

## More Wetlands Caution Required

by Christina Caap & John Rohr

A recent (repeated from a previous year) incident involving the Partridge Bay wetlands has rekindled recognition that there needs to be greater awareness among Carling residents and municipal employees as to the importance of prioritizing our wetlands environment. Above wetlands are designated Provincially Significant Wetlands. A call to the Township office in early June by a Carling resident regarding high water levels resulted in the dredging of a beaver dam and drying of a wetland.

As a result, directors of both the West Carling Association and the Pengally Cottagers' Association have been in discussion with both MNR and Carling Township to try to assure this does not recur. This is not only very disruptive to the wildlife and nesting habitat of birds, reptiles, and mammals in the wetlands, but also will affect the water quality in Partridge Bay and Pengally Bay due to the sudden huge nutrient flush in to the bay habitat, affecting both cottagers and the fish population.

Beavers are a keystone species and a principal creator of wetland habitat which is essential for supporting aquatic animal and plant species.

We hope to be able to work with the Township on these sensitive environmental issues and we need all residents support to be alert about our environment and to contact the Township about your concerns.

This is how we can make a change in how the nature is preserved in Carling.



# WEST CARLING ASSOCIATION

9 Christie Street,  
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Since 1921

Incorporated 1992

\*Georgian Bay Shoreline Concerns\*

## SUMMER 2009 NEWSLETTER

### President's Message

By Bruce Davidson


You have been hearing for some time now how your Association has been active in championing environmental issues and seeking to change both mindsets and the legal framework in West Carling to accomplish this worthy objective. As you might expect, we have had success with certain issues, fallen short of the mark on others and find the jury out on still others. It's a mixed bag to be sure but, as the saying goes, nothing worthwhile in life ever comes easy.

One source of extreme gratification comes from fostering initiatives that lead to the preservation of the native habitat for flora and fauna, particularly endangered species. In this regard, we are delighted that both the Shebeshekong River wetland and the Remy Bay wetland have been designated as Provincially significant. Additionally, we are hoping that Hailstone Lake and wetlands near Deep Bay will also gain recognition by way of this special environmental status. Should this prove to be the case, I am confident that we will have in our arsenal some very powerful tools with which to fight the forces which have destroyed large swaths of wilderness on our borders, particularly to the south. Perhaps someday we will move beyond wilderness kayaking into eco-tourism on a broad and sustainable base in the Crown Lands that constitute 50% of Carling Township. What a legacy to leave our kids!

We are also cautiously optimistic that the Franklin Island stewardship program which we co-founded, will continue to evolve and strengthen. Your Directors feel that Franklin Island is one of the most beautiful and diverse wilderness habitats in the whole of the Georgian Bay archipelago. With that in mind, we are continuing to support this endeavour financially and are seeking to upgrade Franklin Island's profile in various political circles.

As you have been made aware last year, West Carling in concert with three other local property owner Associations was particularly active in supplying input into Carling Township's Official Plan. This whole process was a great learning experience as we tried to strike a balance between the idealistic and the pragmatic. It would be wonderful to report that we enjoyed unqualified success in this regard, but

Continued on Page 3



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*Continued from Page 7*

Glenda was kind enough to assist me with the installation of the nest this spring, as it was a fairly bulky contraption to move about. What neither of us appreciated at the time, was that a puppy is not all that helpful when it comes to jumping into and out of boats. As every dog owner knows, puppies have an instinctual ability to move directly into the line of fire just as one has committed to taking a step. And so it was that Lola managed to position herself directly below my descending foot at the critical moment, causing me to step down hard on the connector on the gas tank in the boat. With fateful consequence, I managed to crack the fitting, but was not aware of it at the time.

Picking myself up from the bottom of the boat after the blue haze of profanity had dissipated, I cast off into the teeth of a good Georgian Bay blow in the company of Glenda and a particularly pleased yellow lab. And oh, I should probably add that at this time in early May the temperature was nearly freezing and there was absolutely nobody around. So forget about rescue.

With perfect timing, the tin boat ran just far enough to get us out into the offshore wind, whereupon the usually reliable Yamaha, starved of gas, promptly died. And would not start. Not with fifty pulls and a whole lot more cussing. Naturally.

Well isn't that what paddles are for you ask? Why surely, but you may be unfamiliar of the annual ritual of paddle selection played out each spring at our cottage. In a nutshell, one takes all the detritus washed ashore, adds the broken paddles and oars from the boathouse and distributes the remnants to the various watercraft. Well guess where the tin boat lies in the hierarchy of paddle respect? You guessed it--dead last! Which is why Glenda was a little puzzled when given the choice of using either a sawed off rowboat oar or a paddle missing both the laminated handle and a third of the blade. Paddling the tin boat furiously with these instruments or torture was quite a challenge to say the least.

Hope may spring eternal, but there's no way we were going to prevail, handicapped as we were. Finally after a magnificent but futile battle, we washed up on a nearby island and pondered our fate. As luck would have it, I managed to jury rig a temporary fix and with great relief we were able to beat our way homeward, none the worse for wear other than sore arms and a blister or two.

And so it came to pass that Jebadiah and Jessica were presented with a brand new home in a gated community on a ravine lot in the suburbs with both a huge swimming pool and a private frog pond. Who could ask for anything more? Stay tuned for a late summer occupancy report.



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## *Of Tin Boats. Snakes and Critters*

*By Bruce Davidson*

I suppose my love affair with fox snakes developed around 50 years ago (yikes) when my great uncle introduced me to his pal Ralph in his vegetable garden. Ralph and Uncle Nelson had a symbiotic relationship of sorts whereby the two legged creature would provide all sorts of goodies that crawled, jumped and flew, while Ralph, for his part, merely had to show up for the smorgasbord and was allowed to stretch out his six foot length in the sunshine afterwards totally undisturbed. Each seemed to enjoy the company of the other in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Many years later we had our own pet fox snake take up residence under the front steps down near the water. For some peculiar reason we bestowed the rather grand name of Jebadiah on this scaly beast. Lizzie, the yellow lab, did not seem to view his presence with equanimity, so I had to plant some shrubbery for privacy in front of his entrance. All we had to do there afterwards was to say "Lizzie, where's snake?", and she would amble over to Jeb's entrance with one ear cocked signalling total alertness. Our neighbour at Snug, Tom Poppleton, got into the spirit of the matter by carving a beautiful painted signpost with the outline of Jeb's body and the words "Snake Crossing" on it. This was after I recounted to him how I had been carrying buckets of water up the steps without looking down and had inadvertently stepped on Jeb stretched out across the middle step. Until that fateful moment I had never known the glorious heights to which basketball players were capable of soaring, while poor old Jeb managed to strip off all the petals of the unfortunate flowers in his path as he made a horizontal dive off the step at Mach 1 speed.

So when Carling Township's own species-at-risk expert, Glenda Clayton, asked for volunteers to build an experimental fox snake nest, my hand naturally snaked up of its own accord. After all, how could I possibly deny Jebadiah and his new girlfriend Jessica to right to procreate in dignity?

(By way of explanation, fox snakes lay eggs rather than give live birth, and a number of critters such as racoons, foxes and mink dearly love fox snake egg McMuffins for breakfast. The nest is a four foot cube of wire which does not admit unwanted diners.)

*Continued on Page 7*


the reality is that the draft Plan which is now being reviewed by several Provincial Ministries falls short of certain density and setback standards which we strongly advocated. We feel that a measure of responsibility ought to be assessed to our own elected Council who seemed out of touch with some issues considered important by waterfront owners. And we are not faultless for our part, in failing to muster sufficient constituents to express their views at various public meetings. While we are not holding our breath, there is always the possibility that the final document will more closely reflect our position once the various Ministries have had their input

You will read elsewhere in this newsletter that we are moving our Annual General Meeting from the Carling Community Centre to Gilly's Restaurant in Snug Harbour. There a couple of good reasons why we have made this departure from tradition. Most importantly, we want to give our members an attractive forum with both water and auto access in which to hear from their elected Councilors and various guest speakers appearing from time to time. Presumably this will result in an increased turnout, particularly on sunny days (-: The other reason for the move is to foster a better spirit of camaraderie among our constituents. Some of your more experienced (translate grey) Directors remember past years when we had an annual picnic on Franklin. While it is unlikely that we can go back to those days for liability reasons, if our AGM is a success this year, perhaps we can find a venue for tomorrow that will allow us all to get out and meet our neighbours in a more meaningful fashion than merely waving from passing boats.

Ultimately a greater sense of community in West Carling should translate into increased membership. This, in turn, will give us a stronger voice in directing the affairs of our community and translate into increased revenues for the Georgian Bay Association. A perusal of the latest issue of Update gives just the smallest hint of the huge workload that the GBA undertakes to protect our environment. Both the WCA members and non-members benefit equally from the efforts of the GBA. In my book that's unfair. So if you have a neighbour who is not a member of West Carling, tell him that there are dozens of volunteers working on his behalf to preserve and protect our wonderful Georgian Bay/ If he is not prepared to volunteer his time, then at least join WCA and provide the financial support for the many initiatives that both organizations undertake.

On a final note I would like to invite anyone in West Carling who has interest in insects, birds, wildlife and/or fish to consider coming on board as a Director of your Association. We lost our resident expert Jean Niskanen to cancer a number of years ago and she is greatly missed. While it will be difficult to fill her shoes, we need to try and there is a vacancy on the Board at the moment. So please, have someone nominate yourself at the AGM or speak to one of the existing Directors before the AGM about a suitably qualified individual. We need sound advice on dealing with issues like the white pine sawfly, quagga mussels, cormorants etc on our waterfront.

See you at Gilly's.



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## UPDATE ON PROPOSED WIND FARM(S) ON PARRY ISLAND

As many of you will know, the Wasauksing Band on Parry Island has been working with Skypower, a wind farm developer, for a number of years with the intent to generate significant amounts of electricity from wind power on Parry Island. The electricity would be sold to the Ontario Power Authority.

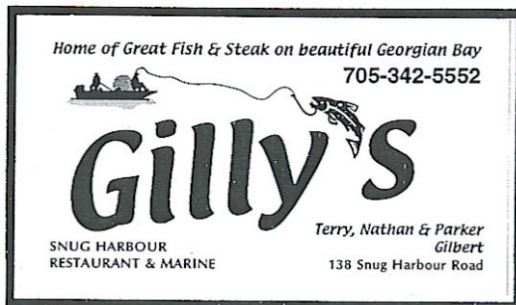
Recently, the general public was invited to a presentation by Skypower and the Band on Parry Island. We had all expected that this would be a formal presentation of the project and that we would learn about the location(s) and size of the wind farm(s) and the timing and be able to ask questions. Instead, it was more like an open house with generic posters around the walls of a gymnasium and several Skypower representatives together with senior members of the Band, to answer questions. This was not the most useful arrangement for the public but I was able to glean a certain amount of information.

I met the Chief who was only recently elected and comes from a long line of Chiefs. I found him both impressive and thoughtful, clearly someone who is looking to significantly improve the status of the Reserve in all aspects by becoming more self sufficient. He has a number of plans for Band sponsored businesses, other than the proposed wind farm.

Most of the information came from one of The Skypower representatives:

1. Skypower has recently forged a partnership with a not-for-profit Massachusetts organization called Citizens Energy, believed to be funded by the Kennedy clan. Skypower is generally funded by limited partners, including reputedly, a German bank.
2. They do not yet know where the wind machines will be located. They have nearly finished mapping where they **can't** be located because of environmental concerns such as wetlands or cultural concerns such as hunting lands or burial areas.
3. They only have about 6 months' wind testing data and must have at least 12 months', preferably, two years' data so this is also holding them up as regards potential sites.

*Continued on Page 5*



*Continued from Page 4*

4. The wind generators are far too big to transport along the narrow, twisty roads and bridge leading to the island and would almost certainly have to come by barge, likely into Depot Harbour. This may be a deciding factor in the location of the wind farm as one would presume that they would wish to keep road building down to a minimum.
5. My contact suggested that the project was probably at least 4 years away, given the amount of work still to do to even complete the full feasibility study. He was fairly lukewarm as to the likelihood of the project proceeding. Clearly, Skypower has other higher priorities at present.
6. Both the Chief and the Skypower representative confirmed that they would have to prepare environmental reports under both Federal and Provincial laws which is good because we were concerned that they might be able to work only with the Federal requirements which are generally less stringent than the Provincial. They are very aware of the need to satisfy the Endangered Species Act which applies to several species on Parry Island and is very strict.
7. I was surprised at one comment from a senior Skypower representative that "Ontario is not that good a location for wind power generation because it is windiest in winter when demand is low and frequently calm in July and August when demand is highest". Not that we didn't know that but apparently our Government doesn't!
8. We got a semi commitment to continue these open meeting with the neighbours as the project progresses but the point was made that they need to be formal presentations with concrete information.

So we know a little more than we did but not that much. It was hard to determine how committed the Band is to the project. I sensed that there may be a certain amount of frustration with the apparently slow pace of decision making within the Band. We will keep you posted. There is another proposal for a wind farm on a Reserve near Key River that I am trying to find more about.

**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.

