



# THE TINY COTTAGER

Issue No. 37

A GEORGIAN BAY PERSPECTIVE

Spring/Summer 2011

## The President’s Message

By JUDITH GRANT

Two decades have passed since the Federation of Tiny Township Shoreline Associations was incorporated in 1991. Its founders drew up its constitution in 1990, and the Federation passed its first comprehensive bylaw in 1993.

Many of the challenges faced by ratepayers associations in the shoreline area of Tiny Township are similar to those we face now. This is evident in the 10 “specific purposes” listed in the constitution, the full wording of which is available under “Who We Are” on [www.tinycottager.org](http://www.tinycottager.org). The new umbrella organization was to:

- promote the aims of associations in the shoreline areas
- promote the wise use of the shoreline environment
- encourage the formation of new associations
- provide a forum for members to discuss issues and exchange information
- supply information to members on issues of concern
- monitor development, considering principles of sound land-use planning and environmental management
- promote changes in policies of governments to further its purposes
- promote adoption/enforcement of laws and bylaws where appropriate
- raise funds to further its purposes
- hold property if necessary to further its purposes.

Over the years, FoTTSA has undertaken many activities to further these purposes. It has greatly increased communication between the organization and its members: through phone calls and letters; via *The Tiny Cottager*, the website and e-mails; and through at least two meetings each year (one formal, one informal). The health of the environment has been a focus -- combating gypsy moths, improving swimming water quality, coping with invasive weeds, and opposing Dump Site 41. FoTTSA also has been active from the beginning in municipal elections, through assessing and recommending candidates. And we have engaged in various activities that draw the members of the Federation into the larger community in Tiny and in Simcoe County.

Since our founding 20 years ago, the Federation has grown and changed. In April, the Federation’s directors invited member associations to two “New Directions” meetings, to discuss common problems, reassess current activities, and consider new projects. These sessions produced a number of ideas that the board has already begun to act on, and which will probably occupy the directors and a series of committees for as much as a year. This is healthy. All enterprises need times when they take stock, choose new objectives or confirm old ones, and draw on fresh energy.

There will be further opportunities for member associations to contribute ideas and energy to this process, and we will keep you aware of these in e-mails. Please watch for them and participate!



## The Joys of Kite Boarding

By ANDREW COMBES

We have all seen them - those colourful kites arcing through the sky while somewhere below a figure carves through the water at speeds that seem quite improbable. That is kite boarding or as it is often known to those in the sport simply ‘kiting’. And when you do see those graceful almost balletic manoeuvres I suspect you, like me, think, “I would love to be able to do that”!

I was planning to write this article as a seasoned veteran of two winter holidays spent tearing around warm blue Caribbean waters, pulled by the massive power of a kite. Alas, very strong winds in January of this year caused me to put my own mortality ahead of the vicarious thrills of you, the reader!

As someone of grandfatherly age I certainly felt apprehensive at trying what appears to be a sport for the young athletic type that still believes in his or her own invincibility. Kiting is considered an “extreme” sport and there have been many accidents, some of them fatal. Something you will learn very early on, should you decide to try kiting, is that it is potentially dangerous, and that it is very important - I would say essential - to take lessons from a qualified instructor from the very beginning. There is no fun to be had in being dragged uncontrollably down the beach by a kite that is far more powerful than you and difficult to control without at least some hours of practice. But do not make the mistake of thinking that kiting is only for the highly athletic muscular person; many ordinary folk enjoy the sport. It is just a matter of using the right size of kite and board so that you are not overpowered.

It is said that kiting is now the fastest growing water-sport in the world. Certainly it has come a long way from its earliest experimental beginnings in the mid 1980s in the USA and France. The modern era of kiting probably began in the mid 1990s when someone in the Hawaiian surfing scene took a kite to the famed North Shore of Maui and gave the sport a high profile demonstration from which it has never looked back.

So what equipment do you need? If you want to try in our Georgian Bay waters, your very first requirement

will be a wet or dry suit and boots to keep you warm. Kite, lines, bar, harness, board and a pump to inflate the leading edge of the kite will all be necessary and you should wear a sports style life vest. Oh yes, one last thing you will need to get started is plenty of patience! Be prepared to invest several hours in just learning to fly the kite - and that is where a qualified instructor will be invaluable for your safety and shortening the learning curve.

Be prepared to be surprised at the sheer power of the kite which can be quite capable of lifting you straight out of the water or indeed, from personal experience, dragging you along while semi submerged! There are different safety systems in the control line and bar system, which your instructor will teach you to use very early on, together with the safe method of launching the kite in the first place. Take heed of those wise words!

In our township you can often see kiting during the summer and fall along the southwest sandy shorelines down toward Wasaga. There are several good sites to practise the sport, offering clear soft sand, shallow water and a prevailing onshore breeze. Go and watch them enjoying this wonderful sport, and introduce yourself if you think you might be interested. If you do decide to give it a try, head on down to Wasaga Beach where there are several kiting schools.

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# 2011 Events

(for a more complete list including web addresses please see the 2011 Events page on [www.tinycottager.org](http://www.tinycottager.org))

**MAY**

28-29

**Midland Model Train Show**

North Simcoe Recreation Centre, Midland

**Waterfront Festival**, Heritage Park, Barrie

**JUNE**

2

**Night at the Museum**, Simcoe County Museum

4

**Tiny Trail Open 2011**

130 Balm Beach Rd W, Perkinsfield

4-5

**Doors Open Huronia**

June 7 – July 2

**"The Wizard of Oz"**

King's Wharf Theatre, Penetanguishene

11-12

**Wheels & Tracks in Motion**

Simcoe County Museum, Minesing

17

**Party on the Dock**, Midland Town Dock

18

**Wasaga Beach Fun Run – Classic Car Event**

18-19

**Wasaga Beach Kitefest**

21

**National Aboriginal Day**, Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, Penetanguishene

24-26

**Victoria Harbour 100th Anniversary and Canada Day celebrations**

25-26

**Wasaga Beach Fest**

**Coldwater & Area Studio Tour**

**Aboriginal Festival**, Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, Penetanguishene

**JULY**

1

**Canada Day Celebrations:**

Penetang Centennial Museum

Little Lake Park, Midland

Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, Penetanguishene

Discovery Harbour, Penetanguishene

6-23

**"The Melville Boys"**

King's Wharf Theatre, Penetanguishene

8-10

**Mariposa Folk Festival**, Orillia

9

**17th Annual Midland Library Garden Tour**

10

**Huronia Triathlon**

July 10- Sept.4

**Sunday Evening Concert Series**

Penetang Centennial Museum

15-17

**Festival du Loup**, Lafontaine

16

**Art in the Park**

Waterfront Park, Penetanguishene

July 27- Aug. 13

**"Blood Brothers"**

King's Wharf Theatre, Penetanguishene

21-24

**Collingwood Elvis Festival**

22-24

**Wasaga Under Siege, 1812 Battle Re-enactment**

Nancy Island, Wasaga

**AUGUST**

6

**Métis Day**, Discovery Harbour, Penetanguishene

12-13

**Balm Beach Summerama**

13

**Artwalk**, downtown Midland

Aug 17-Sept 3

**"Who's Under Where?"**

King's Wharf Theatre, Penetanguishene

(August)

**Elmvale Water Festival**

27

**Barrie Dragon Boat Festival**

28

**4th Annual "Savour Simcoe" Tasting Event**

**SEPTEMBER**

4

**Memories of Summer Fireworks**, Wasaga

10

**Wasaga Triathlon/Duathlon and Give-It-A-Tri**

16-18

**Quilt, Rug & Craft Fair**, Simcoe Museum, Minesing

24

**Settler's Day**, Penetang Centennial Museum

**Dragon Boat Festival**, Orillia

25

**Franco-Ontarian Day**

Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, Penetanguishene

**OCTOBER**

7-10

**2011 Thanksgiving Studio Tour**, Barrie, Orillia)

8-9

**Thanksgiving Harvest Festival**

Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, Penetanguishene

26-28

**"Haunted Harbour"**, Penetanguishene

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# Join the Big Pull at Tiny Marsh

By KATE HARRIES



Photo by E. Czarapata

Two years ago, Deanlea Beach cottager Pat Armstrong enlisted me in the fight against garlic mustard at Tiny Marsh. She had discovered it there a couple of years earlier and had been working to eradicate it.

What's the issue? Garlic mustard is a biennial (which means it has a two-year life cycle, with seed produced in the second year) that displaces native woodland flowers and disrupts complex soil organisms in the soil that are necessary for tree germination and growth. Uncontrolled, it can completely wreck a forested area.

For a full description, see under "invasive species" on the Federation's website [www.tinycottager.org](http://www.tinycottager.org) and for a dramatic visual illustration, Google "garlic mustard video" and watch the video produced for Wisconsin Family Forests.

A group of us got to work in 2009 and carted off thousands of plants to the dump. Last year, we got rid of almost all visible stands. But alas, the seed for this year's crop is germinating as I write. Once more into the fray, with the continuing approval of the MTM (Matchedash Bay, Tiny Marsh and Marl Lake) board.

We now call ourselves the Tiny Marsh Garlic Mustard Eradication Group, and we have learned a lot in two years, through experience and consultation with Sara Street of the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre and Dave Ireland of the Toronto Zoo. Here are the key strategies.

**Timing.** Although May is a good time to get the first-year rosettes, for a mass-eradication effort, it is more efficient to pull the second-year plant in June, just before the seed ripens. It's easier, and if the root is left in the ground, it won't re-sprout. The first-year rosette is harder to get rid of because it snaps off easily leaving its taproot in the ground where it will send out fresh growth.

**Disturbance.** We have learned to minimize digging (uncovering and turning over the soil just exposes more seed) and to avoid trampling native vegetation so whatever remains has a better chance to grow. It could take a decade to eradicate this pest.

**Repopulation.** Dave Ireland told me it is very important to repopulate the disturbed soil, or at the very least cover it with mulch or leaves from the forest. In March, at an Ontario Woodlot Association conference, I met a woodlot owner who told me of success through planting mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) because it out-competes garlic mustard. A booklet published by the Ontario Invasive Plant Council makes the same recommendation.

**Disposal.** We took bags to the dump, where we are told the composting temperature will destroy the seeds. I also took some home and burned it. Don't put pulled plants in your compost pile, or leave them lying around, because the seed will ripen there.

**Consumption.** Early settlers introduced garlic mustard because it's tasty – as a cooked vegetable, and in salads. Eat your way to a restored environment!

The Big Pull at Tiny Marsh is set for two successive weekend mornings – Saturday and Sunday, from 10 am to noon on June 11-12 and June 18-19. Wear long sleeves, gloves and long pants tucked into socks or boots to guard against biting insects and mites and bring a small handfork or trowel. Park in front of the nature interpretive centre and follow the signs. A couple of hours' quiet weeding in the peace of the marsh is a lovely way to spend an early summer morning. See you there! For more information, call Kate at 705-322-2545 or Pat at 705-361-2637.





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*The Tiny Cottager* is mailed to the permanent addresses of more than 10,600 Tiny Township property owners (including 7,200 in the shoreline areas of Tiny) and to businesses in the area. It reaches some 25,000 readers. Copyright is claimed on all original articles and on advertisement layout and design created by this publication.

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# Why Are Our Water Levels So Low?

## *Insights from the Sierra Club's Great Lakes Symposium*

By STEPHEN COFFEY

Lots of rumours are floating around about why our water levels are so low - from ex-Governor Jesse Ventura's conspiracy theory on corporate water theft to the use of Great Lakes water to replenish the Ogallala aquifer. Water levels at my shore are down 5 feet from 1998 levels. And it seems things are going from bad to worse. The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) recently forecast the possibility of another foot decrease in the depth of Lakes Michigan and Huron from last year's levels. I wanted to know the real reasons for the low levels and whether there are any solutions, so I joined the Ontario Chapter of the Sierra Club and found many insights at their Symposium on April 9th.

The low water period after 1998 is longer than any in living memory and has led to increasing fears that the problem may not simply be cyclical. The main governmental organization looking at the problem is the International Upper Great Lakes Study Board (IUGLSB) appointed by the International Joint Commission to research the causes and possible remediation of low water levels. The Sierra Club, an NGO, has performed its own analysis.

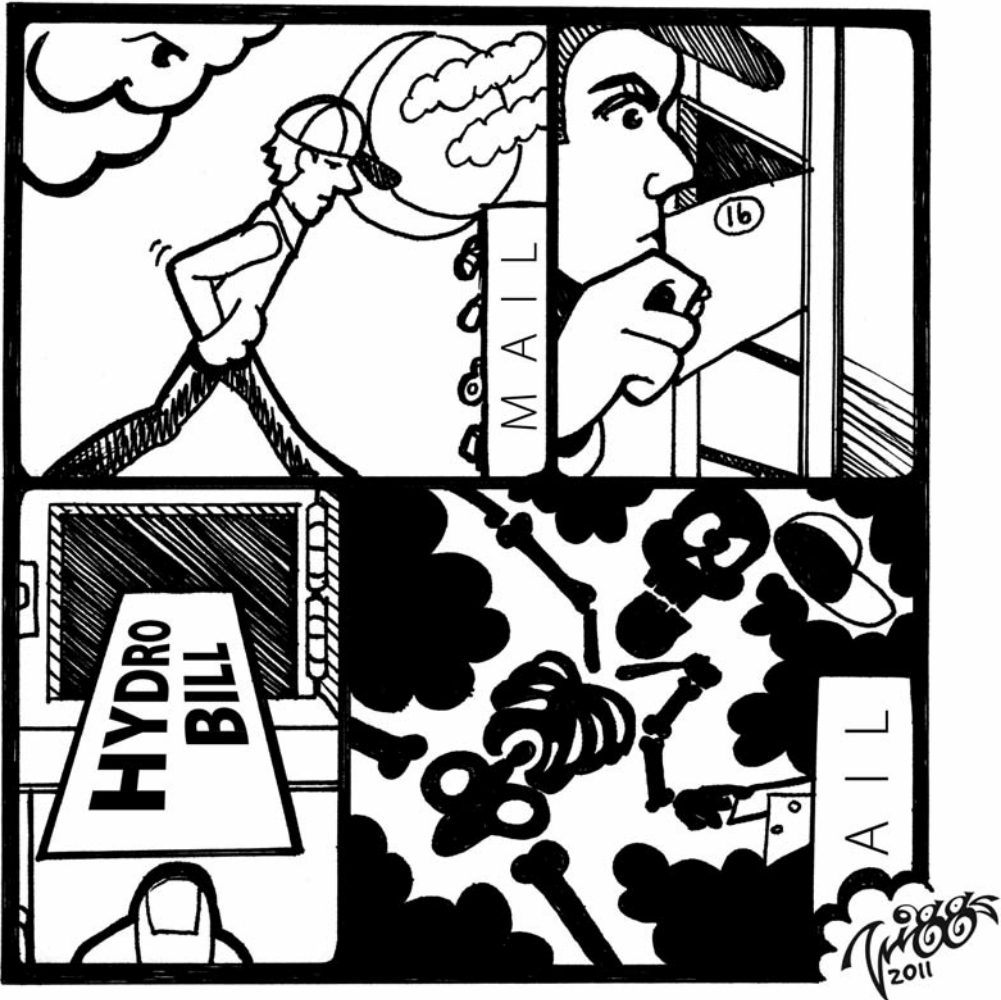
The major reasons cited for low water levels are climate change (low annual precipitation), land movement (isostatic rebound) and man-made interference in the natural drainage of Lakes Michigan-Huron including Georgian Bay. These "middle lakes" are connected by the Straits of Mackinac, have the same water level and are drained by the St. Clair River. Both the IUGLSB and the Sierra Club point to an increase in the flow or conveyance of water down the St. Clair River as the primary man-made reason for lower water levels on Lakes Michigan-Huron.

Conveyance initially increased as a result of dredging in the late 1950s and early 1960s by the Corps to accommodate larger freighters. This dredging had the very serious unforeseen and long-lasting effect of destabilizing and eroding the river bottom. The increase in conveyance as a result of this destabilization is estimated to be 5.8% of post-dredging volumes by the IUGLSB. The Sierra Club, interpreting the data differently, estimates it to be as much as double that.

While the IUGLSB and Sierra agree as to the main factors causing a decline in water levels, they differ as to the relative importance of each factor. Where they substantially disagree is in the area of remediation. To date, the IUGLSB advocates doing nothing to remediate low water levels - let nature "run its course" --- believing that the problem is cyclical in nature and will correct itself when historical levels of precipitation return. The IUGSLB claims the recent "dry" period is similar to the 1930's dustbowl period experienced in North America after which levels rebounded. However, during the dust-bowl period, the decrease in water levels of the middle lakes was not nearly as great as in the last 12 years.

The Sierra Club advocates returning the conveyance of water down the St. Clair River to that prior to the destabilization and erosion of its bottom. They support the installation of flexible controls to reduce water flow down the St. Clair when water levels are low and to allow increased flow when water levels are high. Lake Superior has outflow controls on the St. Mary's River, Ontario on the St. Lawrence and Erie with the Welland Canal. Lakes Ontario and Erie are at or near their long-term average water levels as a result of these controls and the increased flow from the middle lakes..

The Sierra Club has considered controls such as underwater concrete weirs or inflatable apparatuses located near the Blue Water Bridge, which connects Sarnia and Port Huron. They do not support dam and



lock systems because of high monetary and ecological costs. Another idea gaining increasing acceptance is the insertion of hydrokinetic turbines on the St. Clair River bottom which would slow down the conveyance of water from the middle lakes down the river and produce a significant amount of electricity in the process. A detailed technical analysis by the Sierra Club shows that turbine insertion could increase levels on the middle lakes as much as two feet over time with minimal impact on the water level of Lake Erie.

Not everyone on the middle lakes wants controls on the outflow of water. Some shoreline property owners on the east shore of Lake Michigan who like a larger beach oppose any action which might increase water levels. But the Sierra Club and other environmental groups have shown that the effects of low water levels on the middle lakes go way beyond the creation of wider beaches. Low water levels have wreaked havoc on wetlands, especially on those of Georgian Bay - once the richest in the Great Lakes, and vital to fisheries.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of this situation is the

massive loss of freshwater in a world where it is rapidly becoming a diminishing resource. By my rough computations, a water level decrease of 4 to 5 feet in Lake Michigan-Huron is equivalent to losing one third of the entire water volume of Lake Erie. This is an astronomical amount of water which has left Lakes Michigan-Huron and has gone down the St. Lawrence to the ocean. I really don't understand why this hasn't created a greater furor amongst the 50 odd million people living around the Great Lakes or why it hasn't become a serious political issue. After seeing such catastrophes as the virtual disappearance of Lake Chad and the Aral Sea, we should be worried, **very worried**. We should be implementing solutions instead of just watching the water leave under the Blue Water Bridge.

The Sierra Club's Bill Bialkowski will be speaking on the conveyance issue at FoTTSa's AGM in June. People wishing to support the Sierra Club Great Lakes Section's work may do so by contacting Kristina Jackson at (647) 346-8744.

# Soaring Hydro Costs

By IRENE WILSON & JOHN GRANT

Health Canada should stamp a warning on electricity bills: "Opening this may be hazardous to your health with potential side effects of high blood pressure, heart palpitations, headaches and nausea." Even if you're successfully reducing your energy consumption, your overall cost as a seasonal resident has probably risen anyway. There are quite a few reasons for this; one major factor is the imposition of the 13% HST starting last May 1, replacing the 5% GST. Another is that Time-of-Use rates increased at that point too, by about 9.1% if you average the peak, mid-peak and off-peak time periods. For Hydro One customers, there was a significant increase in the distribution charge starting January 1, and an additional increase affecting many seasonal residents (the result of amalgamating Seasonal High Density and Seasonal Low Density into one class). Having absorbed all that, we can now look forward to a number of years of further rapid increases, as we absorb the costs of bringing renewable generation on line, converting to a "Smart Grid", and coming to terms with

fast-increasing maintenance expenditures on an aging transmission and distribution system. And good luck with figuring it all out. The list appears to grow and become more complicated with each passing year: time of use, delivery, regulatory and everyone's favourite, the never-ending Debt Retirement Charge.

We are told that, in addition to becoming greener and cleaner, the electricity system is going to be smarter and much more efficient in helping us to conserve. Smart appliances will interact with the Smart Grid through the smart meter to - ultimately - save us money. But getting that to happen means expensive investment in the meantime. The Ontario government stated on November 18, 2010, "In order to have a clean, modern and reliable electricity system that includes renewables and creates jobs, the government has made significant investments. While necessary and unavoidable, these investments are increasing electricity costs. Over the next five years, residential electricity prices are expected to rise by 46 percent, after which price increases are expected to moderate as Ontario will have largely completed the transition to a cleaner, more reliable system."

See HYDRO...page 12



# A Report on Georgian Bay Forever’s ‘Vital Signs’ Conference, March 26, 2011

By Denise Gadian

Georgian Bay forever? One hopes so. However, a collective assessment of its vital signs by a panel of experts shows otherwise.

The event was well attended by people from around the Bay and beyond, including residents from Woodland Beach, Carusoe Bay, Bluewater, and other Tiny shoreline communities.

The keynote speaker was Lana Pollack. Appointed by President Obama, she is the chair for the U.S. section of the International Joint Commission, between the United States and Canada. Ms. Pollock believes governments on both sides of the border need to step up, make a more substantial commitment, and be held accountable in cleaning up the Great Lakes. She advocates that both governments provide greater monetary investment, better regulatory measures and stronger enforcement.

In her address, Ms. Pollack spoke of all-too-familiar problems still affecting the Great Lakes: excessive nutrients resulting in algal growth, agricultural run-off, aging septic and waste water treatment plants and invasive aquatic species

Ms. Pollack reminded the audience that 8.2 million people depend on the groundwater in the Great Lakes basin, and therefore much is at stake in the next Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between the U.S. and Canada which was last written in 1978, and amended in 1987.

In the recently released 15th biennial annual report that is the basis for the next Agreement, issues affecting the ‘near shore zone’ were given considerable weight. Among them were beach closings. Ms. Pollock noted that one study reported 3,000 days of beach closings and advisories across the Great Lakes in 2005. Presently, there are no standards of testing for beach closings, and authorities do not test for viral pathogens.

Other issues that have become more prominent since the last revision of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement are climate change and ‘chemicals of emerging concern’. According to Ms. Pollock, because of climate change we are in a dynamic situation with many unknowns and therefore any Agreement should be flexible and allow for immediate responses.

‘Chemicals of emerging concern’ refers to newer toxic materials that are being flushed into the Great Lakes basin: fire retardants, household/personal care products, and pharmaceuticals. In the Lakes, they pose adverse health risks to human and to aquatic plant and fish life.

McMaster’s Dr. Pat Chow–Fraser followed, and spoke of the impact of low water levels on wetlands in Georgian Bay. She gave a stirring presentation complete with satellite imagery that stunningly portrayed the decrease in wetlands around Georgian Bay caused by low water levels. She and her colleagues have researched and mapped 1735 acres of coastal marsh in Georgian Bay. An alarming number of these wetlands have dried up and diminished since 2002.

According to Dr. Chow-Fraser, the decrease in wetlands has reduced the size of fish populations and the number of fish species. One case study involving muskies found that only two juveniles were caught between 2003 and 2007, a result of deterioration of their habitat and lack of prey for them to feed on. Low water levels have also separated wetlands from larger bodies of water, thereby destroying access to fish spawning habitats.

Judging by the Q+A session after her presentation, many in the audience viewed the low water levels of Georgian Bay as perhaps the most critical issue affecting them. Low water levels have affected wetlands, eco-systems, tourism, shoreline properties, and have had a detrimental economic impact.

Azin Moradhassel, of the Canadian Shipowners Association, spoke about the impact of low water levels on the shipping industry. She noted that for every inch of lost water, a ship’s carrying capacity drops by 120 tons. Ms.

Moradhassel also spoke of the ‘Green Marine’, a global voluntary environmental movement that is involved in a range of issues including ballast discharge and toxic fuels. She gave a progress report on maritime regulatory measures and their outcomes. These regulations were put in place by the Canadian and United States governments because during the last fifty years the shipping industry was largely responsible for the entry of invasive aquatic species such as zebra and quagga mussels into the Great Lakes. Invasive aquatic species, hitching a ride on ocean-going ships moving through the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes, have caused billions of dollars of damage and have severely disrupted the aquatic ecosystems of the Great Lakes.

According to Ms. Moradhassel, mandatory regulations  
*See GBF...page 6*

## Letter to the Editor

My name is Enser, and when I opened the hydro bill for my cottage I could not believe my eyes! \$264 for hydro and \$375 for delivery, plus HST, plus debt reduction and a host of other charges! This, when my home electrical bill, where I spend most of my time, was only \$164 and \$73 for delivery.

I called Hydro One immediately to challenge the delivery charge and was referred to the Ontario Energy Board and they referred me to the Electricity Distribution Association. I talked to a spokesperson there at some length about the unjust treatment of seasonal residents concerning delivery charges.

He explained that the charge was for the long distances between residences in sparsely populated areas. My response -- that many cottage areas are densely populated -- was dismissed. He followed up with an irksome, off-the-cuff remark to the effect that an owner of a second property could probably afford it.

He informed me that only the government could alter the rates, that I had really had no say as a consumer, and that my only alternative was to go off the grid at enormous cost.

Back to Hydro One where a knowledgeable and cooperative individual listened to my tale of the unfairness of excessive delivery charges. I was then referred to the Ontario Hydro One website [www.hydroone.com](http://www.hydroone.com) where there’s information about the “New delivery rates” for “Residential” and “Seasonal” residents.

I found that the hydro costs were the same at home and at the cottage, but the delivery rates were 3.456 per kWh at my home, but 8.427 per kWh at my cottage.

**200% More!**

To add insult to injury, my neighbour (who lives less than 100 feet away from me) pays the urban delivery

# Sonnet for Hydro ONE

By Gabriële Telfer

*We're going retro in our cabin in the woods,  
consuming less energy, using fewer resources,  
taking cooking outdoors, and if we could,  
we'd park the car and get back on our horses.*

*Always saving energy in off peak hours,  
with low flow showerheads, compact fluorescent lights,  
using cones for ice cream, and looking at flowers  
because no dishes to wash means no more fights.*

*We're in control of our energy, excluding delivery,  
regulatory charges, and debt retirement.  
We're part of the solution, and done with the feuding.  
We'll line dry our clothes, and befriend the environment.*

*Dear Hydro One, we're reducing our dependence;  
we'll get off the grid and declare transcendence.*

charge because he lives in his cottage full time. It’s no comfort that this neighbour has been hit with a huge increase in his electrical bill too. Cottage life is getting expensive!

The cost of hydro has doubled as a result of the billions paid to unreliable, inefficient, expensive green energy initiatives like wind, and the huge salaries and bonuses paid to hydro executives. We all are paying more and you can expect increases again in 2012. You can take comfort from the following quote,

“We recognize that some Ontario families are experiencing financial difficulties and having problems paying their utility bills,” Hydro One’s manager of public affairs, Enza Cancilla, wrote on Jan. 27. “We encourage these customers in particular to contact our customer communication centre to discuss payment arrangements and avoid potential disconnection of service.”

Gee, thanks.

*Globe and Mail* reporter, Karen Howlett reports that consumer electricity prices are set to rise by 25% by the end of 2011, or, for the average consumer, by about \$300 per year. The hike has to do with the combined impact of the implementation of the HST (adding an additional 8% to your electricity bill), the recent change to time of use pricing, and most importantly, the awarding of \$15 billion in renewable energy contracts for power generation in Ontario.

Soaring hydro bills have already prompted the Liberals to introduce 10% rebates this year, but they’ve admitted that electricity prices will rise 46% over the next five years.

One solution (ho ho) is to pay your bills each month in order to avoid the nasty surprise lying in wait for you when you pay quarterly. You should also complain to your MPP about these delivery charges. Oh, yes, keep turning those lights off!

ENSER (ENraged SEasonal Resident)

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GBF...continue from page 5

adopted by the United States and Canada concerning bal-  
last discharge in the Great Lakes are currently among the  
most stringent in the world and enforcement is 100%; as a  
result four years have elapsed since the discovery of the  
last aquatic invasive species. Whether or not one can  
prove these claims, it's laudable that the migration of inva-  
sive species has been reduced. Nonetheless the remaining  
culprits are still wreaking havoc.

Arunas Liskauskas from the Upper Great Lakes  
Management Unit of the Ontario Ministry of Natural  
Resources began his presentation with some sombre and  
disturbing news: there is a perfect storm raging beneath the  
placid waters of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay: fish com-  
munities are restructuring and changing. He recounted a  
historical chain of events in Lake Huron involving fish  
communities from the 1930's through to the 1960's and  
concluded with what's happening presently.

The lake trout was once king in Lake Huron: there were  
12 types, but the sea lamprey, introduced by ships passing  
through the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Welland Canal,  
led to the near extinction of that deepwater fish communi-  
ty in Lake Huron. Next came the alewife and rainbow  
smelt. In the 1960's their population exploded because  
there were no predator fish like the lake trout to reduce  
their numbers, and the alewife and rainbow smelt also  
depleted food sources that other fish depended on.  
Therefore chinook salmon and once-native lake trout were  
introduced into the Great Lakes to prey on the alewife. In  
turn the alewife declined. However, because it was an  
important food source for other types of predator fish, they  
too became affected, with stocks being reduced to near  
extinction.

A second wave of disruption came with the introduc-  
tion of zebra and quagga mussels, the round goby and the  
spiny water flea.

These aquatic invaders have again restructured the fish  
web. The mussels in particular have sucked the nutrients  
from the bottom of Lake Huron, leaving nothing for the  
fish. Also disappearing in Lake Huron are the diporeia,  
small shrimp-like creatures that have been an important  
food for fish. Whitefish, in abundance for many decades,  
are now declining because of the disappearance of the  
diporeia. The chinook salmon are also declining because  
of less alewife. The northern pike is also not doing well  
because of low water levels. Wild lake trout however, are  
starting to come back, walleye stocks have recovered in  
Severn Sound and Saginaw Bay, and the smallmouth bass  
are eating the round goby.

Dr. Allan Crowe, a hydrogeologist with Environment  
Canada, and formerly a long time seasonal resident of  
Woodland Beach, focused on the health of beaches in  
southern Georgian Bay. He spoke about the factors con-  
tributing to E. coli in water, such as deposits of fecal mate-  
rial by gulls and geese. Dr. Crowe bemoaned the urbaniza-  
tion of shoreline properties, particularly the planting of  
grass, so attractive to geese. If Mr. Crowe had his way, and  
could be king of Georgian Bay, lawns adjacent to beaches  
would be banned. Other causes of E. coli in sand and  
water are defective and inadequate septic and sewage sys-  
tems, as well as urban and rural run-off.

While many along Tiny's shoreline are familiar with  
beach closings due to high levels of E. coli in the water,  
many are not used to thinking of it as being present in the  
sand. In fact, fecal material and pathogens that enter the  
"swash zone", the juncture where waves curl and rush

onto the beach, seep into the groundwater and into the  
lake and are carried along the shore.

How safe are our southern Georgian Bay beaches?  
According to Dr. Crowe, kids playing in the sand along the  
shore are probably not at serious risk: the levels of e-coli  
on Tiny's beaches are no better or worse than elsewhere.

Dr. Gail Krantzberg, who concluded the conference,  
began by saying that the Great Lakes are the 3rd or 4th  
largest economy in the world and half of Canada's GDP is  
derived from the Great Lakes region. She believes that  
lack of government accountability is impeding progress.  
Dr. Krantzberg called for more constituents and stakehold-  
ers to be involved in the Agreement, for she believes that  
rehabilitation and the healing of the Great Lakes will ulti-  
mately be successful only if a "place based" strategy is ini-  
tiated and well co-ordinated; real success will come not  
from the top down, but from the bottom up, lake by lake.

Georgian Bay's vital signs? Patient critical.  
For more information, see  
IJC 15th Biennial Report (<http://www.ijc.org>);  
Lake Huron Food Web, enter  
<http://tinyurl.com/3cop7c7> into your browser  
Dr. Allan Crowe, "E. Coli: A Permanent Resident of Our  
Beaches?" *Tiny Cottager* no. 30 (Fall 2007): 3, 14  
Judith Grant, "Low Water Levels in Georgian Bay," *Tiny  
Cottager* no. 31 (Spring 2008): 3.

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# Recommended Summer Reading

Welcome to the second annual Tiny Cottager Recommended Summer Reading column. Whether or not high speed Internet has reached your little corner of summer paradise, you shouldn't get any "error" messages if you put your face into a book the old-fashioned way, with any of the titles recommended below, settled into your favourite chair -- with or without optional large or small shaggy dog snoozing at your feet!

from Irene and Gary Wilson, Wendake Beach

## Thunder Bay Beach and Nearby Islands of Southern Georgian Bay

by William Northcott (Northwood Enterprises)  
(Available at the Huronia Museum, or from author at: 705-525-2276 or [thunderb@csolve.net](mailto:thunderb@csolve.net))

Resident on and around Thunder Bay Beach for seventy years, Bill Northcott traces the history and settlement of the beach from the 1830's to present day in this well-researched publication, covering a broad spectrum of topics, including commercial enterprises such as fishing, lumbering and ice cutting, to early cottagers and present-day activities.

Illustrated with an extensive collection of photos, many dating from the 1800's, Northcott's personal memories mingle with geological reports, archaeological surveys and historical accounts to produce an engaging book that will appeal to all ages, on a journey through almost 200 years which will intrigue any reader who has ever spent time on or near "The Beach". An attractive hardcover book of over 300 pages that would enhance any home library.

from Dale Stringer, Cawaja Beach

## Juno: Canadians at D-Day June 6, 1944

by Ted Barris

This book tells the exploits of Canadian forces: how Canadian journalists and filmmakers scooped the world; how Canadians misled the enemy and advanced the farthest inland; why D-Day operations were postponed; and what French civilians saw as Canadian troops landed, all told through interviews of personal testimony, and historical records.

from C.A. Pangrazzi, Farlain Lake

## Rites of Passage - Circle Gathering, A Tree of Life Reflective Guide Book Honouring Women

by Beverley Dujay-Macdonald

(Available at: <http://www.ritesofpassagecommunity.com>)

Interested in reading something different? Beverley Dujay-Macdonald has lived in Huronia for most of her 56 years and has always been inspired by the rich First Nations history of the area. In a personal quest for spiritual growth, she invited three local women friends to join her in celebrating the phases of a woman's life by gathering monthly at the Full Moon Time following certain native rituals and traditions that honour women. This self-help manual provides an easy to follow step-by-step guide for women of all ages looking to create circle gatherings within their own community, and also offers personal reflections and insights shared by the four women as they travelled their own spiritual path over the course of two years of gatherings. I enjoyed supporting a local author and found her story both helpful and inspiring.

from Ines Colabrese, Christian Island

## In Defense of Food

by Michael Pollan

I just finished reading a great book that I have to recommend. It's an incredible historical account of what's happened to food production in the past 100 years or so, and how this new "food" is causing huge health problems. There are some interesting tips on how to eat better that are very simple and effective. You can probably find this book at the library. Author's website:

<http://michaelpollan.com/books/in-defense-of-food>

from John Fenton, Bluewater Georgina Wendake

## Willful Blindness: Why We Ignore the Obvious at Our Peril

by Margaret Heffernan

This recently-published book has been reviewed extensively on television, radio and in the press. It is not specifically "summer" reading or about the region, but it is well worth most people's attention if they wish to "discover the surprising reasons we turn a blind eye to problems -- and

how to see more clearly to prevent pitfalls and disasters in our personal, professional and civic lives".

A brief snippet from inside the front cover: "How could economists miss the housing bubble? Why do spouses think their adultery won't hurt anyone? How could mortgagees take on such huge debts? The answer to all these questions is the same: willful blindness. The biggest threats and dangers we face aren't secret or hidden. They're the ones we choose to overlook."

My recommendation of a book well worth reading.

from Joe Martin, Addison Beach

## Playing with the Enemy

by Gary W. Moore

This book is not about the area, but it will be of interest to those who love baseball and are interested in World War II and broken dreams. It is the story of a baseball prodigy who grew up dirt poor in the Great Depression in southern Illinois. He was a gifted baseball player who played for the U.S. Navy team in North Africa and then was sent to Louisiana to guard German prisoners of war. While doing that he taught them to play baseball.

Unfortunately, he broke his ankle in the final game against the Germans, effectively ending his baseball career. He descended to the depths of booze and depression, but came back to play in the minors and to go on to have a fortunate marriage and a wonderful family. With tears in his eyes, the player (the author's father) finally realized: "I wouldn't trade this family for anything. Not for money, not for fame and...not for baseball".

from Patricia Campbell Warner, Cawaja Beach

## The Inspector Gamache series of mysteries by Louise Penny:

**Still Life**

**A Fatal Grace**

**The Cruellest Month**

**A Rule Against Murder**

**The Brutal Telling**

**Bury Your Dead**

In Still Life Canadian author Louise Penny introduces the cast of characters who populate the remote little town of Three Pines, Quebec, somewhere in the Eastern Townships, south of Montreal. One wonders how such an idyllic town can spawn such mayhem, but the situations in each are solved through the thoughtful and intelligent handling of Chief Inspector Armande Gamache, Penny's protagonist, and his faithful police team at the Surete de Quebec.

Penny is a wonderful writer, a delight to read. Her genius lies in carrying one book into the next without leaving the reader dangling at the end of each, yet sometimes picking up threads from an earlier book to weave into a rich tapestry of people who come across as real as they interact in Three Pines.

I discovered Louise Penny last fall and eagerly read each book in order through the winter. (So much for books for the beach!) A seventh in the series is coming out this summer -- I can hardly wait!

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# The Log Cabin That Ridley Built

## A Bluewater Beach Landmark - Part One: The Builder and his Legacy

By ANTHONY ROVITO

The name Frank Ridley is well known in Huronia and points beyond. A builder by vocation, Mr. Ridley constructed a number of custom homes in the Kingsway area of Toronto and, in 1925, he and his wife June lovingly built an 18th century-style log cabin at Bluewater Beach. In 1987, we became the proud owners of that log cabin and quickly learned to appreciate its rich history and the painstaking work that went into building it. Soon after, we became committed to gradually restoring the Ridley cabin to its original state.

In addition to being a successful builder, Mr. Ridley was also an accomplished, self-taught, Ontario archaeologist and a committed and active conservationist. In archaeology, Frank Ridley is probably best known for his 1946 discovery of the Huron-Wendat Ossuary, also known as the Ossossane Bone Pit—an Indian burial ground on County Road 6, south of Perkinsfield. In searching for this significant bone pit, Mr. Ridley first taught himself French so that he could review the correspondence of the Canadian martyrs, particularly the letters of Father Jean de Brébeuf who, prior to being killed by the Iroquois in 1649, had described in detail the ceremony of the “Great Feast of the Dead” that had taken place at Ossossane in May 1636.

Historically, we now know that every 10 or 12 years the Hurons from a clan’s village normally brought the remains of their dead (previously buried in shallow graves or on above ground scaffolds) to a final resting place in a large communal burial pit. The “great feast of the dead,” as the reburial ceremony was called, usually involved three days of feasting and dancing, after which the remains of the dead, along with many artifacts and treasures, were lowered into the large pit which was lined with beaver furs. To date, nearly 100 such pits have been found in Northern Simcoe.

The bone pit at Ossossane was officially excavated in 1947 and 1948 by Ridley, Kenneth E. Kidd and a team of Royal Ontario Museum archaeologists. It contained the bones of close to 600 Hurons along with clay pipes (some with human effigies), stone discs (sun worship symbols), pottery fragments, totems (bear symbols), stone and

wampum (money), and European beads which had been acquired by trade. Prior to the official ROM excavation and thereafter, Mr. Ridley would bring some of his daily finds from the bone pit back to his Bluewater Beach cabin where he would carefully clean, study, and document the various objects.

Mr. Ridley's specific interest in archaeology reportedly began at age 11, when he visited a museum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where his father, a naval architect, supervised shipbuilding for the Royal Navy. The Ridley family had earlier immigrated to Canada from England just before World War I and had originally homesteaded in northern Manitoba. There, the young Ridley befriended the Indians from the nearby Peguis reserve and quickly developed a life-long interest in Indian culture and history.

Many years later a young Quebecois Wendat of Huron descent, Francis Gros-Louis, upon visiting the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, sadly discovered that the skeletal remains of over 500 of his Huron ancestors had been removed from the Ossossane burial ground and were now being kept at the museum. From that point, he began to dream of returning his ancestors to their rightful place. For 10 years, Gros-Louis and other members of the Agondachia Association (a Wendat-Huron Cultural group), worked to make that initial dream a reality. And, after an official request was made to have their ancestral bones returned, officials from the Royal Ontario Museum, in 1998, agreed to allow the Huron people to secure and rebury the remains of their ancestors. Thus, in August of 1999, 300 cardboard file boxes containing the human remains of over 550 Huron ancestors made their way from the Royal Ontario Museum back to the Ossossone Ossuary to be reburied in a solemn ceremony.

Much was written about that reburial ceremony and whether the bone pit should have been dug up in the first place. The Barrie Examiner at the time summed it up as follows: “Looking from the light of today, it is gratifying that the ROM was so eager to cooperate. And, looking from the same light, perhaps it would be harsh to condemn those original archaeologists who removed the remains in the

first place.”

Frank Ridley was a fervent supporter of First Nations people. His meticulous archaeological work helped to document the everyday lives of the ancestral Huron-Wendat nation. Based on his research findings (specifically, the striking similarities between northern Canadian pottery and that of northeastern Europe), Frank Ridley was also one of the first proponents of the dual passage theory into North America: via the Bering Strait from Asia and the Atlantic from Europe. In 1959, Ridley was invited to China to help interpret Canadian archeological research. Upon his return from China, he visited Moscow and there, in the State Historical Museum in Red Square, made a significant discovery: that the earliest northeastern Canadian potsherds of 500 B.C. showed striking similarities in decorative techniques to the Russian potsherds of 1000 B.C. This further supported his theory of dual passage into North America.

After interviewing and writing about Frank Ridley, Jindra Rutherford wrote: "A builder by vocation and an archeologist by avocation, Frank Ridley was destined to go far beyond the scope of an amateur archaeologist". The Ossossane Bone Pit was, in fact, just one of many Indian archeological sites that Frank Ridley was consulted on and participated in. As an Ontario archaeologist he was very much respected and highly sought after for his knowledge and expertise on Indian artifacts and culture, specifically Huron archaeology.

As a conservationist, Frank Ridley spearheaded the flooding and creation of Tiny Marsh—a 17th century lake identified in Jesuit maps. In 1954, Ridley petitioned Tiny Township to re-flood this troublesome property and create a wildlife sanctuary and limited hunting area. In 1966, the Township finally set aside some 1400 acres for the Marsh and it began to be administered by the Department of Lands and Forests. Today, Tiny Marsh is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Natural Resources and has become an extensive network of nature trails for all of us to enjoy.

*This article is rooted in the author’s personal experience of Ridley’s cottage, conversations with neighbours who knew Ridley, and several print sources mentioned in the article. The fall issue of The Tiny Cottager, will contain Part Two: The "Labour of Love" Restoration of the Bluewater Beach Ridley Cottage.*

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# White Sweet Clover Removal - Nottawaga Beach

By DIANE HASLEY



White Sweet Clover (WSC) is a non-native biennial that produces small plants in the first year. These plants can reach over 2 metres in height in the second summer, and white flowers appear from July to September. Each plant can produce thousands of seeds. If growing conditions are not ideal, these seeds remain dormant for many years.

In 2007, it was shocking to see a wall of flowering WSC plants growing in the dunes along sections of Nottawaga Beach. Speculation is that some WSC seeds were left behind when the water level dropped. For several years, the plants that grew from these seeds went unnoticed, but many dormant seeds must have germinated in 2006 – hence the proliferation of flowering plants observed the following year.

Volunteers were recruited at a 2008 beach association meeting. Our WSC Removal Program began on a Saturday morning in late July. We pulled or dug out as many plants as possible. These were then piled and left to dry at specific sites along the beach. Once dry, the plants were burned.

Because WSC grew unchecked in 2007, there was a bumper crop in 2009. Over 30 volunteers – ranging in age

from children to seniors – cleared large areas on the July work day. A core group of volunteers continued the work until the end of August. At times, this task seemed overwhelming, but there was a reward. By Labour Day, healthy dunes were visible along Nottawaga Beach.

In 2010, there were not as many flowering plants. We took a slightly different approach. Volunteers met and fanned out across the width of the dunes. We walked the length of the beach, pulling all WSC plants in our path. Because of the work done in 2008, we knew that many of the 2010 plants had grown from dormant seeds.

Members of the Nottawaga Beach Association are now responsible for removing WSC from the dunes in front of their properties. However, the July work day will continue to be an essential part of the program. Those participating will remove WSC from common areas and lend a hand if members need help.

This has become a real community effort. Due to the vigilance and dedication of the volunteers, the dunes and their native plants are being protected, and WSC is no longer growing out of control on Nottawaga Beach.

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HYDRO..continued from page 4

It's not as if these costs were being incurred imprudently. Although the government determines the overall direction of change (e.g. shutting down coal, adopting smart meters), the Ontario Energy Board holds hearings at which users, generators and others are represented, where Hydro One and other providers are required to justify their proposed charges; quite often the proposed charges are reduced. (For a current example, see <http://tinyurl.com/6xp67fv>)

It's far from the Wild West situation of gasoline and heating oil prices, but it's painful just the same.

Hydro One's "Seasonal Residential" customers will find that one of the most expensive parts of their bill is the "delivery" charge. There are a number of components on this line; the key ones are a flat-rate charge (which went up from \$21.25 to \$24.82 this year), a volume-related distribution charge, which increased as well, from 7.294 cents to 8.427 cents a kilowatt-hour, and a volume-related transmission charge, unchanged this year, on usage adjusted to take account of line losses, of 0.974 cents/kwh. (For comparison, Hydro One's "Urban High-Density" customers face a flat rate of \$19.50, a volume-related distribution charge of only 2.879 cents/kwh, and a volume-related transmission charge on adjusted usage of 1.031 cents/kwh.) If you are a full-time resident with a Seasonal Residential classification, you may apply to Hydro One to change to Residential, but, to qualify, you must reside in your cottage for at least 4 days a week for 8 months of the year and not designate another property as a year-round residence. There are further detailed criteria which may be found at <http://tinyurl.com/6a46wvy>. The Ontario Energy Board has directed Hydro One to research whether its distribution costs would be more fairly allocated by some other structure such as using municipal boundaries, but don't hold your breath.

Another irritant in the bill is the seemingly- never-ending Debt Retirement Charge that appears near the bottom of your statement, a reminder of the old financially-mismanaged Ontario Hydro, which was restructured in 1999 to form Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation (OPG). A liability of \$19.4 billion was left over, called "stranded debt". (Some of this debt was accumulated because we

were enjoying electricity at 4.3 cents/kWh when the actual market price was closer to 6 cents/kWh, along with other less-than-stellar financial decisions.) The Electricity Act of 1998 provides for the Debt Retirement Charge to be paid by consumers until the residual stranded debt is retired. The original intention was to retire the debt by 2012, but as of March 31, 2010, the balance was \$14.8 billion and it is now intended to be retired between 2015 and 2018.

The new statements contain an Ontario Clean Energy Benefit, a 10% credit which the Ontario Government introduced on November 18, 2010, "to help consumers manage rising electricity prices for the next five years." But the government's decision to apply the HST to electricity bills makes it seem like robbing Peter to pay Paul.

To be fair, managing and directing a massive, complex system like Ontario's electricity network is no joke. Getting it to move in a new, ambitious direction is a huge challenge, and the government deserves credit for pointing in that direction. But the way all that complexity shows up in the bill is not really doing consumers a favour. Some consumers might indeed prefer just to see one final number on the bill rather than try to make sense out of the bits and pieces as they're presented.

What options does a ratepayer have? Going off the grid is a possible (but expensive) option especially for those who are considering new homes or major renovations. If natural gas is available, you can gradually switch water heaters, heating systems, stoves and dryers over to this relatively inexpensive energy source. Options such as tankless water heaters and high efficiency furnaces can reduce your overall gas consumption. But it would be foolish to think that we can go back to cheap electricity. It ain't gonna happen.

**Township of Tiny  
Notice of Study Commencement  
Septage Management**

**Class Environmental Assessment Study**

**The Study**

The Township of Tiny is undertaking a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study to establish the preferred approach for providing septage and holding tank waste disposal services to the residents of the Township. The Township of Tiny has approximately 9,400 homes with private septic systems or holding tanks. At present, the collection and disposal of septage and holding tank waste is by private haulers. The Township does not have a municipal sewage treatment facility that could receive and treat septage and holding tank waste. The Ministry of Environment (MOE) prohibits the land application of untreated septage on agricultural lands during winter months. The MOE has indicated that a province-wide moratorium on land application of untreated septage will eventually come into effect. Consequently, the Township needs to examine alternative solutions for the disposal of septage and holding tank waste.

**The Process**

This study is being carried out in accordance with the requirements of Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Engineers Association Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (2000, as amended in 2007). A key component of the study will be consultation with agencies, residents and interested stakeholders. There will be opportunities for public input and comment throughout the Class EA process. Three (3) Public Information Centres (PICs) will be scheduled during the course of the study. A notice of PIC will be advertised in advance of each public meeting. The purpose of the PICs will be to review and provide comment on the problem statement for the study, the potential alternative solutions and the preferred alternative(s).

As the study progresses, information will also be posted on the Township web site at: <http://www.tiny.ca>.

**Comments Invited**

Public input and comments are invited for incorporation into the Class EA process. Upon completion of the study, a Study Report will be prepared for public review and comment for a period of 30 days.

If you have any questions or comments, wish to receive additional information on the study or wish to be added to the mailing list to receive further notifications of the study, please contact either of the following Study Team members:

Mr. Henk Blom  
Manager of Public Works  
Township of Tiny  
130 Balm Beach Road West, R.R. 1  
Perkinsfield, Ontario L0L 2J0  
Phone: (705) 526-4204  
Fax: (705) 527-8767  
Email: [dlacroix@tiny.ca](mailto:dlacroix@tiny.ca)

Ms. Anne Egan., M.Sc.(Eng.), P.Eng.  
Project Manager  
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E-mail: [anne.egan@rjburnside.com](mailto:anne.egan@rjburnside.com)

Information will be collected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

This Notice first issued on February 14, 2011.

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L to R: John Becking, Bluewater Georgina Wendake Beaches; Susan Laycock, Executive Director, Georgian Bay General Hospital Foundation; Betty Becking, Bluewater Georgina Wendake Beaches; Carey Moran, Director GBGH Foundation; Ingrid Egner, Bluewater Dunes Association; Judith Grant, Addison Beach and Pres. FoTTSA; Robert Elia, Nottawaga Beach; Dorene Trunk, Rochelle Beach; Linda Andrews, Wahnekeweing Beach; Al Smith, Edmor/Georgian Heights Beaches; Hamish Grant, Addison Beach.

# Tiny Cottager Challenge:

*Beach Associations Give Generously*

Since 2003, the Tiny Cottager Challenge has raised almost \$150,000 for the Emergency Department at Georgian Bay General Hospital, and \$15,000 more for Physician Recruitment and the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre.

This year 10 beach associations participated: Addison, Bluewater Dunes, Bluewater Georgina Wendake, Edmor-Georgian Heights, Kingswood Acres, Nottawaga, Rochelle, Sawlog Bay, Wahnekewening, and Wymbolwood.

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L to R: Hamish Grant, Addison Beach; Robert Elia, Nottawaga Beach; Judith Grant, Addison Beach and Pres. FoTTSA; Linda Andrews, Wahnekewening Beach; Suzanne McDonald, Executive Director, Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre; Betty and John Becking, Bluewater Georgina Wendake Beaches.

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# New Science for More Accurate and Timely Swimming Advisories

By IZHAR KHAN & ALLAN CROWE, ENVIRONMENT CANADA



Nothing can spoil your day at the beach more than finding it posted with an “Advisory” notice for swimming. Ontario’s Health Units require a swimming advisory when samples show that the E. coli content is higher than Ministry of Health guidelines for recreational water quality. The advisory sign normally remains posted at the beach until subsequent testing shows the risk to swimmers is once again within acceptable limits.

There are two types of posting: an advisory and a beach

closure. An advisory is a warning that the water may contain levels of bacteria that may cause an increased risk of developing minor skin, eye, ear, nose and throat infections and stomach disorders. A rare beach closure occurs following catastrophic events, such as sewage spills, that present an immediate risk to health from contact with the water.

Health risks in swimming water arise from pathogens: harmful bacteria, viruses or protozoa from fecal sources, whether human, agricultural or wildlife. Unfortunately, it is difficult and costly to measure such pathogens directly. Therefore, E. coli is used as a surrogate, or “microbial indicator”, for fecal pathogens because it can be readily measured with relatively inexpensive tests. The presence of E. coli indicates contamination from human or animal fecal wastes and possible occurrence of human-associated pathogens.

### Current assessment methods

But how does a health unit currently go from sampling the water to deciding on its quality? The standard methods to grow and count the E. coli require 18-24 hours. Adding the time to collect water samples from several beaches, transport them to a laboratory, and decide whether or not the beach should be posted can take 2 to 3 days! But E. coli numbers in lake water can change significantly over much shorter times, and thus a beach posting reflects water quality 1 to 3 days ago, and not necessarily conditions on the day of the posting!

To provide more timely results, scientists have been working on two different methods to improve the timeliness of the assessments and the accuracy of beach postings. These are Rapid Analytical Methods and Predictive/Forecast Models.

### Rapid Analytical Methods

Current methods for assessing E. coli in lake water are simple and inexpensive but have limitations noted above. Also, due to the manner in which the E. coli is cultured, current methods may give a false positive (overestimate the E. coli count) by culturing other bacteria, or a false negative (underestimate the E. coli count) because some E. coli in the sample won’t grow in the lab. An alternative method that avoids the limitations of the current method is a DNA-based technique known as polymerase chain reaction (or simply PCR). From a single copy of the DNA of target bacteria, PCR can generate billions of copies of the DNA in a few hours, enabling rapid identification of presence of all of the specific bacteria, such as E. coli, in a sample of lake water. However, PCR does not provide a precise count of the number of bacteria in the sample.

Now an improved PCR technique, called Quantitative PCR (Q-PCR), will provide both an accurate count of the number of a specific bacteria, including E. coli, in the sample, and undertake the analysis much faster than PCR. Hence Q-PCR could be useful for a health unit that collects 80-90 lake water samples from several beaches in the morning, and in a few hours provide results to determine if beach postings are needed.

The Q-PCR technique provides both a more accurate assessment of E. coli numbers and a very rapid count of E. coli versus the current methods. The drawbacks of the Q-PCR method are higher cost of equipment and supplies, and the higher degree of skill required to operate the equipment and interpret results. Nevertheless, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is currently considering switching to Q-PCR for rapid and accurate assessment of E. coli in recreational waters.

### Predictive/Forecast Modeling

It is well known that environmental conditions affect pollution in nearshore water. For example, rainwater runoff from fields can transport E. coli to a creek, which then discharges at a beach. Thus, just by observing conditions at a beach, we can make an educated guess as to whether or not we should expect elevated levels of E. coli today.



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Scientists have gone beyond “guessing” by developing mathematical models to predict whether or not elevated levels of E. coli could occur at a beach. This method is similar to weather forecasting in that the model evaluates the conditions at a beach early in the morning and estimates the probability that E. coli levels might exceed the water quality guideline during the rest of the day.

How do these predictive models work? Developing a model for a given beach, involves doing a mathematical analysis (regression analysis) to correlate E. coli levels at that beach with factors such as wave height, wind speed, wind direction, water temperature, recent rainfall, number of waterfowl on beach, sand erosion, water clarity (turbidity), day of the year, stream and/or storm water discharge. Data for several years are needed to accurately assess which parameters affect E. coli levels and how strongly each factor contributes. Because different beaches are impacted differently by these factors, the model is adjusted for each individual beach.

To apply the predictive model, the parameters found to influence E. coli levels at the specific beach are measured early in the morning. These data are entered into the model, which then yields an estimate of the probability that E. coli levels will exceed the water quality guideline today.

The predictive model forecast can be obtained in minutes. However, it also has a few drawbacks: it requires a lot of historical environmental data to calibrate a beach specific model, and the quality of the forecast depends on frequency and quality of historical data, and how close weather measurements (e.g., a weather station) are to the beach.

Predictive models are being tested at several beaches in the United States and Canada, including Toronto. At some beaches, the models have not been reliable, but at others they have provided correct predictions over 80% of the time. This level of accuracy is much better than the current methods used by health units.

Summary

Both rapid analytical methods and forecast models have advantages over current culture-based methods, but they also have some disadvantages as well. Further development and evaluation is required before regulatory agencies adopt these new techniques. We hope that these advanced techniques will be lead to more timely and accurate beach postings for the public.

Report on Council

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Mayor Ray Millar  
Deputy Mayor George Lawrence  
Councillor André Claire  
Councillor Nigel Warren  
Councillor Gibb Wishart

ENCROACHMENTS AND HARASSMENT AT

**ASSELIN BEACH:** Last October, Council received a letter from a resident in Concession 17 West, who wrote on behalf of 16 other residents. The letter outlined steps taken by these residents both the previous year and last year to deal with alleged encroachments and described the harassing of beach users at Asselin Park. The steps taken included the submission of a map showing alleged encroachments, a list of them, and a meeting with Roger Robitaille, head of Planning. The alleged encroachments include a marine railway, boats, decks, planter, flag pole, horseshoe pits, hammock, fire pits, gardens, rock walls, lighting, furniture etc.

The letter requested a site inspection to confirm the encroachments, their removal, construction of a fence to define the public parkland, and “Asselin Park” signage. Council left the matter in the hands of staff, with the understanding that legal advice would be sought and that the incoming Council would deal with the matter.

**SEPTAGE DISPOSAL ON FIELDS:** Last October, two officials from the MoE in Barrie attended to shed light on the licensing of the spreading of septage on fields. Chris Hyde, District Supervisor, said that spreading is safe if the soil and the hydro geological assessments are appropriate. A private owner in the 17th Concession East has had 6 hectares approved for spreading and another in the 15th Concession East has had 8 hectares approved. The latter is the property that prompted a presentation at the previous meeting of Council. The license for this property expires in November, but may be renewed.

Hyde observed that they do more follow up tests in Tiny than elsewhere and that the rate of spreading has been reduced in Tiny. He said that in future the Township would be notified when a landowner applies for a license to permit spreading.

**BEACH WATER QUALITY SAMPLES:** Last December, a representative from the Barrie District Health Unit presented results from its testing of swimming water quality at public beaches in Tiny last summer. These can be viewed on the township website under Agenda on the home page (COW Dec. 13, 2010, Reports of Consultants or Third Parties).

Water quality continues to be a major concern but no level of government seems very proactive in considering solutions.

**LAFONTAINE BEACH PARK MASTER PLAN:** During the winter, Council listened to a presentation by consultants of options for the Lafontaine Beach Park Master Plan, the favored option being to reduce the size of two of the groynes. They expressed considerable concern over the potential cost (\$92,000 is estimated just for studies leading to the feasibility and permitting of this action) and raised doubts about whether there would be significant beneficial effects from doing so while the water levels remain so low.

The Master Plan includes establishing a community area with a playground, a sheltered area, preserving areas with mature trees and natural vegetation and regenerating the beachfront area with plantings. Removal of the groynes presents problems as they provide the only easy way for swimmers to reach water deep enough for swimming. No decisions were made but Council members noted that any development is contingent on the actual waterfront situation. The complete presentation is available on the township website under Agenda on the home page (COW February 14, 2011, Reports of Consultants or Third Parties).

MAYORS’ ECONOMIC ACTION INITIATIVE:

Mayor Millar has been attending meetings with the Mayors of Midland, Penetanguishene and Tay Township. In order to move the EAI forward, endorsement of the concept in principle by the four municipalities was required, and such a resolution was passed.

SEPTAGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRO-

**CESS:** In January, R.J. Burnside and Associates presented a plan for public consultation in the first phases of the Tiny Septage Class Environmental Assessment regarding Tiny’s septage disposal options. They hope that plans and alternatives can be completed in 2011, after which the next three phases may take another one to two years depending on the province’s requirements. There is a good detailed presentation on the township’s website. See Agenda, COW January 10, 2011, Reports of Consultants or Third Parties.

Later in the winter, Councillor Warren was appointed Chair, and Councillor Wishart as his alternate, of the Project Advisory Committee for the Septage Management Environmental Assessment Study. Three members of the public were selected to join this committee, namely Keith Robillard because of his extensive experience with waste management, Jurgen Pape because of his involvement in the community with the field spreading process, and Myron Humeniuk because

see REPORT ON COUNCIL. . . continued on page 16

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REPORT ON COUNCIL. . . continued from page 15  
of his relevant experience in the public sector.

**OFFICIAL PLAN / GROWTH PLAN UPDATE:** In January, we learned that the addition of the Ontario Places to Grow program had delayed the finalization of Official Plan updates for both the County and thus for the Township for more than a year (Tiny's Plan must agree with relevant sections of the County's Plan). Recently, when the County and the Province continued to find it impossible to reach agreement, a mediator was appointed. Mayor Millar expects that the Township will not be able to move forward on its Official Plan Review until November.

There will be many changes to the Official Plan as a result of the Places to Grow program and details are available on the township website under Agenda, COW January 10, 2011, Reports of Consultants or Third Parties. This is an excellent presentation but note that it is 86 pages long.

**REQUEST FOR REPORT ON COSTING OF POLICE SERVICES IN TINY:** Early in March, the CAO/Clerk reported on ways to potentially reduce costs of policing in Tiny, and staff was directed to request a costing/quote from the Ontario Provincial Police, in accordance with Section 10 of the Police Services Act. Council further directed staff to investigate, review and report back on potential municipal partnerships in regard to the delivery and/or governance of the Township's policing services.

**OFFICIAL PLAN AND ZONING CHANGE FOR SMALL LOTS OF RECORD:** Also in early March, the Council voted to amend the Official Plan and the Zoning Bylaw to remove the need for the Committee of Adjustment to consider a minor variance in all cases of development on lots of record smaller than 10,000 sq. ft. The owner(s) of the lot must in every case comply with the Ontario Building Code relative to sewage disposal and well location, and the proposed development must also comply with all requirements of the Zoning Bylaw including the sewage approval.

**ORD LANE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL DEFERRED:** In March, by a 3-1 vote (Councillor Wishart declaring a conflict), Council recommended to the Committee of Adjustment that an application to create 7 shoreline lots on Ord Lane on Part Lots 27 and 28, Concession 3 West be deferred. Council considered the undertaking in light of the 'Environment First' philosophy of the Township's Official Plan and deemed that the same conditions and criteria as required by a Plan of Subdivision should be imposed as part of this development application including but not limited to an Environmental Impact Study, Preliminary Groundwater Study, Functional Servicing Study, and Engineering Approval, including a subdivision grading and drainage plan.

**RURAL CONNECTIONS BROADBAND FUNDING AGREEMENT:** In March, Council noted that additional

funding for high-speed internet is available for Simcoe County. (See notice on The Tiny Cottager website <http://www.tinycottager.org>) They directed that an appropriate bylaw/agreement be prepared to enable Tiny to take part.

**CANADA POST - PROPOSED CHANGES:** Later in March, an official from Canada Post presented a proposal to change all civic addresses in the township to use "Tiny" as the destination. This provides needed flexibility for Canada Post when adjusting postal routes. If individuals wish to continue to use the existing hamlet names, the mail will be properly delivered as long as the postal code is correct. This change will probably result in new postal codes for a significant portion of households, which means that many individuals will have to send out change of address cards.

**2011 BUDGET:** In March, the treasurer presented the final operating and capital budgets. Due to a change in accounting rules, certain expenditures, which used to be capitalized, must now be treated as operating expenditures. As a result, the 2011 operating budget increased by 10.9% over 2010. (Apart from the accounting changes, however, the operating budget dropped by 1%.) The capital budget has decreased very significantly, with a reduction of 68% on a gross basis and a decrease of 37% on a net basis. This is primarily related to the end of the infrastructure renewal programs partly funded by the senior levels of government. Operating expenses are budgeted to be \$6,825,376 and the capital budget is \$3,214,102.

The municipal tax levy has increased by 2% from last year, but since the assessed value of taxable property has increased by 6.7%, the actual municipal tax rate is dropping by 4.4%. As in previous years, residential taxpayers shoulder 97.5% of this, since Tiny has very little commercial or industrial assessment to call upon.

Complete details are available on the township website: see Agenda, March 14, 2011, COW, Staff Reports to Council, Administration and Finance.

**2011 SEPTIC INSPECTION PROGRAM:** This year the re-inspection program will focus on the shoreline areas of concessions 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, & 13, and also in inland areas of concessions 1 to 4, and in concessions 6 and 7.

In 2010, 1104 inspections were completed over the summer. Of that total, 165 lots were found to be deficient as follows:

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- 19 lots had indications of vehicles parking or driving on the septic tank or leaching bed.
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- 12 lots had a structure on top of the leaching bed.
- 11 lots had a patio on the surface of the leaching bed.
- 8 lots had steel septic tanks that were severely deteriorated and required replacement.
- 4 lots required information on the location of the sewage systems from the resident.
- 4 lots had a driveway over the septic tank.
- 2 lots had outhouses that were in disrepair.
- 2 lots had root intrusions into grey water systems.
- 1 lot had sewage effluent breakout on the surface of the ground.
- 1 lot had a damaged sewage pipe between the house and tank.

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The Province has announced that a mandatory inspection program will be introduced in the near future. This may result in changes to our re-inspection program.

**RETIREMENT – ROGER ROBITAILLE:** Roger will retire on May 31st after 40 years of service to the township. His knowledge and customer service will be missed. He has provided exemplary support to the residents, staff and councils during that time.

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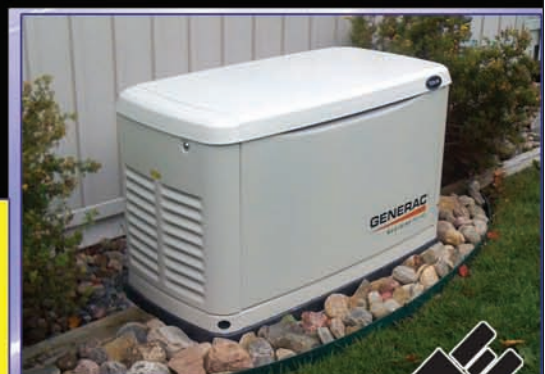
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