



# Acton Island Association

December

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## A Note From Your President...

Well, here we are at the beginning of another long winter and for many of us the cottage is a second thought for now. Thankfully the snow seems to be holding off up here in Muskoka but after the cold and damp summer we experienced it seems like a small concession.

The district of Muskoka Lakes has experienced some moving changes this past fall, firstly in September the death of Councilor Stewart Martin, and in November the early resignation of Mayor Susan Pryke. Both will be sorely missed. Looking forward, please keep an eye out for the membership renewal letters. We appreciate your quick response as this years Roster will be the one to last the next 2 years. Also, be reminded that our Membership director (Gord) spends much of his winter months on the beach in Florida so the information for the Roster is updated but the cheques don't actually get cashed until his return in April.

Christmas is around the corner and if you are coming north on weekends try getting into the "spirit of the season" by checking out the "Trek to Bethlehem" in Bala Dec 5, I highly recommend it. Enjoy your winter and we will see you on the lake next year.

Leslie McCann

## Annual Acton Island Meet and Greet

Our Summer annual meet and greet took place this year at the home of Bill and Mary Tannahill, owners of the Bellhaven B&B located at 1022 Guys Road, on Sunday July 5<sup>th</sup>. As always the Meet and Greet was a great success. We would like to extend a thank you to our hosts the Tannahill's. We are currently looking for a location to host our 2010 Annual Summer Meet and Greet on the third weekend in July. Next year the Meet and Greet will be combined with our annual general meeting. Any offers to host would be greatly appreciated and can be sent to Leslie McCann at [leslie@summitmortgage.ca](mailto:leslie@summitmortgage.ca). This year we will also be putting up a corkboard at the Meet and Greet where people will be able to post any notifications they wish to put up.

## **Annual General Meeting**

Two new directors were added to our board at this year's AGM, Michelle Fish and Hugh Kerr. They can be reached at [mfish@rogers.com](mailto:mfish@rogers.com) and [hugh.kerr@sunlife.com](mailto:hugh.kerr@sunlife.com) respectively. Further items included on the agenda of the past AGM included the financial statement and roster. In the future the Acton Island Association financial statements will be posted on the website and made available at upcoming Meet and Greets/ Annual General Meetings. Beginning in 2010 we will be moving to a two-year roster distribution. All minutes of the AGM will be posted online at [www.actonisland.com](http://www.actonisland.com).

## **Bala Falls Hydroelectric Project**

The debate over the construction of the proposed hydroelectric project for the North falls in Bala has continued throughout the summer and into the autumn. On October 10<sup>th</sup> a public meeting was held at the Bala Community Centre to update residents on the planned hydroelectric generating station, developed by Swift River Energy Limited. The project, which could generate between 3 – 5 megawatts of electricity, enough energy to power between 2,400 to 4,000 homes a year, will be located on a site which previously held a power station until the early 70s. The Bala site was chosen as one of 17 sites laid out by the Government of Ontario in an effort to create new, 'green,' renewable sources of energy to replace the provinces outdated coal-fired power plants. Proposals by local groups to move the site to the South falls have been stalled as the Ministry of Natural Resources do not hold enough land around the site, and as such was not a viable option. Swift River Energy Limited released the required environmental report in early November, beginning the 30-day period in which the public can comment on the report after which time construction on the project can begin. Public comments are due by November 27<sup>th</sup>. Groups such as the Save the Bala Falls Group and the Moon River Association are publicly protesting the proposed hydroelectric project, citing concerns over the environmental and economic effects that the project will have upon the area and the Bala Community. Some of these concerns include the impact that blasting for the project will have upon heritage buildings such as the Bala Stone Church and Purk's Place, as well as well as the affect of road closings upon surrounding businesses. Bill Purkis with Save the Falls Group has come before the township council requesting a report from staff outlining public concern including the groups concern over the short public comment period on the 600 page screening report.

Again at this point the board does not have a firm commitment fore or against the proposal. The board is willing to assist you in finding published information on this project and request you to consider your own direction on this matter.

The Swift River Energy Limited project website: [www.balafalls.ca](http://www.balafalls.ca)

<http://savethebalafalls.com>

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## What's Happening in Muskoka

It was a record year for the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Bala Cranberry Festival with close to 24,000 attendees over three days. The festival's organizing committee was able to hand out close to \$50,000 in donations from the festival's revenues to numerous local groups and youth scholarships. The silver anniversary included many of the festival's annual events such as the Celebrity Pig Race and the Cran-Anne look-a-like contest, but also included many new features such as a water ski show by Summer Water Sports and a new children's area with rides and a petting zoo.

The Township of Muskoka is hosting four events for the 2010 Ontario Winter Games. The Games beginning Thursday March 4<sup>th</sup> until Sunday March 7<sup>th</sup> will see 365 athletes along with their coaches and families in Muskoka for the event. Bala is hosting the Ringettes and the Biathlon, Boxing and Kick Boxing competitions will be taking place at Red Leaves in Minett.

On October 26<sup>th</sup> Muskoka Lakes District Council an 80-acre boundary expansion of Port Carling's east side passed. The 2,500 Muskoka Lakes residents who are opposed to the boundary expansion have decided to appeal the decision to the Ontario Municipal Board. At the point when the district issues a notice to the Muskoka Lakes Township official plan amendment including the boundary expansion a twenty-day appeal period will begin.

## District Debt and Development Changes

Last summer the Muskoka District voted to make some changes to the regions development charges. The vote set to increase development charges for the next 4 years at 13% per annum compounded. This change means that by the end of the 5-year term for the by-law the charges will be just below the amount that was recommended by the project's consultant although slightly higher than the 10% recommended by the corporate services committee. The new by-law will ideally raise more money while not allowing development to completely cover the costs of development. Further details on the changes can be found at [www.mla.on.ca](http://www.mla.on.ca) or [muskokadistrict.iwebz.com](http://muskokadistrict.iwebz.com).

## Bala Wetlands Health Evaluation

An extensive study took place over the course of the past summer on the Bala Wetlands to determine if they can be labeled provincially significant. The Muskoka Watershed Council is conducting the study as an attempt to sponsor watershed health. The study which took place in June, July, August and September of this year took place in the wetlands area to the North of Bala and to the west of highway 169. Wetlands are important as they cleanse out the watershed, and as such are a vital part of a healthy ecosystem. The study is being undertaken by Dirk Janas, a senior consultant for Beacon Environmental using the Ontario Wetlands Evaluation system. The evaluation scoring will eventually enable the Ministry of Natural Resources to rank the Bala wetlands and determine if they are provincially significant. The wetland area is spread over crown lands and seventeen private properties. Of the private properties seven owners gave permission for access to the property allowing the study to be conducted on 70% of the land area. According to Janas the study is required on 60-70% of the area to qualify for consideration on provincially significant wetlands. The study has cost an estimated \$35,000 to complete funded through a non-profit organization. The Bala wetlands health evaluation is part of a continued effort in Muskoka to pioneer environmental health.

## Boating Laws 2009

This past summer there were several changes made to Ontario's boating laws. Boaters now found drinking and boating will face the same new penalties for impaired driving on a road. The new penalties that were installed on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 state that any boaters found drinking and driving with a blood alcohol concentration between 0.05 and 0.08 mg/l now face immediate suspension of their vehicle driver's license. With further infractions mandatory alcohol education, alcohol treatment and ignition interlock programs will be imposed. The penalties apply to anyone found drinking and operating a motorized or non-motorized vehicles including power boats, canoes, kayaks, sailboats, jet skis, dinghies and other inflatable rafts. In addition the law has changed requiring all boaters to hold a Pleasure Craft Operating Card as of September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Reports indicate that 2 million Canadian boaters are yet to acquire a Pleasure Craft Operating Card. The Pleasure Craft Operating Exam can be taken online at [www.boaterexam.com](http://www.boaterexam.com). Furthermore there are a number of safe boating courses offered throughout the province including one, which was introduced this past summer as part of the safety program of the Muskoka Lakes Association. The valuable course is provided by the Power Boating Academy and includes the Pleasure Craft Operating Exam. Look for updates at [www.mla.on.ca](http://www.mla.on.ca) for updates on dates for next year's course. Finally, as of May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009 a new boating law was instated regarding noise pollution in public spaces. Operating a boat within the restricted area (9 Km from shore) without a proper muffler can result in fines from \$250 to \$500. A reminder that the restricted area includes all of the Muskoka waterways. Make sure to familiarize yourself with all updates to Ontario's Boating Laws for the 2010 season and continue to boat safe!

## Afterword

### Your Acton Island Association Board of Directors

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Your board is here to serve the needs  
of its members. If you have ideas or  
topics to discuss please let us know

Leslie J. McCann  
President

For more information, feel free to contact:  
**Your Township Mayor and Councillors**

**Acting Mayor:** Karen Ellis  
**Acting Deputy Mayor:** Mary Grady  
**District Councillor:** Brian Hare

Council Seat Positions will be filled by December 15<sup>th</sup>

## Upcoming Events in Muskoka Winter 2009

### **December**

Santa Skate Competition, Port Carling Arena- December 5  
Christmas Dinner and Dance, Port Carling Legion- December 5  
Bala's Trek to Bethlehem – December 5  
Bracebridge Santa Clause Parade – December 6  
Children's Christmas Party, Port Carling Legion- December 12  
Annual Christmas Social, Bala Legion- December 21  
Olympic Torch Relay, River Mill Park, Huntsville – December 30

### **February 5, 6, 7**

Port Carling Winterfest

Check the Muskoka Lakes Chamber of Commerce Directory  
website for more information. [www.muskokalakeschamber.com](http://www.muskokalakeschamber.com)

