.gbtl.org](http://www.gbtl.org)), or by calling 416-440-1519 ext. 3

### **PLEASE RENEW YOUR WEST CARLING ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP**

if you have not done so, email: [mgordon003@sympatico.ca](mailto:mgordon003@sympatico.ca)

Please Ask a Neighbour who is not a member to join. The WCA needs the support of all potential members to, among other things, effect town council (eg to ensure good development); protect Franklin Island; contribute to the Georgian Bay Association's efforts re stopping water-level decline.

# RECOGNIZING ADDITIONAL DONATIONS

By Michael Gordon

This was my first year responsible for the membership database and as I opened envelope after envelope I was surprised and delighted to discover how many members chose to add a donation on top of their basic \$60 membership dues.

In total, over 50 members made an additional donation to the West Carling Association and/or the GBA. These additional donations totaled over \$2,000 and enabled the West Carling Association to engage in critical issues such as:

- Enhancing the stewardship of Franklin Island by contributing to the hiring of 2 full-time summer stewards to do education and campsite clean-up activities.
- Participating actively in the process of updating the Official Plan for the Township of Carling to ensure the character of our area is protected
- Completing the work with the Georgian Bay Land Trust, Nature Conservancy of Canada and MNR to evaluate major coastal wetlands with the hope of having them designated Provincially Significant Wetlands – a major improvement in their protected status

Thank you to all those who made additional donations, they really make a big difference.



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# Lookout for Lyme

by Alex Davidson

There is nothing like an early June exploratory walk around the cottage property to reload the job jar for another summer season. Needing attention were a number of mature white pines that had been either blown down or sheared off at the trunk by what must have been some pretty violent wind storms over autumn and winter months. I also noted with some minor annoyance that a group of deer which have taken to wintering in the hollow behind the cottage over the past couple of years had done even more tree damage than usual. In addition to defoliating all the cedars to the height of their grazing reach, they had taken to nipping off the tender branch tips of the young pines, thereby deforming future development of the trees. Too many deer and too little forage I guess.

At any rate, I took to cutting and clearing a large pine that had fallen behind the cottage and within the area where the deer had been wintering. About a week later I noticed a rash on my forearm that looked unusual. It consisted of a small black spot that was encircled by a red ring which resembled a small bull's eye; no more than one quarter inch across. Over the next few days the ring expanded a bit. An alarm bell went off as I recalled reading of a rash of this type that is an early indication of tick bite and Lyme disease infection. I made an appointment with my doctor in Toronto who confirmed my suspicions and prescribed antibiotics. I feel particularly lucky: first that the tick bite occurred on a highly visible part of my body, and secondly that I had read that earlier article describing the source and indications of Lyme disease. I have since learned that the disease has become disturbingly prevalent in the Parry Sound area, probably as a result of the rapidly expanding deer population and mild winters over recent years.

Lyme disease is contracted from the bite of a tick which carries a bacterium known as *Borrelia burgdorferi* in its stomach. The tick's principle host is the familiar white tailed deer. The classic sign of early infection is as I described above; a red painless and itch-less rash, often with a bull's eye shaped ring, that occurs at the site of the tick bite 3 to 30 days after the bite. The small black dot in the centre of my rash was either the head of the tick, left behind if I scratched the site, or the actual nymph stage of the tick, which is not much larger than the dot over an "i". In fact it



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is the nymph that is the most likely source of my bite, as it typically goes unnoticed and must be attached for a day for transmission of the infection to occur. When detected early, effective treatment of the disease is usually accomplished with antibiotics such as doxycycline (in adults) and amoxicillin (in children).

However the bad news is that a rash does not always appear, or develops in a spot not readily detectable. If infection is allowed to proceed undetected and untreated, symptoms such as erythema migrans (reddish rashes elsewhere on the body) and flu-like symptoms such as headache, muscle soreness, fever, and malaise are likely occur. If the disease is allowed to progress from lack of treatment, its ultimate manifestations are not pretty. As usual, a trip to the Wikipedia website on lime disease will guarantee scary scenarios.

Prevention includes the common sense advice of wearing fully protective clothing when working in the bush, particularly where deer are known to be prevalent. Attached ticks should be removed promptly with tweezers (without twisting) , as removal within 36 hours can reduce transmission rates close to zero.

Wikipedia and our Federal government's Health Canada website provide lots detailed information. They are both easily accessed by googling 'lyme disease'.

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## WCA Website

by Marc Cooper

The West Carling Association (WCA) is pleased to announce the launch of our new website [www.westcarling.com](http://www.westcarling.com). Today the website has information on the WCA; who we are, what we do, and how to become a member, including a feature where you can pay or renew your membership by credit card. You can even get the local weather from Parry Sound, Killbear or Point au Baril right on our home page.

Over the winter the website will grow to include helpful resources and links, past WCA newsletters and special updates as they happen. Everyone is invited to send feedback to [info@westcarling.com](mailto:info@westcarling.com) and be sure to include suggestions on what content and features you would find helpful. Visit [www.westcarling.com](http://www.westcarling.com) today!



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## Raft Dodger

by David Hume

In July of 08 , I rounded up a number of items I had collected around the cottage and boathouse with the thought of constructing a swim raft in anticipation of my grandsons' visit just a couple of weeks away . A 6' x 6' raft was launched, anchor and all, and placed approx. 15' off shore in about 5/6' of water . The three kids came up and as it turned out, the raft was the unquestionable hit of the summer. The raft sits low in the water and has a slow, lumbering list to it with the right weight distribution.

The raft sits in the shallow end of a small bay off the North side of our island and while it is accessible from only the East and West sides, the West side is shallow and full of shoals being navigable only to canoes and kayaks of which there is extremely limited usage for those reasons.

Arriving home after Labour Day, there in the mail was a manila envelope from Transport Canada ordering:the raft be removed immediately, and pictures to be sent as proof.

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The raft had already been removed as the kids were no longer around so I beat T.C. to the punch and complied by taking an e- photo of the raft in dry-docks and sent that off .

The letter from T.C. stated that they were investigating a “ concern “ regarding the placement of a swim raft at this location and further noted that it was the opinion of their office ( Sarnia ) that the structure poses a substantial interference to navigation in the area and ordered its immediate removal.

An application was attached. I filled this out quickly, and accompanied by a number of enlarged photos of the raft’s home and immediate area, sent the package off to Sarnia.

On Feb.13, 09 , I received an acknowledgment of the application with a request for more information. This is the list of items required and conditions by which you can have a raft ;

- 1) Map or chart to show location – 6 copies.
- 2) Sketch or drawing of the project , including side and top view and showing dimensions – 6 copies
- 3) Rafts are to be located directly in front of the owners property
- 4) Rafts are to be located not farther than 100 ft. from shore
- 5) Rafts are to be located at depths of 6 ft. or less
- 6) Rafts are to be removed from the water at the end of the boating season
- 7) Rafts are to be painted yellow or white AND have reflective markings on all sides
- 8) Rafts are NOT to be tied, attached, or moored to any other structures .
- 9) T.C advises that placement of this raft shall not take place without approval under the ACT.

I am not quite sure why a map or chart were required as they claimed to have investigated this situation and must had all that they needed already on file. Needless to say, I did not continue with the process.

Simply by virtue of common sense, most items were automatically complied with anyway.

We now unhook the raft at the end of each day and hook it to the dock at night and return it to its mooring in the morning.

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## **Asian Carp**

by Doug Deeks

You may have heard a bit in the news about the Asian Carp and its potential impact on the Great Lakes, should it cross what is now the last mile from the Chicago canal into Lake Michigan. We wanted to confirm for you that this is a significant issue (reported in most major Canadian news outlets) and we will advise further in another communication as to what the various government departments in the US and Canada are doing to prevent its currently inevitable introduction to Lake Michigan - Huron.

As background, the Asian carp in this context is a foreign invasive that comprises two distinct species - the bighead and the silver - and which was accidentally introduced into the Mississippi river from fish farms in the 1990's. Though native to big river environments in Asia, they have proved themselves to be highly adaptable and have become a dominant species in the warm, shallower waters of the Mississippi and many of its tributaries. In several parts of the Illinois River, which provides the link to the Chicago canal and onto Lake Michigan, the Asian Carp make up 90% of all aquatic life-forms, showcasing the severe impact that this species can have on the native environment. They are believed to have entered the Illinois River less than ten years ago. The carp are reputedly voracious filter feeders that can grow to 1 metre in length and weigh in excess of 50 kilos. Their size, adaptability, rabbit like reproduction and voracious feeding habits have proved highly effective at muscling out native fisheries and significantly altering aquatic ecosystems and it is expected that the Great Lakes will provide an environment in which they will thrive.

An electrified barrier was installed in the Chicago canal several years ago to prevent the carp from migrating north to Lake Michigan but results from studies conducted in September and October and released just recently show evidence that the fish have successfully navigated past the barrier and now need only to pass through the shipping locks to gain access to the Great Lakes.

A temporary closing of the locks to provide time to eradicate the fish from the canal and fortify the barrier appears to be about the only option at this stage to prevent what looks like an almost inevitable introduction of this species.

## **Our Feathered Entertainers**

By Bruce Davidson

Back in the old days, as our parents used to say, a guy didn't really have a problem telling anyone that he was 'going fishin'. While it did raise expectations among those preparing dinner, the concept of getting 'skunked' was just about unimaginable. My how things have changed in only a couple of generations. On the rare occasion when I venture forth today, I slink quietly out the back door saying nothing to anyone, having earlier hidden the fishing tackle in the boat. A couple of hours later, I lazily walk back in the front door with a sleepy just-back-from-the-nap expression (empty handed, of course), with nobody the wiser for the latest humiliation.

Anyway, the point of the comment is to illustrate that cleaning black bass on the dock

back then was a regular occurrence. So regular, in fact, that we also had regular customers for the tasty fins, skins, scales and organs. I am, of course, referring to the numerous seagulls who always hung out nearby waiting for their special treat. And man, could they ever spot a guy cleaning a fish from a mile away! Within minutes there would be a dozen swooping around before the knife had even made the first cut. And then the fun began.

Invariably, the dominant gull, usually the biggest, would take up position “A” in closest proximity to the fish cleaner and vigorously defend his territory against all comers. Most interlopers would be successfully driven off by raucous calls and nasty pecks, but there were always many that managed to crash the party. It was incumbent upon the fish cleaner usually out of a sense of mischief to try to throw to everybody else but Jonathon Schwarzenegger the choicest pieces. Ever seen two seagulls on opposite ends of a backbone playing tug-of-war? Or one seagull flying off with the entire carcass desperately trying to swallow the entire package in mid-flight while the rest of the pack was hell-bent on making him drop it over the water? Needless to say it was hugely entertaining.

In the springtime in those days, I also used to go pike fishing in Cormican Bay using live baitfish. As a matter of masculine pride one had to cast out the line as far from the boat as possible (or at least farther than your buddy had managed) and hope that the little rascal wouldn't find his way back to the relative safety of the underside of the craft. Meanwhile, back in the boat, the fishing program largely consisted of drinking beer, smoking cigars, telling lies, and doing just about anything except look at the bobber. So you can imagine my astonishment one time when the line suddenly went screaming off the reel at blinding speed right in the middle of the latest tale of lust and greed. Sensing the imminent loss of tackle in this bucolic moment as the reel ran out, I dove across the intervening space to set the bail and do battle with the brazen intruder... but to no avail. The line kept flying off, faster than ever. My astonishment at the speed of the presumed Moby Dick was exceeded only by my amazement at the trajectory of the fishing line—it was headed skyward! You guessed it. A passing seagull had snatched my bait and was getting out of Dodge on the double. A lot of guys will brag about the fight of a northern pike or black bass, but in my experience neither comes close to trying to reel in a furious seagull.

Implausible as it sounds, this summer I was treated to a head-on seagull collision in mid air. Imagine that! Now before I get accused of telling a tall tale, I should explain the circumstances. It was in the early evening and a huge flock of gulls were swarming around a compact area of about twenty yards in diameter, apparently feasting on insects. From very close proximity on my deck I could see that they were catching something, but the prey was invisible. Anyway the swarm of gulls diving and swooping in tight circles from every which way eventually led to a full frontal collision as two made a bid for the same morsel, I guess. Or maybe they were playing chicken and both made the same fatal move at the last second. But I certainly heard the result--a loud WHOMP! The sound was just like a full blow during a pillow fight in the bedroom. Both gulls tumbled backwards, but then quickly recovered to resume their feeding. About an hour later I was driven indoors by a particularly nasty mosquito invasion, so I have to conclude, unlikely as it sounds, that our feathered friends were after these tiny insects. Isn't that incredible!

In short, I've got a lot of time for seagulls