



THE WATER LINE

Volume 42 / Fall 2007

A Voice For Recreational Boaters In Ontario

2007 DINGHY POKER RUN



Beautiful Massasauga Park was home to the Canadian Boaters Alliance's annual Dinghy Poker Run on Sunday, August 5. The Park greeted all of us with wonderfully warm weather, and its magnificent islands, trees and waters beckoned all to indulge and enjoy. And that we did!

Henry's Restaurant on Frying Pan Island hosted the registration activities and poured coffee for those who needed a pick me up. The gas bar docks provided lots of room for the prospective poker hand winners to mix and mingle. As the clock struck 12:30 p.m., all were eager to depart on the exciting journey.

The first stop was the meeting area in Echo Bay, where the many vessels anchored sighed with envy that they had not joined the fun. Stop two,

Jenner Bay, caught a few by surprise! Who would have thought this hidden bay was so spectacularly pretty? At the third stop, volunteers at the meeting area in the popular Three Fingers warmly greeted the eager dinghies as they pulled in for their revered site stop confirmations. Stop four in Reflection Bay (Shot Gun) saw a frenzied onslaught of dinghies, as they hailed towards the meeting area with expectation written all over their faces. Dinghies with motors 15 hp and under then scurried into the meeting area at Port Rawson for their final stop, while dinghies with motors greater than 15 hp dashed to their last stop at the Moon River Marina in Woods Bay. The staff at the marina obliged each poker player with final confirmation that they had reached the last stop of the Run.

Festivities ensued at Pilgrim's Rest. The poker players were eager to play their hand. The \$500 first prize was awarded to Debbie from Paragon. Congratulations, once again, Debbie!

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WATER ACCESS DISAPPEARING



Across the province, slips and ramps are becoming increasingly limited as marinas are selling out to developers. In some areas, this is reaching

serious proportions. In fact, one boat dealer sells boats to individuals reassuring them that slips won't be a problem, and then has to hide when that same customer returns with tales of "no slips available."

With marina operators (as a whole) aging, it is to be expected that they have started to look at retirement options. Who can blame them? However, those options will include the value of the land transformed into waterfront condos, cottages and all-season residences. Obviously, this land use change poses a great problem for boaters.

This issue has already become very serious in Florida, the Carolinas and about half a dozen other US states. On the other hand, the state of Michigan created a successful program to help prevent this problem, as you will see from the article on that topic.

The CBA of Ontario sees this as a major issue – one that needs research and planning, and then follow through that may carry through the next number of years. We know that part of the solution is legislative and another element is government funding. The articles on page 2 and 3 are the first installment in our report on water access.

UPDATE: PANEL ON THE FUTURE OF THE TRENT-SEVERN WATERWAY

By Ernie Williams,

Thanks to the efforts of Simcoe North MP Bruce Stanton, a private members motion (161) on the Trent-Severn Waterway was passed, resulting in the formation of a six-person panel that has held public meetings all summer.

These meetings provided an opportunity for members of the public, users groups and TSW staff to voice their views, concerns and suggestions on how to improve and fund the TSW in the future. Groups or individuals were (and are) encouraged to make a short presentation to the panel or send in a written submission. This phase will run through to September. Once completed, the panel will report and submit recommendations to the Minister in December.

By the time you are reading this article, there will be three public meetings remaining: Keswick on September 11, Barrie on September 12 and Lakefield

on September 13. I will be making a presentation on behalf of the CBA Ontario at the meeting in Keswick at 6 p.m. If you have not already attended one of the meetings, I urge you to get out to one of the final three.

If you have any suggestions, ideas for improvement or visions for a better TSW, this is your opportunity to voice your opinion. You can also forward any suggestions to me at erniew@allstream.net and I can present or forward them on your behalf.

Some of the major issues covered to date include lock hours, fees, boater facilities available at the locks, infrastructure funding and environmental concerns. It is generally agreed that the TSW is a major attraction and waterway linking Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay and a major economic contributor to Ontario's tourism industry. The TSW generates million of dollars in tax revenue both from boaters, land-based vis-



itors and the hundreds of private businesses located along the TSW.

We will keep you posted on this issue. Also, do not forget to visit the Parks Canada booth at the Toronto International Boat Show at Exhibition Place in January 2008 and talk to the TSW staff. If you need any information on the meetings and specific locations and times, please call Marnie Clement (Communications and Consulting Officer) at 705-741-0806.



THE STATE OF MICHIGAN HARBOUR PROGRAM “A Model for Ontario to Follow”

By Ernie Williams,

For those of you that have done any extensive boating in the State of Michigan, you will have discovered there are over 120 municipal marinas with standard services, conveniences and rates for seasonal dockage and transient boaters. The goal is to have a facility where no boater is more than 15 shoreline miles from safety – with some exceptions in remote areas.

The State of Michigan inaugurated its Great Lakes Program in 1947 and it is now administered through their Department Of Natural Resources. Boaters have paid for much of this harbour network through taxes they pay on marine fuel purchases and boater registration fees. Under Michigan's harbours program, the state provides local units of government with grant funds for construction of facilities. In addition, the federal government supports the harbours program through funds allocated to the Dingell-Johnson Fund, administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, US Department of the Interior, for the development of boating facilities designed to match local contributions.

The key to the success of this program is that gas taxes collected at Michigan marinas by law must be reinvested in boating related infrastructure, so boaters know they are getting a return for the fuel taxes they pay. In Canada, every time we gas up at a marina we pay provincial tax, federal tax, six per cent GST and deficit reduction tax (even though the feds run a surplus) and neither level of government redirects any share of these taxes directly back into boating infrastructure. Most of this money goes to general revenue. This is also a reason why the CBA has always opposed any form of annual registration fees for

recreational vessels as there is no guarantee this money would be reinvested back into boating and most likely would be eaten up by administration costs similar to the Gun Registry.

The taxes collected annually at Ontario marinas through the sale of gasoline runs in the millions. This money would go a long way to fund aids to navigation, more municipal marina facilities, provincial overnight boating sites (a thing of the past) and inject major infrastructure funding into to the Trent-Severn Waterway, which is badly in need of repairs and replacing outdated locks, dams and bridges.

In the past year, a few events have occurred that could threaten our boating industry if we cannot tap into this revenue. This past summer, the Sportsman's Inn in Killarney went bankrupt and it was in need of extensive repairs and a major investment was required. We all know too well it is hard to get a return on investment when you only have an eight-week season. Thankfully, a private investor has bought the facility and is keeping it open. However, had this not happened, the only way to keep it operating would have been for the town to take it over. Revenue from gas taxes similar to Michigan could have helped fund it.

Another major concern is the number of private marinas being bought out by developers for the purpose of building waterfront condos and time shares. With waterfront property at a premium, private operators are very tempted to sell. The CBA is a strong supporter of private Ontario marine operators, but if the trend to sell continues the only way to ensure adequate seasonal and transient slips in the future will be to fund and build municipal marinas through funds generated from gas taxes.

NOTES ON A CONVERSATION WITH MAYOR JIM WALDEN

Township of Georgian Bay Mayor Jim Walden sees a problem related to the jurisdictional issues referred to in his submission to the Trent-Severn Panel. He feels there is a considerable confusion and overlap/fragmentation of the jurisdictions particularly in regard to land use. There is no ability to produce a comprehensive land use document to address the needs of the Waterway.

The situation of the selling of the four marinas took place over the period of a year. There was not a development trend in the area prior to that time, but now we have four marinas disappearing in one year. He felt that the development may not be executed in one year, but the possibility exists for it to do so.

He sees three different interest groups being involved:

1. Permanent residents and condo owners

2. Transients – boaters, renters of the facilities, campers, kayakers, etc., who all bring business to the area.

3. Developers

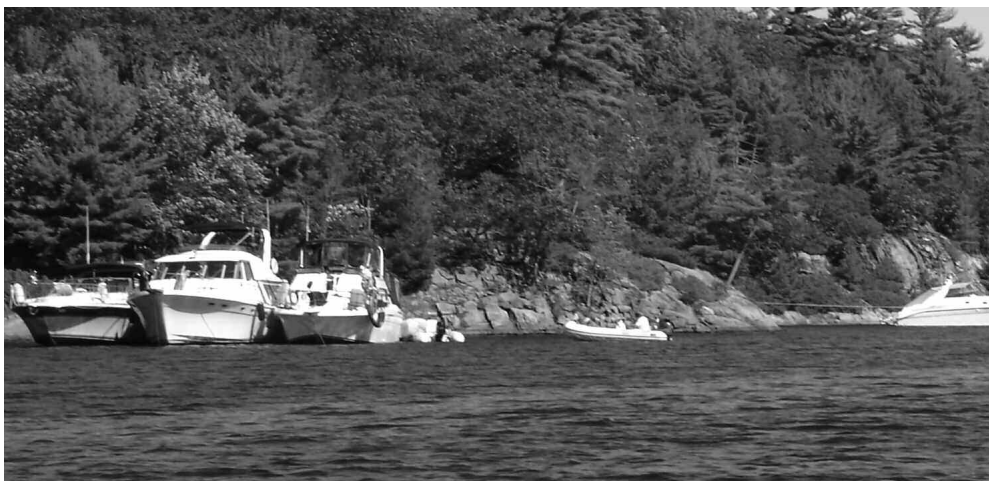
When you have no planning mechanisms in place to integrate the three differing needs, the situation is going to degenerate.

Walden wants to challenge the TSW Panel to address the issue outside of the box. There has to be a decision made as to what the Waterway is. He said there is only

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2007 Dinghy Poker Run

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Other wonderful prizes included a \$250 gift certificate from Elco Insurance Brokers, a \$150 coveted gift certificate from Moon River Marina, and dinner for two from Kill Bear Marina. Plus, there were fantastic gift certificates or gifts from our other gracious sponsors: Queens Cove, Bay Port, South Bay Cove, Moose Deer and Doral.

The Dinghy Poker Run was a truly fun experience. CBA had many volunteers from Moose Deer Point Marina assist with the festivities.

Thank you to all of you for the excitement and energy you brought to the event. And Doug, we love those martinis!

Plus a big thank-you to all our wonderful sponsors: South Bay Cove Marina, Bay Port Marina, Kill Bear Marina, Moose Deer Point Marina, Doral Marine Resort, Queens Cove Marina, Moon River Marina, Elco Insurance Brokers Inc. and Henry's Restaurant.

See you all next year at the Dinghy Poker Run!

A Conversation with Mayor Walden

Continued from page 3

one permission required for highway issues and feels the same should apply to the Waterway, not the two required permissions now required - land use and shoreline (the Trent-Severn and the Township). There are different jurisdictions on either side of the Waterway. He thinks a swath of the Waterway should be the same as a highway, dealt with by one jurisdiction.

Walden said the TSW will never cease to exist. It is an integral part of the Great Lakes system. What needs to be done is to present alternatives and meaningful solutions on how to manage the Trent-Severn and maintain a good infrastructure.

The problem with the disappearing marinas is there is no land available to replace them. He feels the high prices for land/residences in the greater Golden Horseshoe area is pushing up the desirability of moving North, and giving the developers incentives to provide places. He said that it would be an extremely dire situation not to have the boaters/campers etc provide local businesses with revenue, and also the resulting business tax that came from the various commercial enterprises.

UPCOMING EVENTS / SHOWS

Final Public Consultations- Panel on the Future of the Severn Waterway

- Tuesday, September 11, 2007
Keswick, Ontario
- Wednesday, September 12, 2007
Barrie, Ontario
- Thursday, September 13, 2007
Lakefield, Ontario

Toronto In-Water Boat Show

- September 13 – 16, 2007
Ontario Place, Toronto

Canadian Safe Boating Council Annual Symposium

- September 20 – 22, 2007
Lunenburg, Nova Scotia

Toronto International Boat Show

- January 12 – 20, 2008
Exhibition Place, Toronto
Note: The CBA Booth will be in the same location as last year (across from BRP).

The CBA is operated primarily by volunteers, so to ensure that your questions or concerns will be addressed please EMAIL the CBA as emails are our primary method of communication.

info@canadianboatersalliance.ca

Be sure to check out our new website at www.cbaontario.com

Canadian Boaters Alliance, 60 Bellfarm Road #2, Barrie Ontario, L4M 5G6. Toll Free: 877-671-6147