

Steenburg Lake SHORELINE NEWS"

Spring 1989 Vol II #1

Editor: Tom Hughes

Steenburg Lake Community Assoc.

Season Events:

Sailboat Races- Every Saturday afternoon starting on July 1st and ending Sept 2nd for a total of 10 races. Starting line will be in front of the marina with the starting schedule as follows:

Windsurfers - 2:00PM

Sunfishes - 2:15

Sailboats - 2:30

Register at the committee boat by the starting line. We have good buoys this year (won't sink or deflate). Scoring will be: 1st place 3 pts, 2nd place 2 pts., finish 1 pt.. Scores will be accumulated over the 10 races and seasonal winners announced on the Labor Day weekend.

Rock Bass Derbies: The overall effort last year may not have had any great impact on the trash fish in the lake. It did however heighten the awareness that trash fish may be getting the upper hand and there is something that fishermen can do to start reducing that population - **"Don't throw them back in the lake"**. Carry a bucket along and toss them into the bucket for disposition later (the bears at the dump love them). Two derbies will be scheduled during the season once volunteers are found.

Sprint Canoe Races: We had a good turn out last year and there are enough canoes on the lake to make this worthwhile. At the meeting in August we will look for a preference between sprint and endurance race or possibly both.

Note: Over the winter R. Rampton was to look into the Association's liability in sponsoring these events and to determine if we needed to have insurance. At this time I am not aware of the outcome.

-- WATER QUALITY --

Last year a limited number of samples of lake water were taken and sent to the health bureau for analysis. As you know the results were not good. We plan to continue that effort this year. The frequency will be every two weeks so we can establish a picture of what is happening to the quality of our lake water. The results of the testing will be published in this newsletter. There will be 8 - 10 locations around the lake for the samples.

-- SEPTIC SYSTEMS --

The Environmental Protection Act of 1974 "grandfathered" then existing sewage disposal systems from the new requirements. A survey taken around the lake at that time indicated numerous systems that were directly affecting pollution and some of those systems could still be in operation today. A suggestion has been sent to the Health Bureau in Belleville that compliance to present standards be required upon sale of the property. This would require a change in the law and additional funding for the inspection services. Further discussions with Glen Hudgin, director of inspection services will be initiated.

-- BEAVER FEVER --

The Summer 1988 issue of the "Shoreline News" mentioned the potential of the parasite in the lake water. The April 13th issue of the Toronto Star carried an article on the presence of "Beaver Fever" in the metro Toronto area. Portions of that article are restated for your information. "Once found only in Third World countries, a little known intestinal infection referred to as beaver fever has become common in Canada, health officials say."

"Almost 500 cases a year of giardiasis are reported in Toronto. That makes beaver fever marginally more widespread than salmonella gastrointestinal infection. It is not considered serious but the numbers are getting higher. Most outbreaks are in childcare centres. Passing water through sand or other filtering material can screen out the microscopic sacs containing the parasitic larvae and most towns use such filtering."

-- DRINKING WATER --

Our limited water testing of last year indicated that consuming water directly from the lake should be avoided. Many cottagers bring a supply from home for the weekends and some have installed purification and filtering systems. Another alternative exists. The IGA in Bancroft stocks 5 gallon bottles of commercially purified water at \$5.00 per bottle. There is a \$10.00 deposit on the bottle and dispensers are available in many styles. You might want to consider this source for your longer stays. Another source of water in Bancroft which is free is a faucet on the parking lot side of the Post Office. This is municipal water so there should be no problem.

-- ANNUAL MEETING --

August 6th - This is an election year for all offices of the Steenburg Lake Community Association Inc. Be thinking about people you would like to nominate and attend the meeting to make your nomination and to participate in the voting process. Attendance at the meeting has been sparse. Considering that there are 205 occupied cottages around the lake less than 50 remained after the dinner for business meeting last year. We cannot expect this fragile lake to remain as we have known it for many years unless we rise to meet the pressures that are mounting which will most certainly increase the rate of deterioration that has already started. Be an active member of your association.

STEENBURG LAKE GEOLOGY

Two thirds of Limerick Township, including the Steenburg and Limerick Lake basins are underlaid by a limestone deposit classified as 'Black River Limestone'. The surrounding area is part of the Canadian Shield. This explains the alkaline test for the lake waters as the limestone would buffer any acid precipitation. That is not to say acid rain is not a problem as acidity is only one of the pollutants in the atmosphere and the easiest and cheapest to detect. The surrounding forest is at risk from unproven causes.

Second growth maple are not replacing the trees in the maple bush. The trees develop a black heart wood and die at an early stage. Balsam develop 'the shakes' (The tunks split in concentric rings) and are no longer acceptable at the mills mixed with spruce. They die suddenly and are felled by the wind even before the dead foliage drops. With a broader and flatter leaf structure than pine or spruce they would be more susptable to air borne toxins if that indeed is the cause. (By Jack McGeachie)

OF BIOLOGY AND BEAVER

Modern nature fanatics ignore the basic tenet of biology that all species evolve to fill a niche in the environment and when those favoable conditions change that species is doomed to extinction, man not excepted. So we control to delay the inevitable.

In spite of well documented evidence of problems in parks in the USA and Canada where uncontrolled animal populations have created havoc with the environment the Ontario Government have prohibited trapping in all Provincial Parks.

A 15 month study of a single pair of Algonquin Park beaver documented that they felled 266 trees. And a beaver population which outstrips its habitat is vulnerable to social stress, starvation, predation, and disease. One of the most serious is tularemai, which can be transmitted to humans. This is in addition to the water borne parasite that causes 'Beaver Fever' reported in an earlier article. Also that the bacteria B. Coli is present in their intestinal tract as it is with most if not all mammals.

When it comes to beaver, you have to take out half and then you'll always have some. If you don't, the trees will go and so will they. To maintain healthy beaver colonies the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources require that trappers on registered traplines take a certain minimum percentage of assigned quotas or forfeit their licence. Now, as with the Algonquin Park bears, the government will have to screw up our taxes another notch and spend more dollars to eradicate surplus animals.

With their media stunts, fund raising techniques and political manipulations, animal rights activists resemble the worst TV evangelists. The extreme animal rights doctrine is nothing but 'eco-funamentalism', a threat to real conservation.

Our politicians know that these activist groups can be counted on to deliver their votes so are vulnerable to their machinations. How stupid can we get.....(By Jack McGeachie)

General Information:

- Ice Out of the lake - 1988 April 13th, 1989 April 25/26
- There are 309 lake associations in Ontario that are affiliated with FOCA
- Begining this Spring Hydro will no longer spray brush with herbicides, only stumps to prevent regrowth. This will reduce their use by 35%.

-- HAVELOCK BANK ROBBERY --

Fri., Sept. 1, 1961

Mrs. McGeachie and I were on our way north for the Labour day weekend and stopped for gas at Frankfo. The attendant was all excited about a bank robbery at Havelock. He said the bandits had taken to the woods near some lake up north but he couldn't remember it's name. We said we hoped it wan't Bass Lake but he said "That's the one". We told him our cottage was there. After a little hesitation we decided to continue. We arrived to find the roads swarming with Police crusiers.

Saturday morning, Martin Murphy was driving to work at the family mill from the Bass Lake Marina where he and Carol, our cousin, lived when he spotted several men on the road in the distance. They took to the bush when they saw his truck and were nowhere to be seen when he reached that spot. He immediately became suspicious and phone the police.

A dragnet was set up to comb the woods toward the lake. One of the bandits, the getaway car driver, was wearing street shoes and was now having trouble with his feet. He hid under a balsam tree. The posse passed without seeing him until one of the officers happened to look behind and spotted his hideout and he was arrested.

When the officers reached the lake it was unclear whether the rest ahd taken the north or the south sides of our lake. That night crusiers drove past our cottage every 15 minutes playing search lights into the wood. We took the distributor out of our car so it could not be started and slept with all the outdoor floodlights on and no lights inside.

That night the fugitives had broken into a cottage on the south (we were on the north) side of the lake, and stole a boat and crossed the lake toward the railway. When their trail was picked up again a posse started south on the railway toward Gilmour and another group of officers waiting there. Brother Bob had been doing the tracking and leading the posse when they heard a shot signaling the men had been apprehended.

They were taken to a garage and Bob asked the Sergeant in charge to have them sit on the bench and show him the soles of their shoes. There had been four men in the bank so with four men now in custody the police assumed they had the whole gang. Not so, said Bob, there is one pair of boots missing. The police were skeptical but weren't taking any chances and road blocks were set up again. The next morning the 5th man was caught hitch-hiking north on Hwy. #62.

The bandits had gained access to the bank through a cellar window during the night and were waiting for the bank staff when they arrived in the morning. The bank had received enough cash the day before to cover the payrolls of the two mines at Nephton. In total there was over \$80,00 in cash and negotiables plus enough oth valuables to add up to a quarter of a million dollars. it was the biggest bank robbery to that time in Ontario. As soon as the men left the bank an alarm was turned in and the chase was on. They went north from Havelock

and a cruiser was soon on their tail. They shot out the rear window of the getaway car and started shooting at the cruiser. The officer was ordered by radio to fall back and just keep them in sight until road blocks could be set up. The car turned east at Lasswade on an old road toward the Ridge. A car with a flat tire blocking that road was pushed into the ditch at gun point and the getaway car was abandoned at the site of the previous bridge over Deer River that had been missing for many years, but was still shown on the current topographical map.

The police did not know that the bridge was out and now sent a cruiser to the Ridge to block that road. That officer had picked up Mrs. Hiram Reid on his way as he was not familiar with the vicinity. He pulled over to let a car pass that did not fit the description of the one he was looking for when Mrs. Reid said: "If you're looking for bandits they just passed. That car came in here an hour ago with one man driving and now there are several in it. This is a dead-end road and none of those men belong here".

The officer hurried Mrs. Reid out of the car, turned around and gave chase. The old Ridge Road to St. Ola was narrow, hilly and very twisty. The bandits had 'cased' it before the robbery and clocked all the curves. Unfortunately for them the road boss had graded it the day before and left a boulder on the edge at one of the curves. Now the escape car hit it at high speed and broke an axle. The men took to the woods. This was on our Ridge property. That night they broke into a hunt camp and made tea. The next morning they were spotted by Mart.

When capture was complete the police work was still unfinished. The suspects carried no arms or stolen property when apprehended so there was little evidence other than the stolen cars. There was a quarter of a million dollars worth of valuables hidden somewhere between Deer River and the Trenton-Bancroft Railway. It was the biggest manhunt and search operation in the history of the Ontario Provincial Police to that date. Some 82 officers were involved. A bus load of Boy Scouts were also employed. Altogether Bob tracked the bandits 30 miles through the bush. The search included draining a beaver pond along the old road. Police scuba divers scoured the bottom of our lake where the fugitives had crossed. The only evidence found was a leather holster for one of the revolvers. The loot was never found. The police also had to deal with treasure hunters of every ilk. Seers and fortune tellers came from as far away as Texas and had to be rescued from the bush and ushered out of the area. The 'scuttle butt' throughout the police force that we came upon many years later was: "That Bob spent more time looking for lost cops than searching for hidden treasure".

Some of our recollections were of reporters in cars and planes circling our lake searching for a story and our disgust at some of their reporting. Ethel was making movies of whatever might be interesting. She wanted a picture of the balsam tree where the first bandit caught was hiding. When she asked the nearest reporter where it was, his reply was just to take a picture of any tree, that was all they did. Some of the reports were just as factual. Before it was known which side of the lake the robbers had taken, Ethel was standing on the road over the culverts at our creek.

There was a crash under her feet and she took off for the cottage. She was sure they were hiding in the big culverts until Robert emerged. He had been rolling stones along the steel bottom to build a dam. Next he was trying to get a picture of a covey of Ruffed Grouse that we had seen going down to the lake at our beach for a drink. He was using the big 400MM lens. When the next cruiser came by it screeched to a halt and an officer jumped out with gun drawn and ran down to the shore only to come back with a sheepish, "Aw it's only a kid with a camera".

About a month after the robbery a third stolen car with Quebec plates was found several miles north near Detlor beside a tent stocked with fishing gear, topographical maps, walkie talkies and compasses. It had been the base camp from which the gang operated to case the entire area. They had covered every inch of the roads and spotted the missing bridge over Deer River and wore rubber boots to ford the shallow stream to the wating second getaway car.

The only fault in their planning was the assumption that the local police would also know about that missing bridge and not block the old road. But the bridge was still shown on the map and the police did not know the area and sent that cruiser to check it out. Even the boulder on the road might not have been fatal. Their only miscue was in assuming the railway they reached was the Coe Hill branch rather than the main railway. When they turned right on the tracks they were heading south and into the waiting arms of the police instead of north toward thier base and third car and safety. The big break for the police was sending that car toward the missing bridge.

The missing money was never found by the authorities but some time later every hollow stump along the old abandoned roadway were found to have been turned over. Other members of the gang and the girl friends of those in prison held a big party in Montreal.

Brother Bob was written up and had his picture in the Toronto papers and the New York tabloids. The Toronto Telegram article featured his picture and a picture of two bloodhounds with the captions; "He took over.....When the bloodhounds left off after bank robbery.", and the headline: "Hunting Bank Robbers More Fun Than Hunting Deer."

J. McGeachie, Jan. 3, 1989

Classified:

Electric Stove - 22", 4 burner, good condition. Asking \$50.00 - John Savage (#24) 474-5532

Bathroom Sink - With faucets & legs & wall bracket, asking \$15.00 - Tom Hughes (#30) 474-5753.

Canoe Motor Mount - Aluminum, adjustable. Asking \$35.00 - Tom Hughes (#30) 474-5753.

Boat Seats - Clamp-on, swivel with back rest- asking \$10.00 for the pair - Tom Hughes (#30) 474-5753

Call 474-5753 if you wish to list any items in classified.