

President's Message

by Donna Tucker

By now, most of you will have gone through the ritual "opening" for the season, getting the boats in, greeting your neighbours, surveying any winter damage and setting out your "to do" lists for the summer season. Our family is feeling so very fortunate that when we arrived this spring, we were greeted by a particularly gregarious fox family which includes five delightfully playful kits.



Photo by Adam Cohen

This is not the first time we have been graced to share our space with a fox family,

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Musings from the Editor

by Tom Betts

"Home Sweet Home." This simple phrase means many things to many people. For many readers of this newsletter, the phrase may come to mind during that first arrival back to the cottage in early spring. After a long drive, often through heavy traffic, kicking one's feet up at the cottage for the first time sure does feel good. And perhaps, after a long stay at the cottage, the phrase may even be a fitting description when returning to a non-cottage home (especially if the weather was bad and the pump wouldn't prime and the power went out and the boat motor conked out!).

But, at some risk, I would like to blur the delicate lines of anthropomorphism for a minute and suggest that other Georgian Bay creatures may experience just the same kind of "Ahh, finally ... here we are," type of feeling.

I am speaking, in general, of the many migratory songbirds that settle down to nest in the Georgian Bay region, and in particular of those rather amazing individuals who pick one of the 30,000 islands to call home. On a

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but this crew looks like they are ready to move in. Our previous tenants vacated very soon after we arrived for the season, and especially after our grand-dog showed up.

We have been treated to viewings of the kits climbing all over each other, peering curiously at us, and mama fox nursing her babies. Each time we arrived back at the cottage this season, we saw how quickly our visitors had grown. Now that they are weaned they have graduated to sharing in the spoils of mama's and papa's hunts – so far a wild turkey, a mouse, and a deer leg.



Photo by Ella Needham

We are seeing them growing bolder – venturing ever further and staring us down from a safe distance but returning quickly to their protective den should we come too close. We have learned that foxes mate for life and that the male hunts for the family until the kits are weaned – at which point the female goes back to hunting. We have observed the wrestling and tumbling of the kits over each other – part of honing their hunting skills – especially perfecting their "pounce" technique by practicing on each other. We have gone so far as to set up a "fox camera" so we can observe from afar.

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June boat trip to one of Georgian Bay's "outer islands," Cyndy and I were in awe of the bird life there. We had landed on a relatively small island, far from the mainland, and before we could even unpack the picnic supplies we were mesmerized by the many warblers darting from one little tree to another. As we watched and listened, I could easily imagine that any one of these tiny birds had returned to its special island and perhaps its own special cedar or pine after a trans-continental flight of thousands of miles. "Ahh," the half-ounce (!) creature might reflect, "At long last, here I am."

There may well be research to support or refute what I was imagining on this and many other days, but even though I am science-minded I didn't give research much of a thought at the moment – as far as I was concerned, these tiny birds had made a miraculous long and dangerous flight and had ended up at their "dream cottage" for another summer.

The island we had chosen had a pretty fair assortment of greenery, more than many of the outer islands – a few taller white pines, some smaller cedars, a mix of some hardwood trees and shrubs, and plenty of lower vegetation. Pretty nice habitat, if you are a tiny songbird looking to touch down for a day, or a few months. Not to be overlooked, of course, is that this is a tiny island in the middle of a giant body of water, an island which endures brutal winter storms and more than its share of wind; an island, that by its very rocky and isolated existence, no doubt has limited resources. And yet this tiny speck of land apparently produces all that a little warbler will need – at least for a stopover and quite likely for raising a family.

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Photo by Adam Cohen

What makes this experience special is the privilege of peaceful co-existence with our visitors, respecting their space and quietly enjoying the beauty of our surroundings. It is these moments that keep us coming back to Carling.



Photo submitted by Donna Tucker

I have shared our family's experience with our fox family, in part to make a point about peaceful co-existence. In this issue, you will find an article by Philip Green, a property owner in Carling in the Dillon area who makes a plea for a more formalized noise by-law in Carling. Despite three separate deputations to Carling Council over

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Our phone app, *Merlin*, worked hard to keep up with the calls it was hearing – warblers such as the yellow, black-and-white, chestnut-sided, yellow-rumped, blackburnian, pine, American redstart, and common yellowthroat. And others: the red-eyed vireo, red-winged blackbird, gray catbird, winter wren, American robin, and song sparrow. Without even moving, we watched dozens of birds in a frenzy of activity, splashes of yellow and orange evaporating into the greenery and then suddenly reappearing elsewhere. For 20 minutes we moved only our eyes. The island's summer residents had clearly arrived, and they were a happy lot!

I have always been amazed and sometimes in disbelief at the thriving seasonal ecosystems which the rocky Georgian Bay islands support. Even tiny islands with just a few sprigs of weather-beaten trees and a pocket or two of wildflowers attract birds and butterflies of many species, frogs and toads, and the occasional beaver or otter or muskrat.

Who's to say that these creatures aren't having an "Ahh, I'm home" moment just like we do?

True treasures, these 30,000 islands. Every one of them. And not just for us.



Photo by Tom Betts

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the past several years and a survey that showed 50% of residents had concerns about nuisance noise, there has been no meaningful change to the by-law to address this concern. Carling Council recently reviewed the noise by-law and following discussions of definitions of nuisance noise and the kind of evidence that would be required to "prove" such an offence, concluded with the perspective that the issue is subjective and difficult to enforce, adding concerns about the extent of resources that would be necessary to investigate complaints. I urge you to read Philip's article that suggests this situation be approached not from that of a punitive, complaint-based approach but rather one of proactive, peaceful co-existence guided by agreed upon standards so that Carling residents can enjoy their surroundings while respecting their neighbours' space.

The West Carling Association
Annual Meeting of Members

Sunday, August 23, 2026, 10:30 AM

Blake's Memories of Muskoka Restaurant, Killbear Marina

Please join us for coffee and a light breakfast at 10:00 AM

Special Recognition

This year we are pleased to recognize **Bruce Davidson,**
recipient of the 2025 Georgian Bay Association Champion of the Bay Award,
for his outstanding volunteer leadership and longstanding contributions
to the West Carling Association and the broader Georgian Bay community.
We hope that members will join us in celebrating
Bruce's remarkable dedication and service.

Please note: If you have not paid your 2026 membership dues,
you will be ineligible to vote at the meeting.

Important Information:

- Parking at the marina is limited. Volunteers will be on hand to help direct vehicles and maximize available parking spaces.
- The meeting space is located upstairs. A gently-sloped ramp provides access to the building through the rear entrance for those with mobility restrictions.

We look forward to seeing you and sharing updates on
Association activities and priorities for the coming year

A Tower of Strength

Article and photos by Bruce Davidson

Everyone is familiar with the Snug Harbour Lighthouse on Snug Island (pictured below). It's famous. It's on road signs, tourist brochures, letterheads and logos of many local businesses in Carling.



The Snug Harbour Lighthouse

But who knows about its far less illustrious companion? A companion whose very absence would render the Snug Light useless as an aid to navigation?

Very few I would guess. Time now to correct that injustice and sing the praises of the Rodney Dangerfield of light stations: the Snug Harbour *Front Range* Light. It stands on Walton Island, a mostly barren rock about a kilometer to the west. The two of them line up to mark the first leg of the deep-water course into Parry Sound.

The original "range light" as it is commonly called was built in 1893 entirely of wood (see photo to right). Its sturdy construction can be credited to its design as a tapered square pyramidal structure, making it inherently stable in high winds. It was replaced in 1927 by another solid wood version, the one that I knew growing up (this author was unable to find a photo). By all accounts that version lasted an astounding 82 years until it succumbed in 2009 to the steel and fiberglass replacement standing today (see photos on page 6).



Hugh Jackson of Snug Island atop the Range Light in 1927. Snug Island is in the background.

The 1927 light station which this story celebrates was structurally similar to the steel version shown, being virtually a skeleton with only the side facing Red Rock covered in planks. This light station on top of Walton Island, like its predecessor, was designed to resist gale force winds. Massive posts

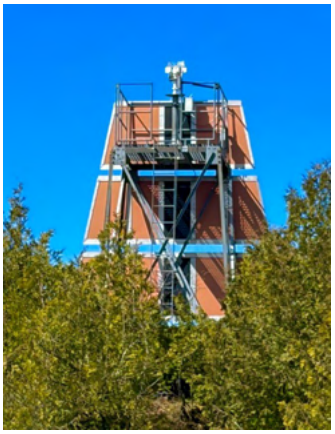
see **Tower**, *page 6*

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supported a small wooden platform while the entire structure was strengthened by diagonal cross-bracing. Access to the platform was by an open ladder with 2" x 6" rungs spaced about a foot apart. The whole structure was painted white on a regular basis to preserve the wood, with the front facing Red Rock sporting a wide black stripe similar to its companion on Snug Island at the time.



Snug Harbour Front Range Light, from the open water



Snug Harbour Front Range Light, as viewed from inland

The Snug Front Range Light of 1927 was built incredibly strong. Here's why I know that:

One fine summer day back in the late 1970's I found myself in the vicinity of the then 50-year-old tower in a small tin boat. I was brimming with excess testosterone – largely owing to my two buddies, of course. On seeing the wooden ladder rising up to the platform high above us all thoughts of fishing were instantly abandoned amid a chorus of "Look at that platform up there! Let's go check out the view."

On scrambling ashore, we adventurers, clad only in swim suits and sandals, faced our first challenge: the entire island was covered in poison ivy. And I'm not talking about little patches here and there – I'm talking about fields of the stuff! Nevertheless, with the confidence of youth we assumed that careful and delicate emplacement of the foot coupled with our perceived agility would be up to the task of avoidance. In that premise we were sadly mistaken. After a number of unavoidable brushings with the enemy we took the philosophical view that such encounters were merely collateral damage and decided to forge on anyway in pursuit of our noble objective. Each encounter with the ivy resulted in a stream of profanity from the victim and by peals of laughter from the other two.

Eventually we attained the tower base, whereupon a small detail not seen from the boat became apparent – a critical 2"x6" rung on the ladder near the top was missing! This would occasion a rather large two-foot step up at a height where such a movement was not at all a welcome prospect. Fortunately for the enterprise we agreed that such an impediment, dubbed the *Hillary Step*, was seen as readily conquerable by any decent two-handed athlete. So much so that we decided that an added difficulty was necessary in order to add a little spice to the undertaking. How about we take away one of the climber's two hands? Great idea! Thus was born the idea of carrying up a heavy stone! Energized by this new challenge we then dutifully pried away a nice flat candidate from the clutches of some shiny green vines and the game was on.

Once the stone's suitability had been agreed upon, we then had to decide who was to have the honour of **first summit**. After an acrimonious debate that dilemma was determined by *the drawing of the pine twigs*.

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With great dismay I found that that honour fell not to myself, but to a candidate who we shall call Tom (in deference to our esteemed editor). With huge enthusiasm Tom the 'winner' deftly tucked the stone slab under one arm and proceeded to tackle the ladder one-handedly. To our utter astonishment he managed the ascent with relative ease and even overcame the *Hillary Step* with a combination of raw strength and a little ingenuity. The crowning glory lay in surmounting the tower platform some thirty-odd feet above us still bearing the load. Not content with this incredible accomplishment, Tom then perfectly executed the weightlifter's classic *snatch*, holding our monolith above his upstretched arms and emitting a series of loud ape-like bellows, much like the mighty King Kong atop the Empire State Building. Needless to say, we bottom dwellers collapsed with helpless laughter for several minutes, thus encouraging even louder hoots from above.

Once we had finally stopped laughing, the self-designated Rules Committee down below decided that Tom must be punished for his outrageous behaviour by being denied the pleasure of hurling our monolith off the tower. Instead, the new rule became that he had to carry the stone back down so we lesser mortals in turn could emulate his mighty display of derring-do.

This essay is primarily written as a tribute to the time when Government-built meant sturdy first-class construction. We should cherish those few historical monuments on the Bay that remain. The Snug Harbour Rear Range Lighthouse and the Jones Island Rear Range Lighthouse are twins, built from the same plans by the same contractor in 1893. The Canadian Coast Guard has signaled its intention to tear down the Jones Light owing to it deteriorated condition. That would be a shame. It's a vital piece of our maritime history.

Let's all lend our support to the grass roots campaign currently underway designed to save the Jones Island Lighthouse.

You can sign the petition at:

https://c.org/MN9LBXL7b7

We may not have feudal castles in Canada, but we have some very cool lighthouses that are deserving of both respect and tender loving care. Jones is one of them and it's named after a beekeeper of the 1870's, no less.



Jones Island Lighthouse
Photo by Tom Betts

The Treacherous Route to Parry Sound

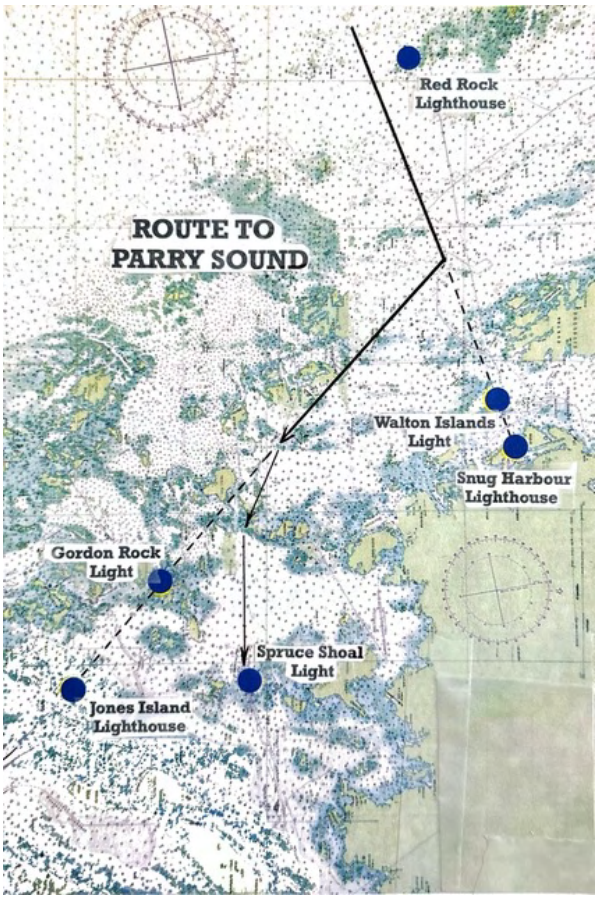
Information provided by Peter Pook

First settled by Europeans in 1857, the booming lumber town of Parry Sound was totally dependent on water transport to move goods and persons. After many shipwrecks had taken scores of lives, the federal Government ordered that five lighthouses be built, working in tandem to guide ships from the open Bay to deep waters of the "Big Sound." They became operational in 1894. Here is how they worked:

Ships would steer to that point just south of Red Rock Lighthouse where the lights of Snug Harbour and Walton aligned, follow that course easterly until the lights of Jones and Gordon aligned on starboard and then follow that new course southerly. Short of Gordon, marker buoys would steer ships easterly toward the light on Hugh Rock, passing Spruce Shoal en route and thence on to the Big Sound.



Spruce Shoal Light, with its active osprey platform
Photo by Peter Pook



Map showing the lighthouse-assisted route that ships would follow into Parry Sound. Image provided by Peter Pook



Gordon Rocks Light
Photo by Tom Betts

Battle For the Bay: Loon vs. Cormorant

by Larry Moses

Every year there are many cottage owners who are returning to their cottages, for the first time, who ask the same question: "I wonder whether the loons who have graced Georgian Bay in front of our cottage the past many years will return?" Like a canary in a coal mine, the loon with its plaintive call represents "all is well," once again. Another year of sparkling clear clean water and maybe even good fishing.

Through the summer this loon is joined by its mate, and they produce a chick or two.

Now we have also noticed over the past several years that a single cormorant dominates this once private territory of the loon. This cormorant, an ugly cousin of the loon, who does not seem to have a mate and no offspring just fishes alone, but right in the middle of the loon's family territory.

The cormorant's fishing is relentless and extends over hours of daily diving and devouring the same small fish on which the loon depends. These fish are gobies or minnows of bass – and of course each one he eats is one less for the loon. Fortunately, so far, the cormorant has not invited a friend or that might be the end of the loon's food supply. Of course, the munching cormorant eliminates gobies which have also become a staple for bass and trout.

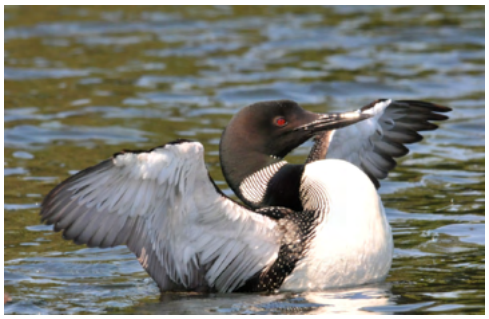
How often I wished that this cormorant would leave and just find another bay.

Imagine my surprise when I found out that my concern was also shared all the way up the political ladder to the provincial premier's office. There is in Ontario a cormorant overpopulation concern.

Because of this concern, the Ontario government opened a culling season for cormorants.

Yes, since 2020 the cormorant culling season runs from September 15 until December 31 on Georgian Bay. Presently, the daily allowed cull is 15 cormorants per day.

Of course there are those who object, but these are not the people losing their fishing industry, the sport fishing anglers, or even the cottager, who just happens to like the loon's grace and the dramatic nightly call echoing across the open waters of Georgian Bay.



Common loon
Photo provided by Larry Moses



Double-crested cormorant
Photo provided by Larry Moses

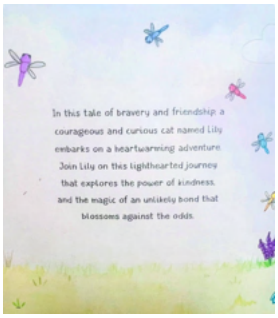
Local Cottager – and Her Cat – Go to Print

West Carling cottager Roxanne Sloan has written and illustrated a children's book, inspired by 17 wonderful years she enjoyed with her cat Lily. According to Roxanne, Lily "absolutely adored her summers on Georgian Bay."

Lily and the Dragonfly, Roxanne's first book, was published in late February by Pegasus Publishers. It is a 28-page wholesome children's story, with accompanying illustrations by Roxanne. The book is available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and other major retailers.

Roxanne intends to follow up with more books in the series. Lily is on Instagram @lilys_big_adventures.







***An illustration from* Lily and the Dragonfly**

Preserving the Soundscape of Georgian Bay: Why Carling Township Should Have a Modern Noise By-law

by Philip Green

One of the great attractions of Carling Township is not just what we see, but what we hear – or more accurately, what we do not hear. The natural soundscape of Georgian Bay, from wind in the pines to waves against the shoreline, is part of what makes this place special. As our community grows and technology changes, however, it may be time to consider whether Carling's noise by-laws should evolve as well.

Today, noise is generally not a significant problem in Carling. Most residents and cottagers are respectful of their neighbours, and the vast majority of gatherings, celebrations, and outdoor activities occur without conflict. But good by-laws are not created only in response to current problems; they are also designed to prevent future ones.

One emerging challenge is the rapid growth of portable amplified sound. Bluetooth speakers have become inexpensive, powerful, and widely available. Market research indicates that the North American portable Bluetooth speaker market is growing at more than 10 percent annually and is expected to nearly double in value by 2030. Millions of portable speakers are sold each year, reflecting a broader trend toward outdoor music and entertainment.

In a community like Carling, this matters because sound travels exceptionally well over water. A speaker that seems modest on one property can be clearly audible hundreds of metres away across a quiet bay. What begins as background music for one family can

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become an unwanted soundtrack for several neighbouring properties.

Some Ontario municipalities have already updated their noise by-laws to address these realities. Oakville, for example, modernized its noise regulations in 2024, specifically addressing amplified sound from outdoor speakers, stereos, and televisions. The Town's stated objective is not to eliminate normal activity, but to regulate sounds that reasonably interfere with residents' enjoyment of their properties.

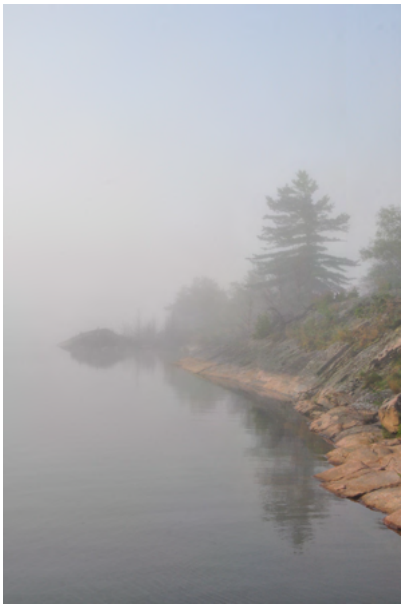
That principle is important. A stronger noise by-law would not require residents to remain abnormally quiet. It would not prohibit parties, family celebrations, or the occasional evening gathering. Instead, it would focus on the long-established legal concept of nuisance: activities that unreasonably interfere with a neighbour's ability to peacefully enjoy their property.

Carling already recognizes the value of protecting shared environmental qualities. The Township's Dark Sky provisions help reduce light pollution so residents and visitors can continue to enjoy spectacular views of the night sky. In many ways, a modern noise by-law would pursue a similar goal: preserving an increasingly rare resource – the natural quiet of Georgian Bay.

An effective by-law would also follow a model familiar to most residents. Consider the dog by-law. It does not make barking illegal. Dogs bark. Rather, it addresses situations where barking becomes excessive and persistent enough to disturb neighbours. Noise regulation can work the same way. The goal is not silence; the goal is preventing chronic disturbances.

A noise by-law does not create a new right to quiet enjoyment. That right already exists under the common law of nuisance. The value of a by-law is that it gives residents and the municipality a practical, affordable, and predictable way to protect that right without requiring neighbours to take each other to court. By establishing a clear community standard for what constitutes unreasonable noise, a by-law also helps neighbours understand each other's expectations and avoid disputes before they arise. In that sense, its greatest benefit may not be enforcement, but prevention.

Ultimately, the question is not whether Carling has a noise problem today. The question is whether we want to preserve the expectation that people can continue to enjoy peace and quiet tomorrow. A carefully crafted, balanced noise by-law would help ensure that as the Township grows, one of its most cherished qualities remains intact. Please email your comments on an improved noise by-law to info@westcarling.com. We would love to hear your views.



At times on quiet waters one does not speak aloud but only in whispers, for then all noise is sacrilege.
Author Sigurd Olson
Photo by Tom Betts

Creature Feature – The Luna Moth

by Tom Betts

If you have the good fortune to spot an adult luna moth, admire it like there is no tomorrow ... because for the moth, there just might not be. An adult – despite how beautiful and elegant a creature it is – will live just 7-10 days. That is just enough time to find a mate, reproduce, and lay some eggs.

Luna moths belong to the family of moths known as Saturniidae, or the Giant Silkworm Moths (although they are not closely related to the true Asiatic silkworm). The luna moth goes by the scientific name of *Actias luna* (from the ancient Greek word *aktis*, which means "ray" or "beam," and *luna*, referencing the Roman moon goddess). They are found only in eastern North America and southern Canada, and in Ontario can range as far north as James Bay.



Luna moth, from its underside
Photo by Bruce Davidson

With a wingspan of 80-115 mm (3⅛ to 4½ inches) these large insects are not easily missed if attached to a window screen or perched in some other obvious location. And not only their size will turn heads, but so will their true beauty: the wings are a gorgeous shade of lime green, and purple edging will accent the forewings. Four transparent eye spots enhance the beauty, and if that is not enough there are the unusually long tails on the hind wings. Quite a creature!

The tails of luna moths deserve a bit more recognition. Research has shown that lunas can evade bats by using their long, twisted hindwing tails as an acoustic defense. By spinning these tails in circles during flight, the moths reflect and disrupt a bat's echolocation. If there is a strike, it will likely be on the non-essential tail.

All spectacular adult lunas will start out as one of about 200 eggs that their mother had laid – either singly or in clusters – on a host tree, such as birch, willow, maple, or walnut. Eggs will hatch into caterpillars in about 10 days – bright green caterpillars that will reach 80 mm in length (3⅛ inches) with thin yellow stripes on their sides and small red bumps scattered about the body. The caterpillars will moult in about a week and will go through five larval stages (termed "instars") before reaching their maximum length and entering the remarkable pupal stage. At this time, the caterpillars will drop to the forest floor, choose a nearby leaf to wrap up in, and spin silk around their host leaf and themselves until an adequate cocoon is formed. Isn't Nature simply amazing?

In two to three weeks with magic happening inside, the luna pupa will emerge as a transformed adult (mid-late June or early July in Ontario). At the risk of repeating myself, isn't Nature simply amazing?

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Luna, *from page 12*

Even then, however, the moth must climb to a nearby tree and flap its wings for a bit to increase blood flow before being able to fly and escape predators. At this point, the moth's life expectancy is a mere 7-10 days, with no feeding. And it will be active only at night.

Adult males and females are similar in appearance, although the antennae of males are noticeably more robust. This allows them to detect the pheromones released by the females for up to a kilometer away, ensuring that there will be more luna moths to replace their parents. In most parts of the luna moth's range, two generations per year would be the norm.

The big moths, such as the cecropia, the polyphemus, and the luna, are experiencing serious population declines throughout most parts of their range. This is largely due to urbanization and habitat loss, pollution (including "light pollution"), pesticide use, and climate change.

To help luna moths, homeowners are encouraged to plant host species (the trees mentioned previously), support efforts to limit deforestation, avoid using pesticides, reduce outdoor lighting as much as possible (lights affect the moths' navigational abilities), and "leave the leaves" – lawnmowers, leaf blowers, and mulchers are bad news for larval lunas.

If you are lucky enough to come upon an adult luna moth, with its enchanting lime green wings and impressive size, admire it for a moment ... and then gently turn out the lights so that this delicate creature can make the most out of its ephemeral existence.

Municipal Election Fall 2026

Submitted by Donna Tucker

Why Should I Vote?

The municipal level of government delivers some of our most valued public services including roads, policing and emergency response, land use planning, garbage and waste management, by-law development and enforcement. You pay annual property taxes in your municipality to fund these services, along with provincially mandated social services costs that are downloaded to the municipality by the province.

Who can vote?

You are eligible to vote if you are a Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, and are a resident, owner, or tenant of property in Ontario (or their spouse). IMPORTANT: If you own or rent a permanent and a seasonal residence in Ontario, you can vote in both municipalities. Your adult children do not qualify to vote at your second residence, unless they are co-owners or co-renters. Similarly, if the cottage is owned by a trust, you do not qualify to vote in that municipality.

Waterfront property owners (WPO) represent a significant number of the residents in many rural municipalities, have a large stake in the future of these communities, and form the backbone of many rural municipal budgets. It matters who represents you as your local elected officials.

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Voters Lists

Due to recent legislative changes, Elections Ontario is now responsible for maintaining and providing the voters lists for municipal and school board elections. This responsibility was previously held by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). This change is intended to improve consistency across Ontario. If you have not checked to see if you are on the voters list, you are strongly encouraged to do so. Even though we have been voting in Ontario elections for many years, I was surprised to find that neither my spouse nor I were registered to vote at our principal residence or in Carling.

You have until August 12, 2026, across Ontario, to confirm or add your information to Elections Ontario. After that date, when the voters list will be provided to the municipality, you can visit the Carling Municipal Offices to check the voters list.

Before August 12th you can register or verify your information through the following options:

Online:
https://www.registertovoteon.ca/

Phone:
1-866-242-3025

Email:
info@RegistertoVoteON.ca

Tip: If your permanent residence is not in Carling: When you proceed to register to vote in the Carling election, you will need to provide your property ownership information, i.e., your property tax bill showing the roll number to Elections Canada.

The Township of Carling will once again offer Internet and Telephone Voting for the October 2026 Municipal Election.

A Call for Submissions

The Fall edition of *Shorelines* will appear in early October, 2026. Deadlines for submissions for this newsletter will be September 10, 2026.

Please consider contributing to the newsletter. The possibilities are endless: an account of the "big one that got away," a favorite cottage recipe, some original artwork of cottage country, noteworthy wildlife encounters, photographs of just about anything, tips for the many troubling "issues" which always arise at the cottage, great books for the cottage, and so much more.

The newsletter will be enhanced by *your* submission, whatever that may be. Please send items by September 10, 2026 to tcmbetts@gmail.com