



Spring 2012

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SLA Executive 2011-2012

Marten Burns
(President)

Bob Corbett
(Vice-President)

Judy Moore-Vey
(Treasurer)

John Cooper
(Water & Boating Issues)

Bob Colhoun
(Municipal Issues)

Michael Ewing
(Regatta)

Jill King
(Membership & Environment)

Wendy Miller
(Environment Issues)

Vanessa Cook
(Member-at-Large)

News from your SLA Executive

Your SLA Executive would like to pass on summer greetings to all our friends and neighbours at and around the lake. For those members who were lucky enough to start their cottage season in March, you are ahead of other cottagers who will be arriving at their cottage or summer home over the Victoria Day long weekend. It is always a great feeling to be back on the water and in "cottage country" again, and to catch up with childhood friends and neighbours. We hope that you have all "wintered" well and that you are as excited as we are for the annual and new events planned for this summer. Since our last newsletter, your nine-member SLA team has been working behind the scenes, keeping in touch with elected officials, making interventions in various zoning issues to maintain shoreline integrity, organizing new events, renewing the membership drive (thanks Jill King!), keeping on top of various municipal issues, and participating in FOCA events and seminars.

For those members who have already renewed their membership, thank you for your continued support. All current and lapsed members were sent a renewal letter in April – please consider the 3-year membership option to help reduce our costs. Our goal this year is for each member to sign up at least 2 new members to the SLA so that we can keep your cottage association strong and viable. We are currently updating the look and feel of the SLA website, and will continue to add the relevant information and resources that you have asked for.

The SLA is now in its 86th year (with some intervening lapses). Your current executive members have collectively contributed more than 60 years of volunteer service in various capacities. A number of board members will be stepping down in August and we need the "younger" generation to step up and take on some of the leadership positions. Your executive is especially looking for volunteers to help with the membership drive, water testing, newsletter & social media communications tools, and the regatta.

Mark Your Cottage Calendars: SLA Summer Events

Saturday July 7, 2012

- **Cottage Succession Seminar** (sponsored by SLA & [FOCA](#)) – Terry Fox Room, Gravenhurst Centennial Centre (10 am- noon)*

Saturday July 14, 2012

- **Annual [Fishing Derby](#) & Picnic** – Sparrow Lake (Public Dock) and at the Silver Pines (9:30 am start – noon BBQ lunch; registration info to come*)

Sunday August 5, 2012

- **Annual SLA Regatta** - Bayview Wildwood Resort Beach
- Registration begins at 9:00 am; first event starts at 9:30 am sharp.

Saturday August 11, 2012

- **Annual General Meeting** - Bayview Wildwood Resort, Glympse Room, on the lower level of the Wildwood Inn.
- Registration/coffee at 9:00 am, meeting starts at 9:30 am sharp. BBQ lunch (nominal cost) at noon for members, families and friends.

Also watch for the date/details for a planned **SLA Family Golf event & Dinner** at [Lake St George](#) Golf Club. Please email membership@sparrowlakeassociation.com to attend or to help.

* Check the SLA and/or FOCA websites (www.FOCA.ca) for more details about these events in June.

Message from Bruce Stanton, M.P. Simcoe North



Bruce Stanton, M.P., Simcoe North

I extend greetings to all our friends along the beautiful Sparrow Lake and Severn River shorelines. Heather and I wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer season ahead.

This time last year I was up to my ears in my 3rd federal general election. I was honoured to receive voters' confidence again on May 2nd last year, and to have settled in to my new duties as one of three Deputy Speakers in the House of Commons. The House sits 27 weeks per year. These new duties have me presiding about 9 to 10 hours each week in addition to the usual meeting schedule and Ottawa work.

Enough about me; I want to take this opportunity to comment on a few federal issues that have relevance in our cottage region. At the time of writing, I can't be sure what the details will be, but by the time this newsletter lands in your hands, you may be aware of some operating changes for [The Trent-Severn Waterway](#)*.

You will know the government promised to reduce its operating costs by between 5% and 10% on an ongoing basis. This is part of our commitment to slay the deficit and get back to a balanced budget by 2015, without raising taxes or cutting transfers to the provinces (for healthcare and education). Every department of the government will contribute its share toward those savings. For Parks Canada that amounts to saving \$6 million this fiscal year and \$19.7 million the following.

Across the country Parks Canada will be making adjustments to operations that have the least negative impact on users, while saving expenses. For the Trent-Severn, this may mean adjusting [operating hours and days](#) of the season for navigation. ([Lockage permits can now be purchased on line in advance](#)) That said, I, together with three other MP's along the waterway (Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Peterborough, and Northumberland-Quinte West) are working with the Minister of the Environment to explore alternatives to schedule reductions. I support each department doing its share to meet our cost-saving goals and I am hopeful that schedule changes can be kept to a minimum.

On another Trent-Severn issue, water levels continue to be hot topic for Lake Couchiching shoreline owners, boaters and marinas (the fact they are routinely lowered during the summer boating season to make room for fall and winter precipitation). As you know, the winter run-off was much less than previous years so current water levels in Couchiching/Simcoe are already below the target levels for this time of year. What does this mean for Severn and Sparrow? Unless we get a wet spring, expect flows (and hence, water levels) to be less than usual for the summer season. Though the waterway does its best to manage water levels, it is still at the mercy of Mother Nature when it comes to precipitation events. We have no choice but to manage the conditions we're handed.

Heather and I hope to see you over the summer, perhaps at your annual general meeting, which I always appreciate attending when the schedule permits. Enjoy the cottage, lakes and river this summer!

"Bruce Stanton", M.P.

Simcoe North (including Township of Severn, City of Orillia)

***Editor's note:** read updates and further info at the [Parks Canada](#) site, and at a private website for [Lock 42](#) (Couchiching), [Lock 43](#) (Swift Rapids) and [Lock 44](#) (Big Chute Marine Railway). Also see [Trent-Severn water levels](#).

Your Federal and Provincial Representatives

Simcoe North:

Bruce Stanton, MP: Bruce.Stanton@parl.gc.ca
Garfield Dunlop, MPP: garfield.dunlop@pc.ola.org

Parry Sound-Muskoka:

Minister Tony Clement, MP: Clemet1a@parl.gc.ca
MPP Norm Miller: norm.miller@pc.ola.org

Message from the Mayor of Severn Township*

Severn is a beautiful place to work, play and raise your families. It is such a large Township, bordered by Lake Couchiching, the mighty Severn River, Hwy 12, and the Coldwater River - its beauty is breathtaking. While I was born and raised right here, it wasn't until I campaigned for Mayor that I came to realize the size of this beautiful Township.

[Severn Township](#) has established a Recreation Committee that is bursting at the seams with excitement. We will be hiring a part time Recreation Director who will help to promote the area, and encourage more people to visit some of the great places within Severn Township. We are pushing forward trying to pave all the roads in the Township within our elected term. Garbage has been an issue for some residents, and the County has a contract with one supplier, beginning mid- 2013. Smaller trucks will be part of the fleet, so that they can access some of the smaller roads. The new [West Shore](#) Settlement Area on Lake Couchiching is bustling with development, as the growth plan came into effect January 19, 2012, providing the various developers with confidence as they move forward on this exciting multi-year project.

Mike Burkett, Mayor

(*excerpts from an update sent to the SLA)

Municipal Contact Info:

Town of Gravenhurst:

www.gravenhurst.ca

Municipality of Muskoka:

www.muskoka.on.ca

Township of Severn:

www.townshipofsevern.com

County of Simcoe:

www.simcoe.ca

Local Councillors:

Town of Gravenhurst

Joe Donoghue

Ward 3 Councillor

jdonoghue@gravenhurst.ca

Township of Severn

Mark Taylor

Councillor Ward 1 (Matchedash)

MTaylor@townshipofsevern.com

Rob Ferguson

Councillor Ward 5 (Washago)

RFerguson@townshipofsevern.com



Sparrow Lake Camp – 100 years of Camping Excellence

In 1892, Canada's famous Massey family purchased a tract of land on Sparrow Lake. For the next 20 years, the property served as the family's summer retreat. But in 1912, the Masseys decided to give the property to their Church, to be used as a camp site for the disadvantaged youth of Toronto.

[Sparrow Lake Camp](#) (SLC) started with the Massey's generous gift and this summer the camp celebrates that gift given 100 years ago. SLC continues to be committed to offering affordable camping opportunities for its campers with its stated mission of being a caring, inclusive Christian community. Recently SLC has also begun to offer outdoor education and leadership programs in the spring and the fall off-seasons to maximize the use of the 100 acre facility.

Like many older properties around the lake, the SLC needs to undertake many capital projects to bring the SLC up to modern standards. SLC is faced with the need to immediately renovate the Recreation Hall, including electrical work, upgrade to the camp's electrical infrastructure, construct a new maintenance shop and construct a new water treatment facility.

Endowment funds have also been established at both the United Church of Canada Foundation and Toronto United Church Council to help the camp through its next 100 years. For SLC to continue its mission and to maintain a high standard of camping experience, while keeping its fees at a level that is affordable to the majority of families, the camp is undertaking a "100 Year" fundraising campaign. Please help spread the word and consider making a special Centennial Year Donation to Sparrow Lake Camp.

Donations can be made via the website, www.sparrowlakecamp.com, or by mailing a cheque to Sparrow Lake Camp, P.O. Box 23028 Barrie, ON., L4N 7W8. The SLC is happy to allocate your gift to a specific area that's important to you, such as capital improvements, or to bursaries to support campers who could not otherwise afford camp fees. SLC will also issue a charitable receipt for all donations over \$25.00. **On June 30th, SLA members are welcome to visit the Sparrow Lake Camp for its' Annual Open House from 1:00-4:00 p.m.** Come and see what SLC is all about! For more information, please visit the SLC website.

Cottage Fire Safety

By August 2010, statistics showed that about 64 per cent of almost 900 fires in Ontario were caused by people. These numbers are up as against lightning fires, and aren't included in the fires extinguished by municipalities. "Our numbers vary quite a bit per year," says Bill Droog of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, "But year to year, people are still causing a lot of fires. People still need to be more careful." So whether you prefer an outdoor fire pit, a fireplace, or a woodstove, making sure everything is safe and set up properly should be first on your list of to-dos before lighting any fires.

Outdoors

Use a designated pit: It's safer to have recreational fires in an existing pit. If you need to make one, clear a five-foot circle of grass, branches, and other debris, leaving just the soil. Then, build your fire in the centre.

Find a clear area: Branches that hang over a fire area are a major hazard and can cause wildfire. Make sure that your pit is far away from anywhere a tree's branch could sway into.

Keep water and a shovel close by: To put out a fire: dump water over it, then dirt. Repeat if necessary.

Never leave it alone: This is pretty simple: In order to keep everyone safe, never leave a fire unattended.

Obey Open Air laws: Your province may have laws restricting outdoor fires. In Ontario, a permit isn't necessary for small fires, but between April 1 and October 31 the [Ministry of Natural Resources](#) has the right to ask that you to put out your fire. Check with your local municipal office or fire department for any additional laws or regulations.

Know that if you cause a forest fire, you're responsible for the costs of putting it out and any resulting damage. The Gravenhurst Volunteer Fire Department maintains a [Muskoka Forest Fire Danger Rating](#) service and other useful contact information.

Indoors

Take care of your chimney

If you prefer to stay inside by a fireplace or woodstove with a cup of hot cocoa and a good book, then make sure that your chimney is in good shape. You can have it inspected by a certified chimney sweeper, regularly clear out as much ash as you can, and burn only well-seasoned wood.

Know your way around the fireplace or woodstove: It's easier to maintain your fireplace or woodstove if you know what and where every piece of it is. To clean out the fireplace's chimney, know where the ash drop and ash pit are. The damper controls the chimney draft and also closes the flue when the fireplace is not being used. For woodstoves, the hearth pad is the base, which shields the floor from radiant heat. The flue, if straight, heats the stove faster.

Keep a fire safety checklist

One of the easiest ways to be safe about handling all fires is to keep a checklist. It usually includes procedures, such as checking fire alarms and outlining a fire escape plan. You can download a checklist at: www.stopthefire.org if you don't already have your own.

FIRE PERMITS

All cottagers need a fire permit for any and all open air brush burning at any time of year.

However, if you wish to have a campfire for preparing food or if you have a CSA-approved Chimenea, you do not need a permit.

There are specific guidelines to adhere to for burning and you will be giving these with the permit.

For the [Township of Severn](#), a seven-day permit (\$5) can be picked up at the Bayview Wildwood Resort 7 days a week.

A six-month permit (\$20) can be picked up at the Township office from Monday to Friday (call: (705) 325-2315, ext. 242)

FIRE BANS

When the township or county issues a fire ban no one can burn at any time, for any reason whatsoever. You are responsible for your neighbours.

To keep up to date with fire bans please listen to radio channels [105.9](#) or [CTV 2](#). Or, look for the new fire status sign at the Fire Hall on South Sparrow Lake Road.

WANTED – Please volunteer for this year's SLA Annual Regatta, Sunday August 5th

Regatta Chair Mike Ewing reminds SLA members (including teens) that one of the key requirements for a successful regatta includes the need for many volunteers. Volunteers are needed **now** to help plan and organize the 2012 regatta. Mike needs committee members to promote the event, seek donations for prizes, help with the set up and logistics, judge the events and games, sell raffle tickets, manage the prizes and ribbons, and many other tasks. Please consider a donation for the raffle/prize table, or help to solicit a donor for a prize. All net funds raised at the regatta help the SLA to continue its programs and advocacy work. Email info@sparrowlakeassociation.com and let Mike know how you can help.

Environment Issues - Lake System Health Monitoring

At the 2011 AGM, members agreed that they wanted the SLA to re-instate the water monitoring that had been done in previous years. We would like to independently determine the health of our water system and to establish baseline numbers so that we can once again monitor trends and have the necessary data to flag any issues with the appropriate authorities. This is a huge task to undertake and executive members Jill King and Wendy Miller have agreed to organize and initiate the process. They will start “small” this summer but they need your volunteer help with taking water samples and recording other observations. This is a great summer project for students who may need their high school “volunteer hours”. Please join the environment/water quality committee by emailing Jill at: membership@sparrowlakeassociation.com.

Did you know that the Regional District Municipality of Muskoka administers a [Lake System Health Monitoring Program](#)? This program is comprised of recreational water quality monitoring, shoreline surveys, and technical assistance to lake associations who are interested in undertaking a volunteer based monitoring program.

The 2011 [Lake System Health Monitoring Program Year End Report](#) contains details of the monitoring program, and the [2011 Data Report](#) provides data for each lake monitored in 2011. Lake Data Sheets for specific lakes (including Sparrow Lake) can be downloaded from the [Muskoka Water Web site](#).

Federation of Ontario Cottager Associations - FOCA

Terry Rees, Executive Director of FOCA was our guest and speaker at last year’s AGM, and Terry and the [FOCA staff](#) continue to be a great resource and help to the SLA. John Cooper attended the [FOCA AGM in March](#), and he and SLA VP Bob Corbett continue to keep on top of cottage, boating, and safety issues.

The SLA has arranged with FOCA for a [Cottage Succession](#) planning seminar to be held on Saturday July 7th at the Terry Fox Room in the newly renovated Centennial Centre in Gravenhurst. Mark this event on your calendar for 10 am till noon – advance registration details will be provided to paid-up SLA members.

A small portion of your SLA membership fees are paid to FOCA so that the SLA can support the advocacy and other [work that FOCA does](#) for Ontario cottagers. FOCA has many excellent programs that SLA members can take advantage of including: [insurance and risk management](#), a [FireSmart](#) program, the partnership with the Ontario MNR on the [BearWise program](#), and the various [Environment and Lake Stewardship](#) initiatives.

The SLA looks forward to working with FOCA on these common areas of interest. Your executive also continues to build relationships and alliances with neighbouring and other lake associations so that we can share best practices.

[FOCA's website](#) notes that “potentially disastrous changes are being contemplated to the Federal *Fisheries Act* that will significantly hamper the protection available to Canada’s aquatic resources” and urges members to speak up, and to contact their MP to voice their concern related to this policy decision that is being contemplated as part of the recent 2012 Federal Budget. The SLA will monitor this issue and will speak to MP Bruce Stanton about this issue as is appropriate – further [background info](#) is available on the FOCA website, and for FOCA’s perspective and commentary see their [letter to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans](#).

SLA members are also encouraged to visit the [“Make your Lake Great”](#) website and learn about this contest that [Cottage Life](#) is doing with FOCA. Please enter and improve our chance to win the \$5,000 prize that the SLA could use for lake improvement projects.

Key Contacts

FOCA:

info@foca.on.ca

www.foca.on.ca

705 749-3622

OPP:

1-888-310-1122 (or
911)

Lock 42 (Couchiching)
705 689-2182

Hamlet Swing Bridge
705 689-6161

Swift Rapids (43)
705 756-8177

FOCA has partnered with [Boater News](#). SLA members can find some great boating info and news at www.boaternews.ca and at www.powerboattv.com.

[Boats and Places](#) magazine is also available in digital format courtesy of FOCA.

Take Note! Summer Events in the Community

125th Anniversary Celebration of the R.M.S. Segwun - Muskoka Wharf, Friday June 29th and Saturday June 30th

Canada Day at Kilworthy Park - Sunday July 1st, 9 am till 3 pm

Antique & Classic Boat Show - Muskoka Wharf, Saturday July 7th

In-Water Boat Show with Ribfest – Muskoka Wharf, Friday to Sunday, July 27-29th

Piratefest - Muskoka Wharf, Saturday August 4 & Sunday August 5

Dockside Festival of the Arts - Muskoka Wharf, Friday to Sunday, August 17-19th

Aromas & Blends-Celebration of Beer Wine & Spirits - Muskoka Boat & Heritage Centre, Sat. August 25th 6-9 pm

[The Muskoka Bay Club](#) is a new top ranked facility. The SLA has been advised that this season the club is embarking on a community information program to allow local residents and cottagers to experience the club and to inform them of the club's offerings from a golf, membership and [food & beverage](#) standpoint.

Also check out the many other summer events in [Barrie](#), [Orillia](#), [Bracebridge](#) and [Huntsville](#). Or why not enjoy a great movie the "old fashioned" way at the [Muskoka Drive In](#) theatre, or visit the [Muskoka Wildlife Centre](#) – younger children need to experience this!

Support our Sponsors and Advertisers

The SLA thanks our long term supporter, Bayview Wildwood Resort. This summer, why not book a special dinner at [Echo's Dining Lounge](#), or take your guests to explore [Stanton Bros. General Supplies Store](#).

Bayview Wildwood Resort

1-800-461-0243 www.bayviewwildwood.com

Dock installation

2 young strong guys available for dock installation & odd jobs
Evenings and weekends

Contact: Jonathan (705) 791-6335

Your 2012 SLA Membership Fees May be Due

Membership renewal letters were mailed to members in April. If your membership is due for renewal this year (SLA membership is for a calendar year), then please complete the form and mail it back asap. If you are not sure of your membership status, need the form, or have other questions, please email us at:

membership@sparrowlakeassociation.com. At the current \$75 price for a 3 year membership, we recommend that you choose the 3-year membership option - membership fees will be increasing in August 2012.

Do we have your current email address and cottage information? The SLA newsletter and other communications will be sent in e-version as the default method of distribution. Members who would still like to receive a paper version will need to advise the SLA, or indicate this preference on your membership form. WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS to stay in touch. If you did not receive an electronic version of this newsletter, we do not have a current email address for you or your family. Please email your preferred email contact info to the SLA at: info@sparrowlakeassociation.com

SLA Privacy Policy - No personal info, including your email address, will be shared with any other 3rd party or member. Information collected by the SLA is solely used for the purposes of communicating with its members and for the provision of its programs.