

Shoreline News

Steenburg Lake Community Association

November 1993

Member FOCA

Steenburg Lake Statistics

Lots For Sale

49.2	Haroutunian	George & Susie
49.3	Hughes	Margo

Undeveloped Lots Around the Lake

11.1	Brett/Denomy	Mark & Kathy
85	Spire	L.
92	Guest	Jack & Ann
50	Rimar Holdings	

Rental Property:

32	Henry	Richard
69	Dawson	Melbourne & Ruth
115.1	Ray	Stan & Jessie
115	Ray	Stan & Jessie
204	Wynn	Terry & Rose

Cottages For Sale:

3	Luffman	Lorraine
5	Hamm	Harry & Keitha
6	Madden	John
30.1	Hartog	Jim & Vicky
46	Ferandez	Kim & John (Marina)
88	Matijaca	Bogumil & Zlata
73	Rodgers	Rosalyn
109	Balson	Ron & Tammy
131	Wells	Robert
137	Braccia	Arnaldo & Anna
140	Suthers	Roy & Betty
150	McKenzie	Jean
167	Davies	W.
181	Pucyk	Kaz & Aldora
204	Wynn	Terry & Rose (Island)

Lake Association Membership (1993)

161 Cottages (85%)

50 Year Association Members

1	Jack McGeachie
3	Lorraine Luffman
7	Kenneth Vivian
14	Don & Marge Reil

50 Year Cottagers Continued.....

16	Pat Fraser
17	Helen Lloyd
18	Clive Wilson
19	Griff Lloyd
20	Violet Mathieson
29	Robert Johncox
30	Judie Hughes
31	Tom & Adrienne Flavelle
42	Jessie Fitzgibbon
47	Jane Frey
139	Vern Landon
148	Majorie Fitzgibbon
182	A. O'Krafka & O. Jacoby
190	Raymond Mucklestone
197	Sandy Langman
198	J.B. Alyea
203	Dr. Charles Bateman

Waste Survey Comparison

	<u>1989</u>	<u>1993</u>
Systems Surveyed:	54	183
Cottages w/Septic Systems	48	145
Privies In Use	2	19
Holding Tanks	3	13
Chemical Toilets	0	1
Other	0	5
Upgrades being Considered	5	27

Permanent Households on the Lake -- 11

Heard Around The Lake

Tom Corner (#91) won the intermediate Canadian men's horseshoe championship.

Congratulations to Steve Wood (#40) and Patricia Henderson who were married on August 7th.

Caught on 9/7/93, Mr. Large Mouth Bass, 23 1/2" long, 16" girth, 7 1/4 pounds at 1:00 PM by guest at cottage #30.

On July 21st Savages (#24) sighted a a bear cub up a tree. The same day it shared a log with Wayne Tracey (#23). Then , at the end of August, the Berry's (105) had a bear cub up a tree behind their cottage and it stayed up the tree for four hours. In all cases the she-bear was never sighted to the relief of all concerned.

Heard Around the Lake Continued.....

Olive George (#182) married Ray Jacoby in Florida in April 1993. Congratulations to both.

A very sad event occurred on July 23rd. R. Claire Langman (#197) passed away from the effects of a stroke. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Sailing Regatta 93

For a change we had a decent day and right after the races there were the canoe races by the beach and a barbecue so you would have thought the turn out would have been great. Not so, no windsurfers showed up and only four sailboats turned out to race. There are a good number of sailboats around the lake so I do not understand why so few join in for the races. I read newsletters from other associations and they report a great turn out for their regattas. What makes our cottagers so different? It is very disappointing to go through all the effort of setting up the course and arrangements to have so few participate. We will give it another go in 94, but if there is not a marked increase in participants it will be our last year for a regatta, for me anyway.

At the August Executive meeting of the association it was decided to move the regatta to the Civic Holiday in 1994 as it used to be. The course is so far from the beach that the races cannot be observed from that point so it does not add to the festivities of the beach party. The canoe races will continue to be apart of the barbecue and beach party.

Regatta Results

1 sail	David McCarthy	cottage #67
2 sail	Richard McCarthy	cottage #83*

* it was a close race with only 52 seconds separating the two boats.

Canoe Races

Junior Class	1st	Rachel & Julie Zylka
Youth Class	1st	Chris & Matthew McCarthy
Adult	1st	Don Taciuk & Gary MacAuley
Seniors	1st	Chris Dean & Paul Bowsher

Toronto Star Delivery

Thanks to your patronage and much better weather than last year, we had a great season delivering the weekend Toronto Star.

We look forward to serving you next summer and hope you have a safe and happy winter.

Gratefully'

Liane & Sean van Dompsele

Limerick Fire Department 93 Yard Sale

In the parking lot of Sam's restaurant in August the Fire Department organized an impressive yard sale. The sale netted the Fire Department about \$2,000. This money will be used for the purchase of radios for our volunteer firemen who can be reached where they are working more effectively by radio than by beepers. Since radios are more expensive than beepers it is planned to repeat the yard sale in August of 94.

The cottagers cooperated and provided many good items that sold rapidly. As you go over things during the winter keep this sale in mind and bring up those items that you no longer have a need for. Drop them off at Don Fitzgibbon's barn. Your efforts will be greatly appreciated.

Highlights of 35th Annual Meeting Steenburg Lake Community Association

August 1st, Limerick Community Centre with 25 cottages represented with an attendance of 41 cottagers.. Welcomed by Ron Rampton. Minutes of last years meeting read and accepted. Reeve Moffatt provided an overview of LimerickTownship's activities. Tudor/Cashel was not represented.

First order of business was a proposal to modify the Association's by-laws which divided the secretaries duties between a Recording Secretary and a Corresponding Secretary and provided for staggered elections of officers and directors. Term of office is now three years and Lead Directors now become elected as part of the Executive.. This passed and your canvassers in the spring will provide you with a copy of the revised by-laws.

Election of President, Corresponding & Recording Secretaries and Treasurer was the next order of business:

- Thomas Quinn stood for president and was elected.
- Glenda Cox stood for Recording Secretary and was elected.
- Tom Hughes stood for Corresponding Sec. and was elected
- Colin Gaddas stood for Treasurer and was elected

Next year elections will be for Lead Directors for Membership, Social, and Municipal Affairs. Updated organization chart will be circulated with the canvassers.

Standing Committee Reports;

Treasurer - Balance at time of the meeting \$4,522.05 (full statement will be included in the fall newsletter).

Membership - Canvassing went well. Membership as of this newsletter is 161, 2 better than last year.

Annual Meeting Highlights Continued.....

Social - Barbecue and canoe races and youth activities went over well on the 17th of July at the Public Beach - suggestions are welcome for other activities. One suggestion was that paddle boats be included next year as an additional race.

Municipal Affairs - Letter last fall to OPP did result in better cottage coverage over the winter. Sweatshirts and hats were added to the Steenburg line at Trudys. A group of cottagers met to hear Rick Henry's suggestions for use of Lodge property on Feb. 5th. in Pickering Town Hall. Doubts about his sincerity persist.

Natural Resources - Water Quality - Slight increase in chlorophyll over 1991. Health Bureau continues to monitor fecal count at the public beach - no problems. Buoy added to rock pile near the public beach. Some Splake have been caught, excellent eating. Continued stocking in 1994 unlikely due to budget cuts and lastly do not clear rocks from shoreline as it is the crayfish's habitat which provides food for the bass.

New Business:

FOCA requested comments on a suggestion for reorganizing FOCA on a regional basis. Proposal was passed out with responses to be put in box on our bulletin board at Trudys.

Tuesday August 10th 7 - 9 PM- there will be a meeting at the Limerick Centre to hear Rick Henry's team present their plans for the lodge property. A good turn out is requested.

Mr. Dafoe asked about a launch on the lake. He was advised that the Marina is a dead issue and the best way is to seek out neighbors for launching privileges. That does not seem to be a problem.

Vivian Prowse requested good communications be maintained on the progress of development plans and actions.

Wes Moffatt requested representation at the Sept. 3rd Limerick Council meeting to formally express opinion relative to the Henry development proposal.

Association now has liability insurance for officers and directors and association members when they are participating in association sponsored events.

Move to adjourn meeting at 5:15

Gave Ron Rampton a vote of appreciation for his three terms as Association President..

Reception followed the meeting and numerous door prizes were awarded by drawings. Thanks to Glenda Cox and Tricia Neub for organizing that effort.

Snowmobilers Ride Safe - Ride Sober

Out of 1 million Ontarians who will ride a snowmobile this winter, between 30 and 40 will die needlessly and hundreds of others will suffer injury in largely preventable snowmobiling accidents.

Many snowmobilers are also cottage owners and users, so the Federation of Ontario Cottager's Associations is an active participant in the Ontario Snowmobile Safety Committee's annual RIDE SAFE-RIDE SOBER community action campaign. Geared to promote safe and sober and responsible use of snowmobiles, the campaign is targeted to that group of males between the ages of 18 and 35 who demonstrate the highest risk behavior in their use of recreational vehicles.

With winter cottage use increasing dramatically in recent years, more cottagers than ever before are enjoying Canada's fastest growing winter recreation activity. For safety's sake, FOCA urges you and your family to reduce your chances of injury or death by observing the following rules when you snowmobile this winter:

1. Avoid alcohol consumption while snowmobiling.
2. Do not exceed the posted speed of 50 kph.
3. Whenever possible avoid riding after dark.
4. Avoid ice crossings that are unfamiliar or unmarked.
5. Buy a trail permit and ride only on approved trails.
6. Never ride alone.

FOCA reminds you that snowmobile trails are patrolled regularly by trail wardens, conservation officers and the police. The highway Traffic Act applies to snowmobiles and any violation could be punishable by fines and/or driver's license suspension. For cottagers wishing to take a snowmobile training course, call 905-562-4922: for local snowmobiling information call 705-739-7669. , RIDE SAFE-RIDE SOBER.

Rock Bass Fishing Derby

The derby enticed only four youths to enter this year and they caught a total of 96 Rockies. SLCA awarded three "T" shirts and donations from Fishing Plus, Canadian Tire, K-Mart and Gords Bait Shop in Belleville rounded out the prizes. There were more prizes than entrants thanks to Eugene Tracey's efforts. The event is so beneficial to the lake we sincerely hope participation will improve in 1994.

"Hasting Estates" Presentation

On August 10, 1993, 55 cottagers attend a presentation by Mr. Rick Henry concerning his proposed plans for the lodge property to be called "Limerick Estates". This plan proposes 161 three quarter acre lots on the property north of the road. Lots 28, 29, and 30 on the lake front would be rezoned for low activity usage (as he put it) for swimming, canoeing and rowing as there would be no docks or launching facility.

Tom Quinn, President of the Lake Association stated the ground rules of the meeting prior to introducing Mr. Henry. All questions were to be written and passed forward and categorized to be posed at the proper time during the meeting.

The entire meeting was tape recorded for future reference and all questions were preserved. Wes Moffatt, Limerick Township Reeve, was present and stressed that an earlier meeting between Mr. Henry and his team and the Limerick Township Council was informational only.

Mr. Henry's team consisted of:

- Steve Blasiack - co-owner of the property
- Richard Harrison - a planner
- Calvin Wellan - a developer
- Tom Smith - Waste disposal proposal

Their presentation was divided into 5 sections:

- 1 - Overview and themes.
- 2 - Design features
- 3 - Rotordisc Sewage System as a communal sewage treatment plant.
- 4 - Benefits of the project
- 5 - Developer gave an overview of his company

These presentations resulted in 26 different questions by the attendees. Those attending overwhelmingly voiced their opposition to the "sub-division". It was decided to have the Association's objections presented to the Limerick Township Council and circulate a petition around the lake. See accompanying map of proposed sub-division.

Petition Circulated

The Executive prepared a petition and distributed it to 16 cottagers for them to carry to 10 - 12 of their neighbors. This effort resulted in 144 cottages being contacted for a total of 265 signatures. The petition listed 8 different concerns of this sub-division on the lake. The last one reflected the general feelings of the cottagers - "An inappropriate urban type development for a community set in a semi-wilderness environment".

Association Meets with Township Council

On September 3rd Tom Little and Tom Hughes attended the Limerick Township Council meeting having been allotted time on the agenda. Tom Hughes presented the council with the results of the petition and the council formally received the petitions by vote. Tom Little, Director for Municipal Affairs then presented the Association's response to the development proposal.

After carefully considering the proposal and the issues which it raises, the Steenburg Lake Community Association has concluded that it must oppose the concept presented by Mr. Henry and the Kaitlin Group. We view it as incomplete and vague. Most important, we view it as a significant threat to the future of Steenburg Lake.

Other areas covered in the presentation were:

- Scale of concept
- Lack of detail
- Misrepresentation
- Lack of concern
- Action request of Council

As you know a special bulletin was mailed to all cottagers requesting financial support. Funds received through this effort will be used to enlist the services of an environmental planner. As of November 8th Mr. Henry has not responded to the Limerick Township attorney's request for the funding and creation of a "Pre-Development Agreement". The township would draw on this account to compensate the township for any expenses incurred during the cycle. Without this in place the township will not meet Mr. Henry for any further discussions.

Reporting On The History Of Steenburg Lake

The collection of information on the history of the Steenburg Lake and its immediate area is under way. Jack McGeachie, whose historical contributions to the newsletter are well known to Association members, has volunteered to head up the project.

The Lake area has so many varied and interesting events in its past that we are anticipating that this collation of information will take some time to complete. However, it should be quite worthwhile when it is finished.

A thank-you letter is sent out to the enthusiastic and cooperative responses to our inquires shown by a number of long time residents on the lake.

Pertinent information about Steenburg Lake's early history should be sent to Tom Hughes.

Bill & Sandra DaFoe (#129)

President's Message

This is a two-fold message that I would like to share with you:

Although our family has only been cottagers on the lake for the past six years, we have made some very good friends. Charlie and myself are enjoying our involvement with not only the people in the Cottagers Association but also the many friends and neighbors we have met in the Community while enjoying our summer retreat.

My goal as President is to maintain two mandates. **First**, I intend to continue with the efforts and directions of the previous executive concerning the identification of cottage issues within Northern Ontario. To do this we must provide for continued dialogue with Provincial Agencies, the County of Hastings, Limerick Council and Community Service Organizations such as our Association. **Secondly**, I will endeavor to ensure that our concerns with respect to the development proposal known as "Hastings Estates" are clearly identified, thoroughly examined, and, that no decision is made until all potential impacts are assessed and the issues resolved in a comprehensive and satisfactory manner.

The proposed development of a permanent residential community of upwards of 500 people on the shoreline of Steenburg Lake will impact upon our cottage lifestyle and the environment as we know it today. This type of development, which has become more prevalent in Northern Ontario over the past years, will not only affect the natural environment but also the character of our local community. These are concerns which we all share and our combined efforts must be directed to ensuring the maintenance of both the environment and our community.

The Executive of the Cottager's Association has hired an urban and regional planning consultant, John McDermott, M.C.I.P., on your behalf as per our August 10th meeting. I have included with this message an overview of the approach to be pursued on behalf of the Association by the Consultant.

There is a need to approach the development proposal known as "Hastings Estates" in a professional and objective manner. The application, when formally submitted for approval, will be subject to close scrutiny by not only the Cottager's Association but also several Provincial Ministries and Agencies inclusive of the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and the Conservation Authority to mention a few.

CAUTION LAKE LEVEL - Tom Quinn

I had an opportunity to drop into the Crowe Valley Conservation Office to see the manager, Kelly Pender. Problem we are having is beaver dams on private property. No different in the rest of the Province of Northern Ontario. Problem is financial. The mandate through Limerick Council is that it is the responsibility of the individual land owner. On our lake logs were pulled Oct. 15th. Level has gone down 8". Hoping by time of freeze-up to go down another foot but lake is still very, very high and if it doesn't go down the problem of severe flooding can be expected.

Under Ontario's Planning act there are many environmental and socio-economic issues associated with this proposal which will require detailed study and review. Given the current fiscal policies of the Provincial Government and the down loading of financial responsibility upon local municipal governments, there is a greater need than ever before to ensure, prior to any further consideration of this application by either the County of Hastings or the Township of Limerick, that the proposal is clearly defined and that the net effects from both an environmental and socio-economic perspective are fully understood by the Province, the County, the Municipality, and all ratepayers of the Township of Limerick.

In addition to the basic issues concerning the environment, land use, access and the level of service required to support a proposal of this scale, there is a need to carefully evaluate such matters as the monitoring programs and the provision of adequate contingency measures, inclusive of financial considerations, in the event the failure of the proposed means of servicing this project. The issues associated with monitoring and contingency measures are of equal significance to the basic planning issues in the review and consideration of this application. We intend to pursue these issues in a comprehensive manner with the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Township of Limerick.

Unfortunately, our initial review of the County of Hastings Official Plan suggests that the planning framework under which applications of this nature are considered is permissive. This places greater emphasis upon the role of the Cottager's Association to ensure that the proposal is sustainable and that adequate measures exist to provide for the integrity of the environment, both in the short and long term. As discussed during our recent meeting, we will be arranging a further meeting with the Executive to clearly define a strategy to address the concerns of the Cottager's Association and the involvement of such agencies as the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Conservation Authority, the County of Hastings and the Municipal Council.

WE NEED YOUR HELP -- both with fundraising efforts to assist in our desires to preserve our environment, and to encourage the involvement of those cottagers who do not belong to the Association. There are individuals within our community who possess a wealth of knowledge and expertise but who do not belong to the Association. These individuals represent a valuable resource and could assist the Association in the conservation and preservation of our very precious

Presidents Message Continued.....

environment. Please encourage your neighbors and friends to join the Association. It is only through our collective efforts that we will be successful. With your help we can succeed in our efforts to protect our environment and ensure the character of our community.

With every dark cloud there is sometimes a silver lining -- Mr. Colin Gaddis, Treasurer and one of the very hardworking Executive members of our Association, is also involved with the 7th Oshawa Venturers. This youth organization visited Colin's cottage last summer and heard of our plight. They donated \$50.00 to our Association to help defray some of the costs. On behalf of the Association, we thank you for caring!

Please contact me at 905-839-4372 (home) in Pickering or 613-474-2657 (cottage) if you can assist in any capacity.

Thomas J. Quinn
President. S.L.C.A.

Directors Reports

Social

by Charley Quinn

WOW! The day at the beach is really catching on. Crowds were bigger than last year and the canoe races were well attended. We are thinking of adding a paddle boat race next year (by request). What do you think? Call me (Charley) at 474-2657 and let me know. Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers (too many to name) who made the barbecue and the races a success.

Mark Your Calendars for 1994

B.B.Q. and Canoe (Paddle Boat) races
Saturday, July 16, 1994

(Tickets for the annual dinner will be available)

Windsurfer & Sailboat Races
Saturday, July 30, 1994

Annual Meeting & Dinner
Sunday, July 31, 1994

**MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW IN THE
SPRING NEWSLETTER**

Membership

by Anita Waddell

The data bases have been updated with all the new information that was obtained through the annual canvass. The lake statistics on the first page were obtained from the membership data base. It is my intent to have the canvassers packages ready by mid-May.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would mail in your 1994 Association dues over the winter. It simplifies the canvasser's job in the spring, not having to handle money.

Municipal Affairs

by Tom Little

Since the last newsletter, the focus of attention for your Municipal Affairs Committee has been the proposed development of the lodge property. This issue is dealt with elsewhere in "Shoreline News" so we will leave you with two thoughts - **say no to development and support the Association with a financial contribution !**

Once again this year we are asking the Ontario Provincial Police to patrol the lake properties through the fall and winter. As you may recall, last year during similar patrols the OPP apprehended several people on the South Road equipped with tools for breaking into cottages. The OPP also left tags on cottage doors which we feel acts as a significant deterrent.

We continue to seek a local source of drinking water for lake residents. Both Limerick and Tudor/Cashel Townships have rejected requests to supply water at the respective township offices, but we believe we should approach them again before summer 1994 to see if there is a way they can accommodate our needs. In the interim, water is available throughout the summer at the Bancroft Post office.

Natural Resources/Environment

by Griff Lloyd

The high lake level is the present concern. If the lake freezes over before the level can be brought down, the spring thaw will bring disaster to cribs, docks and low lying cottages. I urge you to write to the Crowe Valley Conservation Authority. The problem is on private property, however, with pressure some negotiations might result in positive action. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, the power of the pen.....

LATE BREAKING NEWS - Griff Lloyd

Purple Loose Strife plants have been sighted in various locations around the lake. This attractive plant is a danger to marsh areas and we hope to organize a clean-up next summer.

Natural Resources/Environment continued.....

The Crowe Valley Authority's address is:

Crowe Valley Conservation Authority
Mr. Kelly Pender
General Manager /Secretary Treasurer
Box 416
Marmora, Ont. K0K 2M0

Accolades For Trudy's

A recent issue of the "Oshawa Times" ran a column by Christopher White (Minister of Westminster Church, Whitby ,a regular contributor to CBC's Morningside) entitled "In Search Of Chelsea Fix". The entire article is too long to run here but Liz or Bob can give you a copy of the column, they have a stack of them.

The column praises the quality of their "Chelsea Buns" and the home baked bread along with the friendly down to earth way in which the store is run. As the author states "Tells you a lot , not just about them, but about the nature of the community of Gilmour, Ontario. We have to agree....."

A Note Of Thanks to the Limerick Fire Dept.

Joe & Dorothy Cooper & family wish to express their thank s to the Limerick Fire Department who very effectively fought the fire at their cottage on December 27, 1992. It made their hearts sing to see the trucks respond so rapidly to the call for help.

A Major Break-in

by Jack McGeachie

On the night of June 8th my garage was broken into and \$5,000 worth of uninsured equipment was stolen. It included a twin 12.5 HP Sears lawn tractor, a 12 ton pressure Tomahawk logsplitter and two Pioneer chainsaws. The thieves clipped the outside padlock on one building and then smashed out a panel on one overhead door on the other, crawled inside and cut the inside padlock. They then muscled the heavy equipment to the road to load it on their truck. While the locks have been replaced and the doors reinforced it seems pointless to replace the equipment as Mr. Tomlinson has recently had his second lawn tractor stolen. Someone obviously keeps the area under surveillance.

The police were very prompt and I was quite impressed with their service. The police do have suspects but our laws are slanted to protect the innocent and they have to be pretty circumspect and need hard information before they can move

A Major Break-in Continued.....

The thieves left me my axe, swede saw and wheelbarrow, all of which require a certain amount of manual labour and therefore have very little resale value in this day and age.

STEENBURG LAKE WASTE DISPOSAL SURVEY SUMMARY

Systems Surveyed: 183 (9/93)

'Types and number in use

Septic	Privies*	Holding Tank	Chemical	Other
145	19	13	1	5
System upgrades under consideration				27

'Routing of Kitchen Waste

Septic	Dry Well	Lch Fld.	Sand Bed	Hold Tank	Other
120	24	8	6	10	8
Septic systems installed prior to EPA (1974) :					34

* Privies used on a regular basis, not as back up
183 cottages surveyed out of a total of 198 = 92%

STEENBURG MAINTENANCE COMPANY

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Sand & Gravel - Fill Jobs - Firewood -
Septic Systems Installed

Editors Note: The next issue of the "Shoreline News" will be next May. Input from cottagers is encouraged and welcome. Please send you articles/information to: Tom Hughes, 6 Highview Trail, Pittsford, NY 14534. Have a joyious holiday and safe winter. See you in the spring.

TREASURE'S REPORT FOR
4th NOVEMBER 1993

Balance: \$6,127.86

<u>Income:</u>	Memberships (162)	3,240.00
	Donations to the Association	44.42
	Sale of T-shirts & hats	599.52
	Profit from bar at annual dinner	20.14
	Interest	162.93
	Advertisements in newsletter	120.00
	<u>Total</u>	\$4,187.01

<u>Expenses:</u>	Shipping & Postage (including newsletters)	548.01
	Phone Calls	98.25
	Copying & Printing	3.64
	Stationery	270.11
	F.O.C.A. Memberships	300.00
	Attendance at F.O.C.A. meetings	105.00
	Hall rentals for meetings	135.00
	Prizes for Fishing Derby and regatta	129.83
	Rock marker installation and removal	200.00
	BBQ expenses	141.10
	Association Insurance	522.72
	Registration of Assoc. with Prov. Government	25.00
	Advancement for T-shirts and hats	1292.56
	Loss incurred by meal purchases for annual dinner	112.00
	Bank Charges	19.32

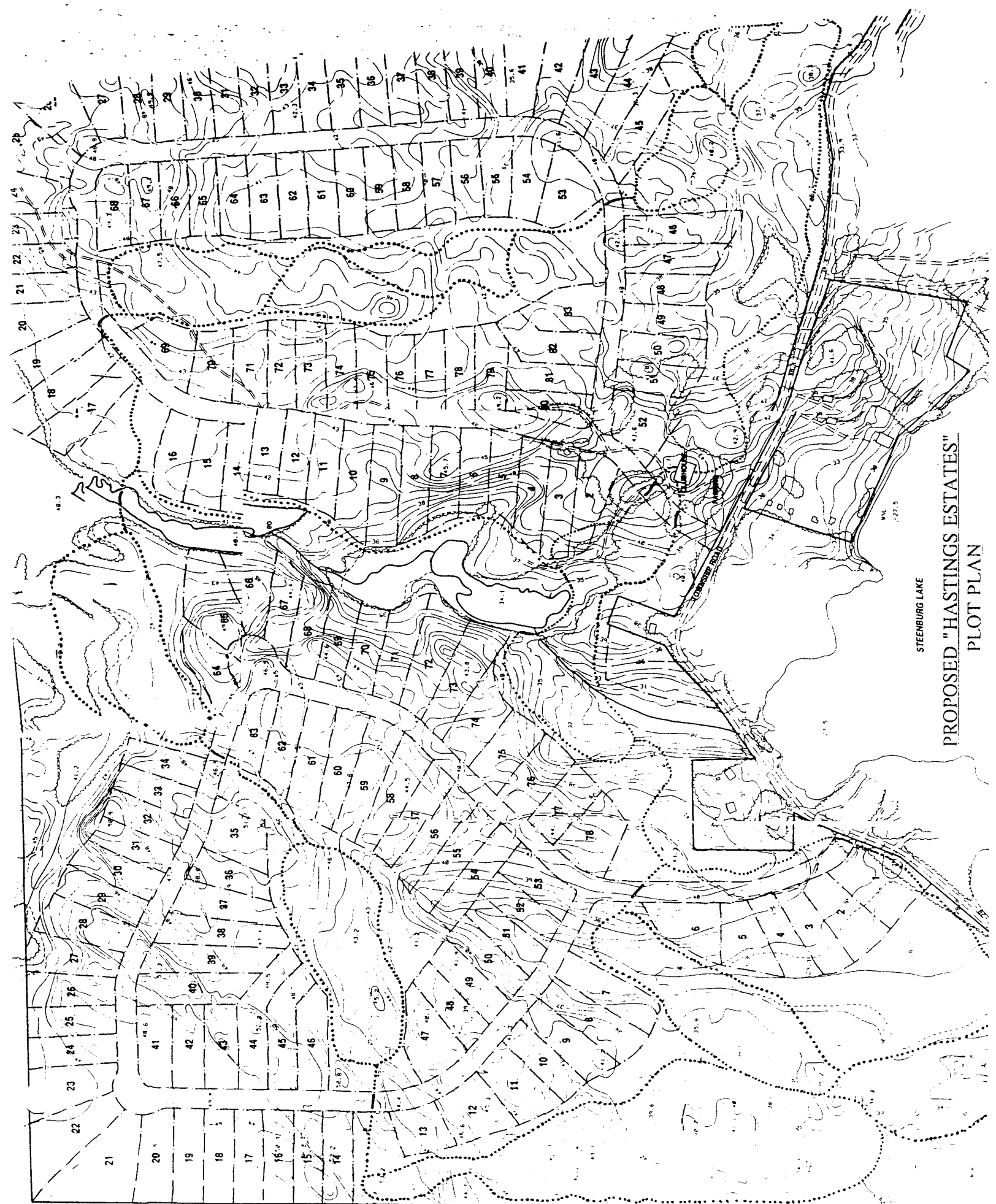
Total \$3,902.54

Balance: \$6,412.33

I sign this as being an accurate statement



Colin Gaddas



STEENBURG LAKE

PROPOSED "HASTINGS ESTATES"
PLOT PLAN

THE INTREPID COTTAGER

Ordinary people

by Craig Nicholson
"The weekly newspaper column
for cottagers"



Cottagers are nothing special. We come from all walks of life and don't have more in common than any other arbitrary societal grouping. Like dog owners, fitness buffs, Blue Jays ticket holders, or people caught in the rain, our paths cross with our shared interest, and then diverge again as life goes on. Sometimes we're even dripping wet.

We are not all wealthy, or privileged, or university grads. We come from all classes, all generations, and all ethnic backgrounds. We like different foods. Some of us are retired and some are permanent residents. Some of us are city people, some country folk. We are mostly family people with kids, and dogs, and lots of relatives we never knew before the cottage. We are part of the great amorphous mass of Canadians who work too hard, play too little, and regret it too late. We are ordinary people.

But we do have one thing in common: we love our cottages.

At some point, we have each made a commitment to a place where we aspire to be and to a vision of how we would prefer to live. We have backed this promise with a financial investment. We have entered into an emotional contract that has a priority in our lives. Our cottages are part of us and we of them.

So how come it seems to be such a hassle sometimes?

I have time for this important part of my life less than 100 days a year. But I work to pay for it year round. And worry that it isn't enough. I spend over 150 hours a year in the car getting there and back. Usually in heavy traffic with a thousand others trying to cut it down to 148. I get speeding tickets and flat tires and high blood pressure and headaches and a car full of dog hair. The wife sleeps all the way. But its worth every minute.

I'm classed as a "seasonal" resident, as if I only make mortgage or property tax payments for the summer. I think it's a class below third. And who said that's my season? Can I lower my assessment by picking an "off" one? Does it cost more to be an all-season resident? What happens when I get old and well-seasoned? The wife says I'll still be the spice of her life.

Despite my full tax contribu-

tions and the fact that in cottage country water front property owners often comprise in excess of 50% of the population, I hardly get any municipal services. The roads to the cottage are frequently in rough shape and no one picks up my refuse. Except my dogs who eat it and then throw up. What do they expect from garbage?

Although about 66% of my taxes pay for local schools, it's illegal for me to use them. Local elections are held when I can't be there to vote. I pay Ontario Hydro more for the same service that others receive for less. Now Ottawa won't write off profits from the sale of my cottage against my dwindling capital gains exemption. And the province thinks I can afford market value assessment!

Mother Nature tests my resolve constantly. The lake is either too high or too low. The dock is always gone. I've got rot and mildew and ants and there's more rain in than out. There's always a tree down, a mouse in the cupboards, or a new skunk residing under the deck. There are black flies, mosquitos, gypsy moths, zebra mussels, purple loosestrife, and bucky beaver who just ate my flag pole again. The wife says not to forget the seagull who poops on my head.

The worst problems are created by other cottagers. The ones with septic that pollute the lake. The ones who still wash in it. Who pour phosphates and chemicals down their drains. Who fertilize their lawns. Who roar around too close to shore in huge boats. Who light their compound at night like some barren stalag. The ones who love their cottages too. Love hurts.

But nothing seems that important when I'm swaying

in the hammock, or lazing around the dock or bobbing gently on the waves. That's the beauty of cottage life. And the danger.

Cottagers are ordinary people. We make everyday mistakes. We follow the path of least resistance. In the city it's easy to feel that nothing can change and all of our little transgressions will be lost in the anonymous shuffle. We become the creatures of sloppy habits. The wife keeps a list of mine.

At the cottage everything is changing. We have the power to make it better. And the lethargy to make it worse. It all comes down to attitude. And common interest. Even self-interest. The wife says that's my forte. Hey, I'm just an ordinary guy.

Until next summer, so long from the wife and I.

NOTE:

I checked with Craig at a FOCA meeting if it was ok to reproduce his column in our newsletter and he said go right ahead. This last column of his for this season was perfect and many of you may not see it so I included it.