

S P R I N G & S U M M E R 2 0 0 8

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SALERNO LAKE SENTINEL

SALERNO DEVIL'S LAKE COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATION



Fun with Facebook

Dougal Rodger has been coming to Salerno Lake since 1995 when he was 12 years old. Last year he started a Salerno Lake Group on the popular website Facebook.com. As of this date there are now 87 members. You could be the next one – check it out at

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2364818147>

I asked Dougal how this came about...."

*Welcome to Salerno Lake
It's Summertime
and the living is easy!*

Well, easy-ish – there's always something that needs to be done around the cottage!

In this issue of the SENTINEL, we tackle taxes, dig in against Uranium Mining Exploration and otherwise try to keep you informed about what is coming up on our lake this summer.

I wanted to find community on the lake, and it's tough to meet anyone aside from immediate neighbors without trolling docks and hollering greetings, which is what I was actually considering on one boring April day... Facebook is popular with a younger demographic, so it was going to connect me with more people my age. So many cottages on the lake are family owned and will, one day, be inherited by the next generation; aside from finding scrabble buddies, it was to start developing the next batch of relationships that form things like the Cottager's Association.



Save the Date !

Fireworks

Sat, June 28th

Watch for the signs on your cottage road.

Rain date June 29th.

A G M

Sat, Aug. 2nd

Irondale Church Hall at 10 a.m.

Canoe Race

Sun. Aug. 3rd

41st Annual Canoe Race, Barbeque and Games!

Message from El Presidente

This year marks the 14th anniversary of our arrival on Salerno Lake but it seems to me that in that relatively short period of time an awful lot has changed in the world of Ontario cottaging. It might not be overstating the case to say that my generation may be the last one wherein ordinary middle-class Canadians could afford to own a cottage in the traditional sense, that is, not as a condominium or fractional ownership. My parents for example, in the early 1950's bought a lakeshore lot in the Almaguin Highlands and built their own cottage along with the road that accessed it, all on a modest single salary while raising a family of seven children. A scenario like that cannot be imagined these days when a mere waterfront lot will cost well in excess of \$150000 and the more stringent building codes effectively make it impossible for someone with a full time job to build their own recreational property. As has been discussed in previous newsletters, even the orderly succession of cottages within a single family is fraught with onerous financial and tax implications. There are ways to deal with these but they ain't simple and more and more people will eventually opt for selling out because it's too rich for their blood. Put simply, as far as cottaging goes these days, if you aren't already in the game it is going to be very hard to get in it. Those of us who are in the game are the privileged ones but it's getting harder to ignore the social dynamics of the 'cottage bubble'. Inevitably, owning a cottage will not be as egalitarian as it has been and will become the province of the most well-off to the exclusion of the lower middle and working class. What was it Cindy Lauper sang? - "Money changes everything".



I bring this up because I fear that what is being lost in all of this economic turmoil is the essential *raison d'être* for cottaging, i.e.; the experience of all that outdoor living can offer, and the connection to our pioneer heritage, a simpler time in Canadian life when most of us were not urban creatures. On a family level, it is for most of us, a place where our familial bonds are built and strengthened.

Allow me now to digress a bit though I promise to come back to my theme... In December of last year I was in a Toronto Hockey Store on Bloor West getting my skates sharpened when a young fellow of 11 or so came in looking for a used pair of skates. He was good looking, bright-eyed and animated. Something in his accent told me that he was from Africa but no more than that. Still I was surprised that he was looking for something used because it seems to me that most kids that I meet these days want and expect only the best. (At times I cynically refer to them as the 'Entitlement Generation' although that is too simplistic a view.)

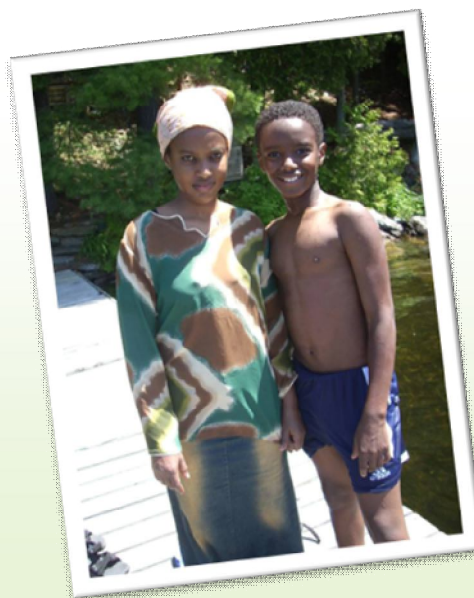
Anyway, this youngster didn't have much money to spend so things weren't looking good but it happened that I had a few dozen used skates stored in a garage nearby. However I didn't know how to broach the subject and before I could do anything, he left the store without skates. This occurrence bothered me for days but then one of those strange coincidences happened; we were involved with arrangements for Christmas gifts for residents of Romero House, a home for refugee families in our neighborhood, and lo and behold, the same young man was living there with his mother and younger brother. They had been in Canada less than a month and yet here was this young boy, so eager to embrace our Canadian way of life that he wanted nothing more for Christmas than a pair of skates. His name was Serafin and his closest friend was another refugee, a Mexican boy named Josue. In pretty short order we had both of them outfitted with skates, gloves and sticks. Within an hour they were playing street hockey; within a month they were skipping school to play shinny on the outdoor rink at Dufferin Grove Park. Hell, I have to confess that at his age I did exactly the same thing in Burks Falls Ontario.

Serafin, his mother Sandrine and his little brother Mali aged 4, have fled from a situation so horrific that although we've known them for months, they have yet to talk about it in any detail. If you google 'Burundi' you will learn enough - there is no need for them to repeat the terrors of their ordeal. Their tenure here in Canada is shaky and it will take time and a lot of anxiety before all the legal issues about their immigration status are finalized. I pray that they will be resolved in their favour but I have too much experience with life and bureaucracy to take that for granted. In the

meantime, Serafin goes to school and Sandrine studies English. (Kirundi and French are their first and second languages.)

So on this scorcher of a weekend in June we decided to ask the family to come north with us to share the cottage experience for the first time. The speed and enthusiasm with which the two boys took to the lakeside life was deeply gratifying and moving. Fishing, swimming, kayaking, hiking – they are game for everything and their unbridled joy in the moment provides us with an equal measure of the same.

My point is that these young boys are going to be Canadians, part of our future (I hope and pray) and they and every kid like them deserve the chance to experience the best of life in Canada, no matter what their economic status. Certainly camping is an alternative to cottaging but it also requires a vehicle in most cases and rising fuel costs won't help make this option accessible to those of lesser means. If we are going to be the lucky ones, blessed with a second home amidst great natural beauty, we must open our hearts and our cottages to others less fortunate. To do less would be our shame.



Canada Day Fireworks on Salerno

Our very own Maestro of the Pyrotechnics, Mr Frank Bartley will be presenting the Annual Canada Day Fireworks Celebration sponsored by the SDLCA, at dusk on Saturday the 28th of June. Watch for the signs on your cottage road and remember to exercise caution out on the water at night. In the event of rain, the fireworks will be held the following night, June 29th.



Environmental Raffle

Cottager Miro Iskic whom I refer to as the Mayor of Salerno Lake has once again kindly offered to donate a beautiful handcrafted work as the Grand Prize of the Environmental Raffle. (Proceeds go to support environmental initiatives that seek to improve the quality of our beloved lake community.) This year he will make a beautiful rustic shelf unit like the one pictured below.

Website Password Reminder

If you wish to access the members-only area of www.salernolake.ca the user name is sdlca and the password is devil2006. Our webmaster Eric Brown will be putting a counter on this section of the website in order to give us an idea of the amount of traffic we are getting. We are always open to your input about the webpage so please feel free to contact us through the accessible email links on the page.



sorry.

"Waterfowl not included – no assembly required – batteries not required"



Correction

In the last issue of the Sentinel, I credited Realtor Andrew Hodgson with a one hundred dollar donation to the SDLCA. I was sorely wrong and I apologize to Mr. Hodgson of Century 21Granite Group in Haliburton. He in fact donated \$400 to the SDLCA and we thank him sincerely.

Uranium Exploration in the Haliburton Area; A Message from Fight Uranium Mining and Exploration (FUME)

www.fighturanium.com

The Haliburton and Bancroft areas are actively being staked and claimed for potential uranium mining and exploration. Currently, roughly 17% of Monmouth township has been staked (approx. 8500 acres). This includes both private property and crown land. El Nino Ventures/CanAm Uranium Corp, one of the two larger stakeholders in Monmouth, has claimed a total of 9,765 acres in Faraday, Cardiff and Monmouth townships and already explored on two properties. Another company, Bancroft Uranium Inc, has just completed drilling on their 2,700 acre claim in Tory Hill and are looking to expand their holdings.

Your land could be staked! In Ontario, most property owners hold only the surface rights and not the mineral rights to their land. This means a prospector (anyone who applies and pays the \$25 license fee) could come on to your land without being required to notify you and claim the mineral rights. The mineral rights holder can then start exploring (this could include drilling, digging, stripping, building roads, etc.) on your land. They need only to provide 24 hours advance notice to the landowner before commencing exploration activities. Have a look at our photos (at www.fighturanium.com) to see what an exploration site looks like.

Under the Ontario Mining Act, there is nothing the surface rights owner can do to stop this. But we can try! For more information on mining and mineral rights in Ontario, follow this link to the Government of Ontario website.

How This Affects You

Health: Uranium causes cancer! A recently released report by the Indian Doctors for Peace and Development (IDPD) on the health of indigenous people near uranium mines in Jadugoda, India showed an increase in congenital deformities, cancer, sterility and reduced life expectancy in villages near uranium mines. This report on the health risks associated with uranium mining from the BC Medical Association triggered a seven year moratorium on uranium mining in BC. Uranium mining produces radon gas which has been called

the second highest cause of cancer next to smoking by the US Surgeon General. Uranium in drinking water is known to have a negative effect on the kidneys.

Environment: Exploratory drilling and mining uranium could potentially contaminate our water. The Irondale River, which connects to the Burnt River and ultimately the Kawartha and the Trent-Severn waterway, runs right through one of the largest claims. An open pit uranium mine WILL contaminate the river. Any accident would cause widespread environmental catastrophe. The radioactive dust generated by mining activity will travel on the wind and contaminate the land and water for many miles around. TOTAL SAFETY CAN NEVER BE GUARANTEED!

Nuclear energy is dirty energy. Don't be hoodwinked by those who tell you it's "clean". The Bicroft and Dyno Mines in Cardiff and the Madawaska Mine in Bancroft, which were producing uranium mines in the 1950's, are now under a CNSC waste facility license. The mine tailings from these mines sat for 40 years before the site was decommissioned. The lakes and streams around these sites are contaminated. The tailings from uranium mining have a half life of a half million years. Since there is no ideal way of storing radioactive waste, the waste dumps will need to be managed by future generations in perpetuity to avoid environmental disaster. If we mine uranium now, we leave a colossal mess for future generations.

Property: Uranium mining and exploration will decrease the value of your property! Would you buy land that was claimed for potential uranium mining? Would you want to live near a uranium mine? Would you want to live down river from one?

What You Can Do

Write to the Premier, the Minister of Northern Mines and Development, your local MPP and the opposition leaders. If you are a cottager, let your lake association know. Spread the word. Contact us at fighturanium@gmail.com for more information, to get on our email list or to get involved.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the SDLCA will be held at the Church Hall in Irondale on Saturday August 2nd at 10 a.m. Please plan to attend as there are many issues of vital interest that will be discussed.



Canoe Race, BBQ, & Games!

Following on the spectacular success of last year's 40th Annual Canoe Race, we'd like to urge any and everyone to enter this year's race, which will be held on August 3rd. We particularly want to encourage more entries in the Junior Category and the Senior Women's – don't forget that there are Men's and

Women's Kayak categories too. Registration starts at noon hour at

the site beside the new Irondale Bridge. Boats begin to go in the water at 1 pm. The fees remain unchanged from last year, \$10. for a single and \$15. for other entries. You must be an SDLCA member in good standing to take part.

The Games and Barbecue will be held at Furnace Falls on Highway 503, where the Canoe Race finishes. For all you new cottagers on the lake, this is an ideal way to meet the community and have a great time. This is definitely a family day and a kid-friendly event. Festivities begin at 2 pm.

The Grand Old Game in Irondale

The Irondale Community Centre is organizing its annual Baseball Tournament for the weekend of July 26th and 27th – they are hoping for an entry lineup of 12 teams. They have invited any and all cottagers to enter a team – in fact they'd love to have two entries from the Lake. In previous years, I've attended a few games as a spectator and had a blast. Now I'd like to get out on the diamond and play a little ball. Anyone else, male or female, young or old who is interested in playing, please contact Doug Rodger at 705-447-2896 or by email elpresidente@salernolake.ca - it will be a lot of fun and a great way to support our Irondale community.

Any ideas for a team name??

However, if you just want to hang around the diamond and enjoy the games and the hospitality, perhaps you'd like to volunteer at the beer and food tent for a 3 or 4 hour shift. In any case, Sabine Lorbach is the contact for team entries or volunteering – you can reach her at 705-447-2673 or sabine@irondalebiz.com.

Batter up!!



Priced out of Paradise

Long-time cottagers have tolerated the invasion of monster homes, golf courses, float planes and power boats, but skyrocketing property value assessments are proving to be the tipping point
Patrick White, The Globe and Mail,
May 16, 2008

Just over 40 years ago, a struggling young artist named Ed Bartram found his muse: a 10-acre slab of granite and pine off Georgian Bay's serrated shore.

The island was deserted but for the concrete forms of an old cottage leaching slowly into the soil.

He had to have it.

Mr. Bartram offered the owner \$7,800, every penny he'd saved teaching high school to supplement his painting income.

"I didn't buy it with the idea of making a profit," said Mr. Bartram, now 70. "I fell in love with the area."

Since then, Mr. Bartram and his work have become so rooted in the island and its surroundings that locals named the island after him. But now the renowned painter of Georgian Bay rockscapes is worried that skyrocketing property taxes on waterfront cottages may force him to part with his Bartram Island and the spartan cottage studio he built upon it for \$400.

"My whole art career is associated with that property," he said.

Over the past three years, values of waterfront cottages in Ontario have ballooned by as much as 150 per cent, according to one recent report compiled by real-estate firm Cushman & Wakefield LePage. Until now, a two-year freeze on the annual property assessment cycle has insulated property owners from corresponding tax bills.

The freeze thaws this fall, when the provincial government will issue a new round of tax bills.

Waterfront cottage owners are already saving up or cashing out.

"People don't like to talk about it all that much, but taxes are already playing a significant factor in people's decision to sell," said Bob Topp, executive director of Waterfront Ratepayers After Fair Taxation, a retiree who saw his cottage taxes increase 65 per cent during the last round of assessments in 2005.

"People are looking at their bills and saying, 'We're out of here.' Either they can't afford it or they don't think their kids will be able to."

Retiree Jane Stock and her husband were willing to tolerate the monster homes, golf courses, float planes and power boats that moved in around their Lake Joseph cottage over the past decade; it was the tax bill that finally drove them out.

"We had many, many happy summers there," said the 80-year-old Sarnia, Ont., resident. "But when two lots near us went for over a million dollars, all of a sudden

our taxes went to just under \$8,000."

"We worked it out and we were paying at least \$85 in taxes for every day we used the place. It just got to be too much."

Ms. Stock said she appealed to her local municipality for help, to no avail.

Several ratepayers' groups expect the ranks of dispossessed cottagers to swell this fall. The median resale price for waterfront cottages in the Muskoka and Haliburton regions increased by 47 per cent from 2004 to 2007, according to a report by Cushman & Wakefield LePage. That compares with an 18 per cent climb for non-waterfront residential properties in the area.

"This means I'm going to pick up a bigger tax bill and the beneficiary is the guy who's not on the water," said Mr. Topp.

That's a reasonable state of affairs, according to the province's municipal property tax authority.

"There's a limited number of waterfront properties, so the values go up faster than other property types in times of strong demand," said Larry Hummel, vice president of property values with the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. "It's purely economics and circumstance."

Tax assessments don't necessarily follow property values. MPAC looked at a number of factors in assessing properties, including lot dimensions, building quality, recent renovations and sales data.

But Mr. Topp wants the provincial government to moderate the roller-coaster nature of cottage assessments by instituting a 5-per-cent cap on year-to-year tax increases. He'd also like to see Ontario adopt American programs that link property-value assessment to personal income and offer special assistance to pensioners.

The provincial government has acted on some demands to reform its assessment methods. Starting this year, properties will be reassessed every four years - replacing the current annual assessment cycle - and any increase will be phased in gradually over that period.

A property owner hit with a 50 per cent assessment increase, for instance, would see 12.5 per cent added to each of his or her subsequent four tax bills.

"That's still too much for a person on a fixed income," said Mr. Topp.

And it may spell the end of one of the country's most fruitful artistic relationships between a breathtaking landscape and one of its definitive interpreters.

Several smaller islands near Bartram Island have recently fetched in excess of \$1-million.

"I live in fear that my assessment will quadruple," Mr. Bartram said. "That may force me out."

Mosquito Prevention

Mosquito Spray worth a try

This was an e-mail received earlier this year from a friend that we will definitely be trying this spring!

I was at a deck party awhile back, and the bugs were having a ball biting everyone. A man at the party sprayed the lawn and deck floor with Listerine, and the little demons disappeared. The next year I filled a 4-ounce spray bottle and used it around my seat whenever I saw mosquitoes. And voila! That worked as well.. It worked at a picnic.

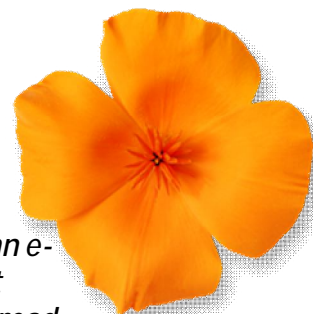
AN OTHER FRIEND'S COMMENTS: *I tried this on my deck and around all of my doors. It works - in fact, it killed them instantly. I bought my bottle for \$1.89. It really doesn't take much, and it is a big bottle, too; so it is not as expensive to use as the can of Bug-spray you buy that doesn't last 30 minutes. So, try this, please. It will last a couple of days. Don't spray directly on a wood door (like your front door), but spray around the frame. Spray around the window frames, and even inside the dog house.*

Good Mosquito !!!



Bad Mosquito

*If all else fails we
revert back to
the bug nets.*



If you are still receiving this newsletter by snail mail consider changing to an e-mail version. It is MUCH better in colour! Just e-mail Susan Thomson at :susan.thomson4@sympatico.ca and she will switch you over. You can also read this on our website.

We'd like to encourage you to send us your pictures and anything else you feel is relevant - elpresidente@salernolake.ca - perhaps a link to an interesting newspaper article or web page - we can use it in the newsletter and post it on our website - www.salernolake.ca - It's your lake folks -= jump in!