

The Loon's Call

President's Message – Donna McLean

DO THE NEXT THING

Last weekend I attended a women's retreat on Zoom and 'Sarah' the speaker was very engaging. Her message was full of tips about coping through tough times, like Covid lockdown. She was widowed at 30, left alone with 7 children. She knows first-hand how life can change drastically, in unexpected ways. For most of us, Covid is only one challenge we have faced along our life path. Life is full of tests and obstacles. Job, children, parents, community, environment, poor health. One of the actions she suggested: DO the Next Thing.

*Many a questioning, Many a fear,
Many a doubt, hath its quietening here,
Learn how to dance, learn how to sing,
Trust in your future, DO THE NEXT THING.*

One thing. Just one thing. Been dying to refinish that old footstool or perhaps you've been meaning to go hiking on a particular Muskoka trail? Study the stars or read all the Harry Potter books? Grow your own tomatoes or order a build-your-own bunkie kit? How about photography or learning to bake your own croissants? It really doesn't matter what the thing is; the part that matters is the dreaming, planning and executing. And not a whole list of things, just one thing at a time. Planning too much and achieving too little can be just as defeating. Just Do the NEXT thing...

And now it is glorious May, soon to the May 2-4 weekend (which this year actually happens on May 24! Raking, opening windows, cleaning the fridge, launching the boats, spraying the black flies and coffee on the dock. We cottage owners are so blessed to have a getaway from those same old 4 walls in the city that we've been staring at for months and months. We can go mask-less across our lot and we can go days without the statistics of COVID weighing us down.

Can't wait to breathe and be still amongst the pines, blue jays and chipmunks. Ahhh for the hum of boat motors and the slapping of kayak paddles. Once again our socializing will be minimal but waving is allowed and conversing while floating at a safe distance is most welcomed. Happy cottaging 2021!

SAVE THE ZOOM DATE—June 27, 2021@10.a.m. next GSLRA Annual General Meeting. The Executive focus this year and in the last two years has been 'Safety' — on the water and on land. Low wakes, vigilance when approaching oncoming boat traffic, cautious and lawful wakeboarding and sea-dooing, contained evening-only campfires, low-lighting at night and respectful neighbourly behaviour. Let's make it safe and enjoyable for both residents and guests!

- ◆ Membership—It's time to renew our memberships to the GSLRA. See note herein from Dave Stephens, membership Chair
- ◆ Development—there has been some background activity on both the Moody Bay and Great Gulf properties of late—stay tuned
- ◆ Excessive and unlawful activity in Gull Lake park—campers, campfires, garbage—we are asking the Town to be mindful and proactive on this front
- ◆ Environment—loons, native plants and carbon waste management—see note from Joanne Smith, Environment Co-Chair

Garbage bins at Hewitt St. dock—do they stay or do they go or is there an alternative waste management solution for the 30 plus water access only cottages on Gull and Silver lakes that have been using the large bins? Stay tuned. See you at the

MEMBERSHIP 2021

We are out to get you --- in a good way! Maybe you have wandered away from us or maybe you are new to Gull or Silver Lake, or maybe you have changed your email address and have forgotten to tell us. We have a mailing list, with active and inactive members listed for about 120 families. That is great but we can do better.!!!

So, this year we are recruiting Area Captains to be the contact points for our members. They will be reaching out to a) Listen to your concerns and/or recommendations and bring them to the Executive. b) Serve as information providers — if they don't know something, they will find out for you and c) Ensure you are signed up and are receiving all our communications.

Questions or concerns? Can you help? Please contact our Membership Chair Dave Stephens, davestph@shaw.ca, 403-617-3207. Need more info or the membership form? Go to www.gull-and-silver-lakes.ca

Need more convincing? See Page 3 ...



2020/2021 DIRECTORS

President

Donna McLean

1250 Gull Lake

(416) 417-8349 (cell)

donna.mclean@rogers.com

gullsilverlakes@gmail.com



Development Chair

Jim Davis

880 Silver Lake

(705) 220-3430 (cell)

jgdavis880@hotmail.com

Membership Chair

Dave Stephens

910 Pinedale Rd.

(403) 617-3207 (cell)

davestph@shaw.ca

Treasurer

Paul Temple

1441 Silver Lake

(416) 520-5164 (cell)

pjtemple@rogers.com

Environment Chair

Joanne Smith

610 Phillips St. E.

(905) 939-7217

ryleigh@bell.net

Sustainability Chair

Carole Anne Simpson

1216 North Shore Dr

(416) 453-4282 (cell)

rand.e.simpson@sympatico.ca

Director-at-Large

Brian Ochab

400 Bethune Dr. North

(416) 409-1000 (cell)

E55och@gmail.com

Director-at-Large

Randy Levine

1447 Silver Lake

(647) 544-5191 (cell)

rlevine@me.com

Director-at-Large

Jamie Mutch

1400 Gull Lake

416-274-2405 (cell)

jamie.mutch@td.com

AROUND TOWN—COURTESY OF COUNCILLOR JO MORPHY

Complaints

Got a problem with roads or parking or other Town services? There's a portal on the Town website where you can lodge a formal complaint. Simply go to: "Report a Problem" at <https://forms.gravenhurst.ca/Report-a-Problem>. Complete the online form and your complaint will be added to an issue database and dealt with, accordingly. You can even upload photos to support your claim. You can still call as well.

Hydro

While one or more utility suppliers are eliminating the lower 'seasonal' rates for hydro, Elexicon is planning no change to our 'seasonal' status and billing rate.

Trains to Restart

People are working hard on getting the Northland train service reinstated. Stay tuned.

New Muskoka Geo Hub Tool:

I have not spent a lot of time on this website, but it sure helps when someone calls and wants to discuss their property. You can enter the address, get air photos, water quality information, flood mapping, zoning ... I could go on and on about the many features available on the website. If you would like to play around with it, here is the website: <https://map.muskoka.on.ca>

MPAC Cancels 2022 Assessment:

As part of the Ontario Government's 2021 spring budget, the Minister of Finance announced the decision to once again postpone a province-wide property assessment update due to the pandemic. Property assessments for the 2022 property tax year will continue to be based on January 1, 2016 assessed values. In addition, the budget notes that the government will hold consultations on the timing and valuation date for the next assessment update and that outcomes will be communicated this fall."

The Muskoka Lakes Association has been hosting several webinars on subjects close to our hearts such as:

- ◆ **Night boating—safe and enjoyable**
- ◆ **Water Levels—past, present, future**
- ◆ **Road Salt—an imminent threat to our water quality?**



AND MUCH MORE— WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO VISIT

<https://www.mla.on.ca/Webinars>

Got Something Interesting for our website? Reach out to:

WEBMASTER Jonathan Hutcheon , Toronto, ON

120 Gull Lake; (416) 807-6645 (cell)

gullsilverlakes@gmail.com



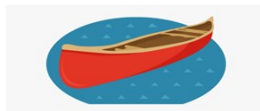
2021 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE — Annual membership dues for the GSLRA is \$35.00

WHY SHOULD I BECOME A MEMBER?

DID YOU KNOW that YOUR ASSOCIATION:

- Is here to keep you informed of what's happening on Gull and Silver Lakes and Environs — by email, newsletter, telephone or in person
- Can advocate for you on vital issues such as water quality, taxation, development, municipal governance and fiscal accountability;
- For water access only cottagers, we tackle additional issues such as shortage of parking, garbage collection, and docking—adequacy, repair and replacement
- Has for more than 15 years, participated in the water quality testing program run by the MLA. Each year our volunteers submit samples from Gull and Silver Lakes sites for assessment. The results are then published at the end of the season. In 2020 when the MLA suspended their program due to Covid concerns, we purchased our own incubator and other equipment, so we could continue monitoring the water quality of our lakes (BIG Thanks for Bruce Elliott!!!)
- Is registered with the Town and several private and public organizations to keep apprised of any up-to-date development and other issues
- Aims to serve as your municipal election watchdog. We interviewed all candidates for the 2018 municipal election and made recommendations for those candidates whose views aligned with ours
- Stands for *responsible development* — we successfully opposed recent plans for 'over' development at Moody Bay and the large vacant land opposite the Gull Lake Park . We believe that strict compliance with all by laws established for development, are paramount!
- Is available to welcome all newcomers—both lake residents and near-lake residents who also share our love of Muskoka. Have questions? Need answers? We are here, many long time residents, here to help you navigate your new Muskoka experience.

SO HELP US TO HELP YOU - AND BECOME A PART OF A VITAL, ACTIVE GROUP WHO LOVE AND WANT TO PRESERVE THEIR MUSKOKA EXPERIENCE just like you do! Membership Chair Dave Stephens (403)-617-3207. Membership forms are on the website. Payment can be made by interac or cheque.



Environmental Thoughts from Joanne:

The Status of Loons:



I saw an article on Loons in the Winter 2021 edition of *BirdWatch Canada* that I thought would interest many of you, since it's hard to not be moved by the eerie call and the beautiful and majestic appearance of the Common Loon. Its profile is even featured as part of our GSLRA logo! This article, by Dr. Kristin Bianchini of Acadia University and the Long Point Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Program of Birds Canada, is entitled, "**Lessons Learned from 40 Years of the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey.**" I will summarize its major points here.

This survey (CLLS) began in 1981 and has over 4,000 volunteers on over 4,600 lakes in Canada. Unfortunately, the Common Loon average productivity has decreased from just over 0.8 young per pair per year to under 0.6 now. The productivity is stable at the moment, but if it reduces to 0.48 or less, we will likely see fewer and fewer nesting loons every summer. What is the cause? It appears that lake acidity and mercury contamination are key. Acids cause toxic metals to leach into the water, resulting in fewer fish and therefore less food for the loons. Even near Sudbury, (known back in the 70's for high levels of acid and acid rain), there has been a much higher decline in productivity (-0.42) ... because it takes a long time for lakes to recover, even after air cleanup. Since loons are at the top of the food chain, mercury contamination results in higher concentrations in their bodies. This causes lethargy in the birds and therefore less defense of nests, eggs, and chicks. There is also suspicion that climate change is intensifying the problem. Extreme water fluctuations, forest fires and warmer water increase lake acidity and/or mercury uptake into food chains. BUT.... It's not too late to reverse these trends. **How?** 1) Become a member and support Birds Canada, 2) Volunteer with the CLLS collection of data, 3) Properly dispose of discarded fish-

ing lines, 4) Protect fish habitat and Loon nests by: a) AVOIDING BOAT WAKES, and b) Letting Native Plants grow along the shorelines., 5) Reduce Carbon Emissions.



Native Plants:

Speaking of Native Plants, let me share with you a document: "**Grow Me Instead**", **Beautiful Non-Invasive Plants for your Garden.** It outlines the problem, and the easy solution of alternatives, now that spring is coming and we are all so excited to get out to the Garden Centres! https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/NorthernGMI_2014_FINAL.compressed.pdf (Also watch for Native Plants sales, for example by the Muskoka Lakes Association....)

Carbon Reduction Measures:

These thoughts also lead into ways that we can easily reduce our Carbon Footprint of what we eat! Become a "Climatarian". 2021 is The International Year of Fruits and Vegetables. There's a saying, "Less Meat, Less Heat". Suggestions: 1) Buy "Land-Efficient" foods (grains/fruit/vegetables), 2) Buy Local, 3) Buy Organic, 4) Eat Drought-Hardy Crops, 5) Reduce Food Waste (1/4-1/3 is wasted!), 6) Buy foods with minimal packaging—Canada is infamous on over-packaging. 7) Maybe grow something! Growing and gardening has become a major

Covid hobby and your own food will taste better!

8) Preserves—another Covid trend. Get back to Granny mode of living—

grown or buy fruits and vegetables in season and pickle, freeze, jam up, preserve. This will keep grocery shopping to a minimum and fun family activity for all ages!

