

BLA NEWSLETTER

Brandy Lake Association

Winter 2009

Doug Swant—Presidents Report



Winter is well under way and we will all soon be thinking of ways that we can get away to the cottage. There has been an amazing amount of snowfall this winter and ice fishermen, snowmobilers, skiers and hikers are taking full advantage of the thick ice and abundance of snow.

Having just spent a three day weekend at our non-winterized cottage where there was a centimetre of frost on the outhouse seat and -28C air temperature, it is easy to start dreaming about warmer times.



The water level is noticeably high. The ice is further up on our shore than I've seen before. Spring run off will be interesting if not damaging. The beaver baffle will not accommodate the volume of water which may mean flooding for some.

There has been some new building over the winter as well. A new cottage on the south-east end and a new boathouse on the north-west end of the lake will add interest to the landscape.

See pg 2

What year Was This?

Frogs and Toads of Muskoka— Donna Sale

As we sit here and enjoy the beauty of the Muskoka winter, our thoughts stray to the anticipation of spring. Cottages are opened and the fun and the enjoyment of the warm outdoors begin. As the



temperature rises frogs and toads emerge to sing and breed.

They belong to a group of vertebrates, animals with backbones, called amphibians, which also include salamanders. Amphibians have smooth moist skins and

the environment they live in must be moist enough to maintain this condition.

Unlike mammals, they are unable to regulate their body temperature and rely on the sun to heat up or the shade to cool down.

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Special points of interest:

- New president for 2009.
- The wildlife by Donna
- Bruce gives some insight
- Lots more information



Presidents Report Continued

Each area of the lake has a representative on the lake association. Please welcome them when they deliver information or make inquiries. Volunteers are a precious resource that we should all nurture. I look forward to meeting new friends around the lake in the coming season.

I'd like to thank the contributors to our BLA Newsletter and wish all an enjoyable spring.

Past President—Bill Allen

When I wrote to you last summer that turnover in your Board, as pre-ordained by our by-laws, was a good thing I wasn't quite thinking of the degree to which that ended up happening this year.

In addition to the prescribed bumping of President and Past-President three of our members, for personal and /or business reasons were not able to stand for re-election, hence we had need of four recruits – a bit of a challenge for our [non-existent] HR dept.

Fortunately, able folks did step forward, three from the ranks of the Neighbourhood Reps. [which affirms a side benefit of that program]. Be assured that your Association is in capable hands.

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Muskoka Storm

Donna Sale—continued...Most lay eggs in water where they hatch into fish-like tadpoles with no limbs, and gills instead of lungs. They eat minute plants and algae. Gradually they grow limbs and other adult body parts and emerge from the water to find a mate and start the cycle over. As adults some can move far from water, but still need a moist habitat such as leaf litter. The adults are predatory, and eat worms, insects and other small animals. Larger animals will eat them. The amphibians that live in Muskoka hibernate over winter.



It is estimated that half of the species of amphibians are in decline or at serious risk of extinction. Because of their thin, moist skin, they are very susceptible to environmental pollution. Scientists have found that pesticides are having a devastating effect on populations. Pesticides can mess with immunity. With reduced immunity the parasitic infections that are usually present become more severe and cause deformities. The tadpoles of the American toad have actually been found to be more sensitive to lower concentrations of a common herbicide, atrazine, than to higher concentrations. This chemical feminizes male frogs, which then become unable to breed. Pesticides can be blown from distant agricultural lands, to frog habitat, where they affect the breeding populations.

Think of this before you use pesticides, herbicides, or any other chemical on your land or in the lake, or even pour them down your septic system. Many chemicals are not broken down in the septic system and will make their way into lake, where they may damage far more species than frogs.

The following species are found in Muskoka, although some are rare: Bull Frog, Gray Tree Frog, Green Frog, Leopard Frog, Mink Frog, Pickerel Frog, Chorus Frog, Spring Peeper and Wood Frog You can find photos of these frogs, their distribution, natural history and listen to their songs, on the web sites listed below, or Google Muskoka frogs and follow the links. Click on species on the Toronto Zoo site and you will also find salamanders.

torontozoo.com/AdoptAPond/frogs.asp

scf.rncan.gc.ca./subsite/glfc-amphibians/toads-frogs

.The Brandy Lake Association
(BLA) - Excerpt From MLA Yearbook
by: **Bruce Erskine**

The Brandy Lake Association (BLA), was first conceived in 2000 and officially formed in 2001 by a group of Brandy Lake property owners who were concerned with both the water quality and the water level of their lake. Presently, approximately 75% of the property owners on Brandy Lake belong to the BLA and many also belong to the Muskoka Lakes Association.

The BLA was successful in asking the

Ministry of the Environment (MOE) to conduct an extensive 2-year study of Brandy Lake, it's watershed and it's surrounding area. The result was to confirm that Brandy Lake is very unique for southern Ontario and derives its name and colour from the tannin of leaves and other vegetation that accumulates in its vast watershed. Also due to the huge watershed, Brandy Lake is high in phosphorous, which is a natural phenomenon for a "dark" headwater lake.

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Winter in Muskoka - Gail Hammond

Winter started early in Muskoka with a lot of snow falling in November. The major storm that encompassed a great deal of the north was just before New Year's eve with hydro out anywhere from 30 hours to a few days. Fortunately the weather was not too cold and most residents and cottage visitors fared quite well. I know there are a lot of people who enjoy all the winter events and sports and this year has been just great for the full enjoyment of all these activities.

I always feel that when we have the boat show in Toronto there is hope that spring will soon be here. Winter in Muskoka is just great but I know we all look forward to Spring and Summer and family fun at the cottage.

The Brandy Lake Association will be holding the Lake Social on Saturday, July 25 and a notice of place and time will be sent out with the notice of the Annual General Meeting that will take place on Saturday, August 29, 2009. Please mark these important dates on your calendar. Spring brings renewed energy and the yearning to be at the lake, hope to see you all soon.

The Association is always interested in any news about our lake and we hope you will inform one of the Executive and we will pass it on to our members. Enjoy the rest of the winter and we look forward to seeing you all at the Brandy Lake Social.

Bruce Erskine Continued

The Brandy Lake Association was the first "small" Muskoka Lake to join the MLA's WQI in 2001 and as **such pioneered the involvement** of the smaller Muskoka lakes in this important initiative. The BLA has a dedicated team of volunteers who take water samples eight times per year at 6 different lake locations. The results of these tests have been very positive – keeping within the MLA's benchmarks – and show Brandy Lake to be one of the cleanest lakes in the Muskoka region.



This past July, the Brandy Lake Association held its 6th annual "BLA Social", allowing the Brandy Lake neighbourhood the opportunity of getting to know each other and share and grow the spirit of a vibrant community.

A beaver dam on the creek that empties the lake into Lake Muskoka has historically governed the water level of Brandy Lake. Over the years, various attempts have been taken to manually tear the dam apart, trap the beavers, and even an ancient story about a group of property owners that tried, unsuccessfully to blow up the dam with dynamite. Seven years ago, the BLA installed an environmentally friendly "Beaver Baffler" which consists of a pair of 18" diameter by 30-foot long culverts that are installed perpendicular through the beaver dam. This baffler assists in helping control the water level of the lake to historic levels. This baffler can be seen on the creek from Hwy 118 just east of Port Carling.

A couple of other interesting facts about Brandy Lake is that it is a member of the Small Lakes Association of Muskoka (SLAM) and that the 2008 Princess Margaret Welcome Home Sweepstakes for Cancer Research - Dream Muskoka Cottage was located on one of the few remaining building lots on Brandy Lake.

Baffler—before repair



Huge Tree—high water damage



Bill Allen continued: Many thanks to our departing members – Bruce Erskine, Jim Cormack, Joan Burgess-Swant, and Rob Saunders for their years of valuable service to the Association.

Welcome to your new Board members – Doug Swant, Johanna Geuzebroek, Judy Filman, and Peter Millar.
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Your BLA Board for 08 /09 & 09/10 is:

President - Doug Swant
Vice-President & AGM Coordinator - Gail Hammond
Treasurer - Jerry Fisher
Secretary - Judy Filman
Environment - Peter & Donna Sale
Membership - Johanna Geuzebroek
Webmaster - Bob Hogg
At-Large - Peter Millar
Past President - Bill Allen
New additions to the ranks of our Neighbourhood Reps. are Bev Kirbyson, Judy Simmonds, Joan Burgess-Swant and Brian Tell.

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It's been my honour to serve the Association since it's inception, [the last dinosaur ??] and I look forward to my final term working with the new Board. Lynn & I wish you an enjoyable winter, and look forward to seeing one and all in the Spring.

Bill

Message From the Web Site
Administrator - Bob Hogg

Please submit action shots of your water or winter sports..for the web gallery ...feel free to send pictures to admin@brandylake.com

In addition – how about some handy things done around the place to show your ingenuity.

Send lost and found items as well. And—Any suggestion.

Several concerns have been presented..however we don't think the BLA should be involved. Personally—I don't mind the laughter—boating – and all lake activities—but sound travels extremely well... so here they are:

1: Bathing in the lake – biodegradable soap is **not designed** to Lake Bath. Our association puts a great amount of effort into monitoring conditions – please help our lake by **not** bathing in it.

2: Music on the dock. Sound travels almost perfectly over water – your neighbors don't want to listen to **your** music.

3: Lights— This is not the big city - lets enjoy the night sky.

Its up to you folks !!!
www.brandylake.com

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The residents on Brandy Lake are keen on maintaining our water quality program as well as other initiatives managed by The Brandy Lake Association. Programs that benefit all of us. The continuity of these programs is dependent on having a strong membership and we look forward to having more residents join our Association.



We are pleased with the efforts of our area reps who continue to encourage new members and previous members in their respective neighbourhoods. The result is that we have more members this year than in some previous years. Of course we could use more and ask you to promote the association to your neighbours and fellow Brandy Lakers.

Membership Committee

Johanna Geuzebroek

Peter Millar



We have used this picture before—here is the spring high water a few years ago—what is going to happen this spring. It is up more than 15' here.

In addition to Donna's note—for boaters—we always flush our engine on land **before** entering Brandy Lake. We never throw bait in the lake. That is a few ways to help prevent **invasive species** from entering our lake. Inboards, I/O and PWC's are the most critical.

Having been on Brandy for 40 years I have seen the night sky go from just white with stars to what we have today—which is still good. I have seen the easy fishing disappear and the onslaught of Pike. I remember the frogs rockon—singing.(Actually its coming back a bit lately) I also remember the lower water level.

Disclaimer: Everything presented here is from members. **Nothing** in this letter should be used to determine **anything**. Get it...just a bunch of folks trying to keep you informed. Consult a professional for any information contained in the letter.