



BIG RIDEAU LAKE ASSOCIATION (BRLA) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**JULY 9, 2005
PORTLAND TOWN HALL, PORTLAND, ONTARIO**

MINUTES

IN ATTENDANCE

Officers: President: Bob Evans, Vice President: Doug Arrand, Treasurer, Ed Brigden;
Secretary: Doug Arrand

Board Members: Pat Chamberlain (Environment), Henry Copestake (Government Affairs), Jennifer Trant (Communications)

Members: Approximately Fifty BRLA Members.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Doug Arrand called the meeting to order at 10:05 am

2. MINUTE OF SILENCE

Bob Evans asked the assembled group to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of those who were no longer with us on the lake.

3. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Bob Evans introduced Betty James, Counselor for Rideau Lakes Township, and Dennis Roberts and Jason Van Spriel, of the OPP Marine Unit.

Doug Arrand introduced the members of the BRLA Board.

4. MINUTES OF AGM HELD JULY 10, 2004

Doug Arrand called for corrections, clarifications, errors and omissions to the minutes of the Meeting held July 10, 2004. There being none, Blair Armstrong moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Jack Evans. Approved by all.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT - BOB EVANS

Bob reviewed his term as director and President of the BRLA. Following a long period of involvement in Board governance he is looking forward to being active at the committee level. He called on all members present to volunteer to serve the BRLA as a member of

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the Board or on one of the Committees, for example, by adopting a Shoal marker. Small steps like this build a strong association.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT - ED BRIGDEN

A. Auditor's Report for year ended March 31, 2004

Ed Brigden offered a detailed review of the financial position of the BRLA, based on the auditor's report from Wilkinson & Company, circulated at the meeting.

Moved by Ed Brigden, seconded by Nancy Watters to adopt the Audited Financial statements. Approved by all.

B. Motion to appoint Wilkinson & Company as auditors for current year ending December 31, 2005

Moved by Bob Evans, seconded by David Boden to appoint Wilkinson & Company as auditors for the year ending December 31, 2005.

7. MEMBERSHIP REPORT - JENNIFER TRANT

Jennifer Trant reported on Membership in the BRLA. As of the 30th of June, BRLA had 274 members. Membership has been as high as 500 (at the time of the houseboat issue), but has fallen off in recent years. We've been fortunate that there hasn't been a significant issue in the community. BRLA needs to remain connected to the residents on and around Big Rideau Lake if we are going to be able to act effectively in the future. All Members were encouraged to talk to their friends and neighbours about the benefits of being a BRLA member.

8. RIDEAU LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION REPORT

A. President's comments – Jaffray Wilkins

The Rideau Lakes Environmental Foundation supports environmental work on and around the Big Rideau and Upper Rideau Lakes. Jaffray Wilkins reported on the activities of the RLEF, referencing his recent DriftWords article for details. Contributions to RLEF levels have been constant and substantial. Funds are divided, with part kept in reserve and part used to support activities of Upper Rideau and Big Rideau Lake.

Bob Sneyd rose, requesting a motion of privilege. The Chair ruled that a motion was inadmissible at this time.

Tm Houston, an RLEF Board Member, noted that the RLEF Board has been working diligently to resolve the issues noted in the DriftWords article, representing the interests of the Foundation and the Association.

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Bob Sneyd rose to address the question of the purchase of the Gallagher House property and to ask whether the purchase was within the purview of either the BRLA or the RLEF with regard to the Canada Corporations Act. Board members present noted that the bylaws of the association specifically permit the acquisition of property.

Alex Macklin, a Board member of the RLEF responded for the Foundation, noting that the acquisition of the Gallagher House property was discussed by the RLEF and that his understanding was that the original offer to purchase the Gallagher House property was made 'in Trust' for the RLEF. There is ongoing discussion regarding the interests of various parties in the property.

B. Treasurer's Report – Ross Walker

Tom Houston offered the report of the Treasurer of the RLEF on behalf of Ross Walker. Donations in the past year totaled \$9,700 which with interest made \$10,400 available for RLEF activities. Expenses include \$1,200 for an audit, \$650 for postage and \$200 for printing. BRLA has made a request of \$8,000 to RLEF (\$2,000 for DryDock and \$6,000 for environmental programs. Friends of the Tay were given \$1,000 and Upper Rideau Lake Association \$825 for environmental programs. The Foundation holds \$42,000 in cash, and is examining its position vis à vis a reserve fund.

Ross Walker is resigning as Treasurer and volunteers are encouraged to contact a Board member of the Foundation if they are interested in serving.

The RLEF noted the passing of David Donaldson, and the loss of a friend of the Rideau Lakes environment.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Communications: Website & DriftWords

Jennifer Trant summarized Communications0-related activities.

DriftWords

BRLA is now distributing at least 50% of DriftWords in electronic form; this both speeds distribution and reduces postage costs. It also makes it possible to include colour illustrations. If you have an email address and haven't shared it with BRLA, please do. Plans are to publish three DriftWords per year, Spring, Summer and Fall. Anyone with something to communicate, or an article or photos to share is encouraged to contact Driftwords@brla.on.ca

Web Site <http://www.brta.on.ca>

There is now a significant amount of information available on the BRLA web site about our current and past programs and activities. These include a calendar of events, current and past editions of DriftWords, and many reports from Environmental programs. Watch

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the Web site for news of activities throughout the year. Comments or suggestions about the web site can be sent to webmaster@brla.on.ca.

B. DryDock

Doug Arrand reported on the Committee of the Board studying DryDock established following last year's AGM. When the Center for Sustainable Watersheds was formed, and chose to move out of DryDock, BRLA was left with an excess of physical plant that was consuming a significant amount of our resources. BRLA needs a place and a public face, but one with less maintenance requirement and a good profile. A Board Committee has been formed to sell DryDock, and relocate BRLA offices in a visible space on Highway 15 in Portland. We are moving NOT vanishing.

The Board has had a number of discussions of this issue, and has made decisions about selling in accordance with its constitutional responsibilities. These have been reported in minutes, and in the President's Pen column in DriftWords.

C. Environment

Pat Chamberlain presented the report of the Environment Committee. They have produced two brochures, one on Bass and one on Trout. These have been distributed to all members and are available at the meeting.

Invasive species have remained a concern to all in the Rideau Lakes area. Zebra mussels are present and as filter-feeders have contributed to a significant change in water clarity. One adult zebra mussel filters one litre of water per day. The clearer water encourages algae growth – including the green algae noted this year – and more weeds. Warmer water temperatures may also have contributed to the significant amount of green algae this year. Studies are underway of the economic and environmental impact of zebra mussels.

The latest DriftWords reported on spiny Water Fleas, another introduced species with now native predator. Members are encouraged to consult materials available to learn more about this recent introduction.

The Ontario Provincial Police have developed a document highlighting Cottage and Marine Safety. Copies are available and we are investigating making it available on the web site.

This summer's environmental programs are outlined in DriftWords. Highlights include the Living by Water Workshop on July 23rd at Narrows Locks

A Watershed Plan for Big Rideau Lake is under development by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA). RVCA is holding a series of meetings to consult the

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public; members are encouraged to attend and offer their input. The Plan, including recommendations for managing the watershed, is to be produced following two years of study. BRLA is participating, and will keep members informed.

Questions from the floor included a query about the nature of the light green gooply stuff floating in the water. This algae growth is likely a result of water temperature and clarity changes.

Shirley Wimperis noted that the Queen's Biological Survey has reported anecdotal evidence that turtles were eating zebra mussels. This was greeted with great enthusiasm.

Members with concerns about the environment, or an interest in participating in BRLA's environmental activities, should contact environment@brla.on.ca

D. Government Affairs & Marine Safety

Henry Copestake reported on a busy year liaising with the many government and regulatory bodies that have jurisdiction on Big Rideau Lake. These include three municipalities, Parks Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ontario Provincial Police, and the Federal Coast Guard. He noted that Pat had already reported on one multi-municipal activity, the Watershed Planning initiative.

Taxation

Increasing taxation has become a significant issue for many BRLA members. In order to work with others on this question, BRLA has joined Waterfront Ratepayers After Fair Taxation (WRAFT) – see <http://www.wraft.com> for more details. Market Value Assessment has shifted a disproportionate amount of the tax burden to waterfront property owners; in the last three years waterfront residents are playing 15 – 20% more of the overall tax bill than their in-land neighbours. BRLA members concerned about this issue are encouraged to contact BRLA govtAffairs@brla.on.ca, and their Provincial Member of Parliament.

Parks Canada Canal Policy

Parks Canada is developing a Policy for In-Water and Shoreline Works and Related Activities – see the draft on-line at http://www.pc.gc.ca/docs/r/rideau-trent/index_e.asp. BRLA has filed a response available at <http://www.brta.on.ca/govt/parksCanadaRideauPolicy.html>. Our primary concerns are that the policies recognize the many heritage buildings along the canal and waterway, that they remove the requirement to paint swim rafts white, and that the “one-size fits all” policy be adjusted to acknowledge the different requirements of the many properties on Big Rideau Lake that are water-access only.

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Shoal Markers

BRLA has once again placed 104 Coast Guard approved Shoal Markers. Lamont Brown of Portland does this for us at cost in the main part of the lake. Rich Bradley leads a team of volunteers in the Rideau Ferry area.

Members are requested to keep an eye on the shoal markers in their area, and let BRLA know if there is a problem. Contact us at safety@brla.on.ca.

Boats, Noise and Speed

BRLA members have expressed on-going concerns about boats that travel at high speed close to shore, and endanger people and property by their presence and their significant wake and wash. The noise of Boats is also a concern. Visitors from the OPP addressed these questions later in the meeting.

Municipal Update

The temporary zoning for the Mason Property is soon to be up for renewal. BRLA Needs input from interested parties. Members are encouraged to contact us at govtaffairs@brla.on.ca and to go to the various township meetings and express their concerns about the operation of a marina in this wetland area.

E. Recreation/Cow Island

Doug Arrand gave a combined report of the Recreation and Cow Island committees. He noted that these groups have been operating together under his chairmanship, but that a Recreation Committee chair is needed.

Fireworks

Mike Fraser was thanked for once again putting on a great Canada Day Fireworks show. This is a significant investment of time, and takes a full day of set-up on Saturday and clean-up on Sunday. Over 500 boats watched our unique spectacle.

Day Camp

Staff for Cow Island Day Camp were introduced: Christina Hegel is lead counselor, Sam Foster and Eleanor White are Junior counselors.

Christina introduced the important role that camp can play for kids who are growing up on the lake, meeting other children and building a sense of community and commitment to the lake environment. Camp is for children ages 4-12, including some older children who act as mentors. We're grateful to Len's Cove and Bayview marinas for providing water taxi service for those campers without transportation to the island.

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Summer Sounds – July 16th

BRLA will be hosting a fundraising afternoon for Cow Island on July 16th. Thanks to Peter and Joyce Cowan for organizing this. Proceeds from the event will be used for Cow Island improvements.

Regatta – August Long Weekend

Thanks to Jim Sneyd who will once again be organizing the BRLA Regatta on Cow Island. Everyone is encouraged to come out and participate – or at least cheer on the contenders.

Sailing

We have not yet set a date for sailing this summer, as we have been unable to find an instructor. If you can help out, please contact sailing@brla.on.ca. Our thanks to Toby Spry for the gift of an Albacore to BRLA to use as a recreational sailing boat.

Teen Program

We are looking for a volunteer to assist with planning the Teen program for this summer. Traditionally we have offered programs on Wednesday and Friday evenings in July and August. If you can help out, please contact recreation@brla.on.ca

Cow Island

Doug Arrand referred members to the circulated written report about Cow Island. This unique property was acquired by the BRLA in 1968 for \$1, with the understanding that it would be used for the enjoyment of all. In 2005, the property was assessed at \$260,000. The property requires some significant investment -- about \$30,000 -- in order to maintain it properly. Work required includes renovation of the septic system, installation of solar power and leveling and maintaining the cabin. The Board is investigating ways to raise funds to support this work.

A member asked whether proceeds from DryDock couldn't be invested in Cow Island. It was noted that the BRLA and RLEF had joint ownership in the town property and that we would need to review disposition of funds before we planned on spending any of them. However, it was noted that the RLEF could support environmentally focused activities on Cow Island (including model septic system installation).

10. ELECTIONS

Bob Evans, as Nominating Committee, presented the slate of candidates for the BRLA Board. The BRLA constitution calls for a Board of between 5 and 9 members. Directors, elected at the annual general meeting, are limited to three successive terms. The only officer elected is the President. Other officers are appointed by the Board itself.

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A. President for 2005/06

There is no candidate for President of the BRLA.

B. Directors for 2005/07

The following members have agreed to serve on the Board for 2005/2006: All are re-elections of members in their second terms: Doug Arrand, Ed Brigden, Pat Chamberlain, Henry Copestake, Doug Good and Jennifer Trant.

A call was made for nominations from the floor; there were none.

As no-one has agreed to stand as President, the Directors elected agreed to share the responsibility of this office.

It was moved by David Bearman that the BRLA Membership adopt the slate of Board Members as presented and thank the Board for their willingness to share the responsibility of President. Seconded by Tom Houston. Passed by All.

11. OPP BRIEFING ON LAKE ISSUES

Dennis Roberts, a 19 year veteran of the OPP, made a brief presentation. He is coordinator of the Leeds County Marine Program. There are 4 full-time officers from 15 May – 15 September patrolling the lakes as manpower permits. In July and August two summer students are added to the roster. The OPP has two boats in the area, a 24 foot Sea Swirl kept in the St. Lawrence and a 19 foot Harbourcraft used in the Rideau Lakes. They are responsible for patrolling from Kingston to Cardinal and from Rideau Ferry to Brass Point Bridge, as well as in all the lakes of Leeds County.

Speed Limits

All boats are limited to 10 Kilometers per hour if they are operating within 30 meters of the shore, with the exception of a boat traveling perpendicular to the shore with a water-skier under tow, or in a marked channel.

This is enforceable, though it is required to prove the speed (which is done through evidence that the boat was planning, or with radar).

Boat Noise

All boats are required to have a ‘noise abatement device’ installed and working. However existing legislation provides the OPP with limited tools to act against noisy boats. There are no decibel limits in the law, and no requirement that the installed noise abatement device work effectively. OPP do stop noisy boats, and there is a \$125 fine for a noise-related infraction.

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What can we do? Members are encouraged to report to the OPP when there are noisy boats in the area. But as the offense is to 'operate' a boat, the OPP must be able to prove who was driving the boat at the time of the infraction.

If you aren't happy with the law, a change is required to the Federal Canada Shipping Act. BRLA could lobby for a fixed decibel level in the statute, that would be a concrete limitation to noise, and be more easily enforceable. BRLA will consider a model letter that can be sent by members to federal Members of Parliament.

PWCs / Wakeboarding

Other issues raised by members included behaviour of youth on PWCs, circling and wake jumping, and waterskiing or wakeboarding close to shore. The officer noted that a boat operator is liable for damage caused by the wake from the boat. However this is difficult to enforce.

Operators Certification

Members were reminded of the requirements for certification to operate a watercraft. This is now being enforced by the OPP on all stops.

Loons and Wildlife

A member asked what can be done to prevent boaters and fishermen from interfering with loons and other wildlife. It was agreed that communication and educational materials were the best option, and that a program to make people aware of their responsibilities and the relevant regulations might be an appropriate BRLA/RLEF activity.

Contacting the OPP On the Water

Members can call 911 if police presence is required in an emergency, or call 1-888-310-1122 (the number for the Smith Falls Dispatch Center) to report an infraction. The OPP also monitors VHF channel 16.

Winter Patrols

The OPP are still trying to make winter patrols of cottage property. Their ability to do this depends on the ice and the weather. Members thanked them for this service.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Thanks to Board

Nancy Watters expressed the thanks and admiration of all members to a very able Board, and congratulated the Board on making a significant transition to a point where we have a balanced budget and a successful program.

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Fire Pumps

A member enquired about the location of the Fire Pumps that BRLA had on the lake. It was noted that these might be best transferred to the local fire department. One pump has been moved to Cow Island. The others will be identified and a meeting will be held with the Fire Chief to determine an appropriate course of action.

B. Centennial Committee

BRLA will be 100 years old in 2011. This isn't that far away. Members are encouraged to begin to consider activities to celebrate our centennial, and to get involved.

C. Thanks to Volunteers

The Board expressed its thanks to all members and volunteers for their work on behalf of the association. BRLA's success is dependent upon the contribution of members.

The Board also encouraged members to volunteer to help out with Board activities. We're particularly looking for someone to take on Membership and Recreation. To get involved contact brla@brla.on.ca

13. ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting was adjourned at 12:15pm by Doug Arrand.