

GBA: 100 Years of Protecting Georgian Bay

By Bob Duncanson,
Executive Director, GBA

One hundred years ago "going up to the cottage" had quite a different connotation for the early cottagers on the eastern shores of Georgian Bay. At that time many people did not own a motor car; there were no superhighways like the 400 and no north-south roads at all along the eastern side of the Bay.

Travellers to Georgian Bay boarded one of three daily trains run by the Grand Trunk Railway between Toronto and Midland. The most popular train left Toronto at 10 am and arrived in Midland at 1:50 pm in time to connect with a steamship run by the Northern Navigation Company. This ship was bound for Parry Sound and made stops at various communities along the way, starting with Honey Harbour. Some of these "stops" were "flag stops", meaning that the ship only stopped if a passenger on board requested the stop or if a community along the way raised a flag to signal the need for a pick-up.

Until the early 1900s some of the communities did not even have a wharf for the ship to land at. At those stops people had to meet the ship in small boats in the channel to pick up and drop off passengers and freight. Ensuring the coordination of train

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100th
Anniversary
Issue



Steamship Waubic, circa 1916.
Source: Madawaska Club archives

Steamship timetable, 1923



Photo by J.W. Bald circa 1915.
Source: canada-rail.com

and ship schedules to accommodate the growing number of cottage-bound passengers was a challenge since the shipping companies were more concerned with freight than ferrying people.

Back then cottages were typically very simple structures. The isolated nature of the communities along the coast meant that it was expensive to get quality building materials there and equally expensive to build. But, as importantly, many cottages were designed to be humble so as to not tempt "n'er do wells" from stealing materials in the long offseason.

The Madawaska Club at Go Home Bay's historical record reported:

"Dr. MacKenzie at Indian Harbor (sic), each autumn as a precaution removed not only all his furniture but even the doors and windows of his cottage, and some of us had seen them being taken down on a scow to a place of safe storage for the winter. And for years at Chancellor Boyd's island of Good Cheer outside Parry Island a large supply of cordwood was purposely left each fall for the use of passing voyagers or storm-stayed visitors, so that there should be less temptation to burn parts of the buildings or furniture."

Concerns about water quality and sewage go back to early days. Privies were primitive at best 100 years ago.

The cottages and hotels that dotted the coastline usually discharged their sewage directly into the Bay. Steamships did likewise. In 1916, the Provincial Board of Health declared, "The only system for disposal of excreta in a rock bound community is with the use of a bucket and dry earth or ashes and having someone remove them when necessary. An incinerator made of stones may be used. The Military Manual gives illustrations of good types of incinerators."

Five Associations Join to Form GBA

The challenges presented by transportation, sanitation and burglary were a common

bond that brought together communities from the east coast of Georgian Bay. In the late winter of 1916, representatives from cottage associations in Honey Harbour, Kaignashene (now Cognashene), Go Home Bay, Sans Souci and Pointe au Baril met at the Toronto Board of Trade and approved the founding constitution of the Georgian Bay Association. And the rest, as they say, is history.

The first Constitution of the GBA encapsulated the main issues of the day: transportation to and from the Bay, protection of game fishing, protection of cottages and personal



Wright Cottage, Go Home Bay. Source: Madawaska Club archives

property and the reduction of raw sewage being flushed directly into the Bay from steamships, hotels and cottages.

In the first few years of its existence the GBA had some significant accomplishments including:

- Working with the Public Works Department in Ottawa to install gas lamps and other markers on inner channels along the Bay and to arrange for the blasting and deepening of these channels. This was necessitated by the growing number of personal watercraft.
- Engaging the Provincial Health Officer to inspect cottages, hotels and steamships to ensure that sewage was no longer being discharged directly into the Bay.
- Instigating a reward for information on break-ins and theft complete with the posting of signs on members' cottages.

Over the years the challenges facing cottagers on Georgian Bay have grown in number and complexity, but the GBA has remained a constant, working with government and local communities to find solutions to a wide range of issues. As the work to stay on top of all the issues expanded, the GBA recognized the need to retain an Executive Director to organize its activities. The first ED was John Birnbaum, appointed in 1992. John was instrumental in taking the GBA to a new level



when it came to government relations. He scheduled regular meetings with all three levels of government and organized annual symposiums that brought together cottagers, civil servants and elected officials to discuss the issues of the day and future challenges to the Bay.

GBA's current ED is Bob Duncanson, who has followed John's lead in promoting excellent relations with governments. GBA has built a solid reputation with politicians and their

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Early Days on American Camp Island, Wah Wah Taysee.
Photo courtesy Alexander Family Archive at wahwahtaysee.com

staff (at all levels of government) as a voice of reason. This cooperative and constructive approach has served us well, as GBA is often invited to provide input and advice on current issues, such as the federal Minister of the Environment's request for input on the renegotiation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

The GBA has stepped forward to address a wide range of needs and issues over the years, and has played an

instrumental role in the founding of new organizations to protect and promote the stewardship of the Bay and its environment.

➤ In 1991 Wally King led the charge in founding the Georgian Bay Land Trust, a charity designed to conserve land in Georgian Bay in its natural state through acquisition and stewardship.

➤ In 1995 Roy Schatz played an important role in founding the GBA Foundation (now Georgian Bay Forever), a charity that invests in scientific projects to protect our waters and ecosystems.

➤ In 2004 Pat Northey helped secure a UNESCO designation of a large portion of the eastern shore of Georgian Bay, leading to the creation of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve.

➤ GBA also lobbied for the establishment of the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council in 2004, which focuses on environmental projects including protection of fisheries.

Today GBA represents 19 cottage associations from Honey Harbour at the south end of the Bay to the Bay of Islands in the north. The members of those associations comprise 3,200 cottages and approximately 18,000 people.

GBA – 100 years young and more focused on the issues that matter than ever. ■

Creation of the Township of the Archipelago

In the early 1970s most of the eastern shoreline of Georgian Bay was made up of unorganized townships. At that time some neighbouring municipalities such as Carling moved to annex the unorganized coastal areas. The idea of annexation did not sit well with many coastal landowners as they saw it as a "tax grab" by communities that would not have similar interests and priorities. The Sans Souci and Copperhead Association was particularly active in opposing annexation and teamed up with the GBA to make common cause with other communities, including Pointe au Baril and Bayfield and Nares Inlets.

Together they commissioned Professor Norman Pearson, a well

respected municipal planner, to study the possibility of creating a municipality out of the communities in the Georgian Bay archipelago. Professor Pearson produced a report entitled, "*The Archipelago Municipality – Toward Effective Local Government in the Georgian Bay Archipelago*". This seminal document spelled out the rationale for creating a municipality along the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. He detailed the many ways in which the communities in the archipelago up and down the Bay shared unique interests such as the lack of roads; water only access; seasonal occupancy; environmental preservation ethic; bi-national US-Canadian citizen profile; multi-generational property

ownership; and interconnected communities "symbolized by the Georgian Bay Association which speaks for all the islanders in the whole archipelago".

After much lobbying by GBA and others, and debate in the Ontario Legislature, a Provincial Bill was passed that created the townships of Georgian Bay South Archipelago and Georgian Bay North Archipelago on January 1, 1980. Soon after the formation of these townships, both townships' councils passed identical by-laws calling for the amalgamation of the two municipalities. Thereby, the Township of the Archipelago was formed on April 1, 1980. ■

Summer 2016 Report



In her eloquent remarks to attendees at our April 2nd reception to celebrate GBA's 100th Anniversary, Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell spoke of the iconic Great Lakes. She said the Lakes were "equalled in importance by some Canadian features, but surpassed by none." Her Honour also happened to mention a number of historically significant Georgian Bay facts including famed Canadian songwriter Stan Rogers and ballads he crafted that captured the history and majesty of the Great Lakes.

So here I sit, listening to Stan and his songs that I have not heard for some time. Songs with potent lyrics about this country, the Great Lakes included, and its history and people. Songs with titles such as *The Nancy*, a British schooner that was scuttled during the War of 1812 in Nottawasaga River by American Forces so that she would not fall into the hands of our friends to the south. *The Last Watch on the Midland*, about a Great Laker the night before she goes to the boneyard for scrapping. And *White Squall*, which tells of the perils in the Great Lakes' expansive and often dangerous waters.

I am not sure if anyone has written a song about the GBA. Perhaps not, although the Association has its own noteworthy history, one that deserves capturing and indeed celebrating.

Just over 100 years ago leaders from five cottage communities on Georgian Bay got together to discuss issues of common concern. It was agreed that it would make sense for these communities to form an umbrella organization that could speak with a common voice when dealing with issues that transcended the boundaries of any one community. And so it was that the Georgian Bay Association was formed in the early spring of 1916.

What were the issues that drew us together 100 years ago? There were

four as recorded in the annals of the Association:

- To bring about better transportation facilities to, from and on the Georgian Bay.
- To cause the laws and regulations relating to fish and game to be observed.
- To aid members to bring to justice persons who break into their cottage or commit other offences on their property.
- To encourage or induce steam and other boats plying the inner channels of the Georgian Bay, houseboats, hotels, boarding house keepers, cottage owners and campers to install or adopt proper sanitary arrangements and appliances so that the waters of the inner channels of the Georgian Bay may not become polluted.

Over the years the issues have become more numerous and significantly more complex, although a few of the above still resonate today. Government and regulations have become more expansive, as has the network of organizations working on issues that impact our quality of life on the Bay. GBA has risen to these challenges by adapting, evolving and growing its mandate. Our success over the years has been largely the result of adhering to one of our founding principles – that being to approach issues with positive, forward looking solutions, not mere public outcry or protests. We work with governments at all levels, along with other stakeholders, to create new ways of doing things, even if this means making changes to the way we do things as cottagers. To that end, and as your President, I'd like to underscore a very important GBA benefit to you, and to all of our members and potential members alike: when important matters arise the GBA has "a seat at the table" with government, at all levels, to ensure that your voices and your concerns are heard.

At times the issues or opportunities have been larger than the GBA's mandate. Thanks to a number of past GBA leaders, sister organizations such as Georgian Bay Forever, the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve and the Georgian Bay Land Trust were formed (by the way congratulations to GBLT which is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year!) to tackle other equally important issues on the Bay. Add to these the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council and we have the GB5, an important collective force to protect the Bay.

The raison d'être for the GBA is as relevant today as it was 100 years ago. We are well positioned and structured to deliver meaningful and significant benefits to our members. And we will continue to do our part to protect Georgian Bay and its environment for generations to come. In the words of Ontario Minister of Environment and Climate Change Glen Murray, who spoke at our April reception, "It is important to ensure that the Bay may be enjoyed by our grandchildren's grandchildren 100 years from now."

Enjoy your summer, and while you do, take a moment to celebrate the GBA's achievements and think of how you may do your part to ensure the Bay's future.

PS – If you are unfamiliar with Stan Rogers and would like to know more about one of Canada's great troubadours go to <http://stanrogers.net>. Stan's lyrics were inspired by Canadian history and the daily lives of working people, especially those from the fishing villages of the Atlantic provinces, the farms of the Canadian prairies and the Great Lakes region. Rogers died in 1983 in a fire aboard Air Canada Flight 797 on the ground at the Greater Cincinnati Airport at the age of 33. His larger than life legacy lives on through his brother Garnet's music. ■

GBA Holds 100th Anniversary Reception and AGM



The GBA kicked off its 100th Anniversary celebration year with a special reception in Toronto on Saturday April 2, following its AGM. The reception was attended by 150 invited guests, including Past GBA Presidents, Board members, representatives of GBA's Member Associations, elected officials from all three levels of government and colleagues from the GB5 organizations. The event's costs were covered by several generous sponsors listed on the next page.

Guest speakers included Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Elizabeth Dowdeswell and the Honourable Glen Murray, Ontario's Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

The Lieutenant Governor concluded by stating, "The Georgian Bay Association sits neatly at the intersection of environmental stewardship and of the role of the Great Lakes in defining the identity of Ontario. As we honour your accomplishments and look forward to what lies ahead I encourage you to continue in your efforts to protect the finite land and water resources of this most magnificent Bay. In the name of the Queen I congratulate you on your dedication and commitment to the land, water and people and I thank you."



Bob Duncanson, GBA Executive Director; Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell; John McMullen, GBA President (Photo: Rolfe Jones)

Environment Minister Murray remarked, "It is interesting that if we think of cottage life before 1916 it was pretty much close to a net zero carbon community once people got to their cottage. In the hundred years since we have accumulated so much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that between now and 2116 we are facing a crisis where our Province will be at the very least 4° C warmer in the south and 8° C warmer in the north. We are not sure that our boreal forests are not at risk... the Great Lakes are all being disproportionately impacted by climate change. They are at risk... Let's try to take up the challenge of preserving what we have been protecting

over the last 100 years so it is there for our grandchildren's grandchildren."



Minister Glen Murray
(Photo: Rolfe Jones)

Wally King, Former President and Honourary Life Member of GBA, concluded: "We can be very proud of what GBA has achieved over the last one hundred years. But more importantly, the citizens of Ontario, indeed of Canada, have also benefitted from the leadership of the GBA in preserving one of Ontario's greatest recreational and conservational assets. The volunteer spirit of GBA was fundamental to these achievements and its future seems assured."

Mr. King noted the presence of another honoured guest, former Premier Bill Davis, a long time Georgian Bay cottager, and asked him to come forward to accept the GBA's thanks and gratitude for his many contributions over the years in support of the Bay.



Former GBA President
Wally King (Photo:
Rolfe Jones)

John McMullen, President of the GBA, concluded his opening remarks by stating, "We think that the *raison d'être* for the GBA is as relevant today as it was 100 years ago. We are well positioned and structured to continue to deliver meaningful benefits for our members. And with the help of those in this room and many who could not be here, we will continue to do our part to protect the Georgian Bay for generations to come."



Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell; former Premier Bill Davis; Anne Randall, Vice-Chair, Georgian Bay Forever (Photo: Rolfe Jones)

Annual General Meeting

Prior to the Anniversary reception, the GBA held its 100th annual general meeting of its member associations.

The Board of Directors for 2016 was approved by the representatives of GBA's 19 member associations.

GBA plans to hold additional events to celebrate its 100th anniversary, including a Fall Workshop based on the theme Looking Forward, to be held in conjunction with the other GB5 organizations. For more information and to see a video and pictures from the April 2 reception, go to www.georgianbay.ca. ■

“ In the name
of the Queen
I congratulate you
on your dedication
and commitment
to the land, water
and people, and
I thank you. ”

– Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor
Elizabeth Dowdeswell

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The Officers remain as last year: President- John McMullen, Executive Vice President - Rupert Kindersley; Secretary - Robert Moos; Treasurer - Doug Carr.

Doug Carr presented the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2015, which show a loss of \$16,000 for the year based on reduced revenues due to lower advertising revenue and a small decline in the overall number of members in our member associations. In addition a few unusual expenses arose that are not expected to recur, including fees for legal advice on the Wiky land claim. The budget for 2016 forecasts a breakeven position for the year.

The Board Committees reported on their activities over the past year, which have been covered in recent issues of *UPDATE*. Rolfe Jones, Communications Committee Chair, presented details of the GBA's enhanced communications initiatives. GBA's new monthly eNewsletter was launched in March and already had 369 online subscribers. (Please sign up on www.georgianbay.ca to receive *eUpdate*.) Website banner ads have been introduced and have shown to provide added value to our advertisers. Social media sites will be used to engage with members when, where and how they want to get Georgian Bay news. Thanks to Marc Cooper and Agency 59 for their extensive pro bono work and contributions to the new initiatives. ■



Celebrating 25 years of Protecting Wilderness: The Georgian Bay Land Trust

In the United States, land trusts protect more than double the amount of land contained in all the national parks in the lower 48. These 47 million + acres are protected by over 1,700 local, regional, and national land trusts, which work with individuals and communities to develop local conservation strategies and set aside important ecological areas for stewardship in perpetuity.



Sandy Island

The land trust movement has taken off in the past few decades as a highly effective way for communities to actively contribute to conservation in their region, and the momentum has spread to Canada as well. Although not as advanced as our southern neighbours, we now have land trusts across the country, including 34 in Ontario that together conserve over 80,000 acres.

The Georgian Bay Land Trust was among the first land trusts established in Ontario, and this year we celebrate 25 years of protecting irreplaceable wilderness on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay and the North Channel. Since 1991, the GBLT has grown from a volunteer-run organization with a shoestring budget and two protected properties to a well-respected land trust with 4 full-time staff, 45 protected properties, and hundreds of dedicated volunteers and supporters. Through ownership, easement, and assisted stewardship, we protect over 6,000 acres on Georgian Bay, and we are continuously adding more areas to our protected network.

In addition to stewarding our 45 protected properties, the Land Trust is dedicated to providing environmental education and furthering scientific research. Our Kids' Conservation Quest program was launched in 2013 and now brings environment-themed activities to over 400 children each summer. We also run a series of free educational events on our properties, and assist with Georgian Bay related projects and research through our King Family Bursary and university partnerships.

The GBLT's protected properties range from critical wetland habitat to spectacular rocky islands, and from the 0.5 acre

Manitou Dock Island, an important historical site, to the 425 acre Sandy Island reserve, one of the Bay's most ecologically significant islands. Below are a few of our most beloved properties – for a complete listing, visit www.gbtl.org.

The Lizard – Cognashene

The Lizard is a geologically striking island in western Cognashene, notable for its long and narrow shape – perfect for an unconventional summer walk. Despite being fairly small, the Lizard contains several different habitat types and is home to over 105 plant species, including the provincially rare Stiff Yellow Flax. The Lizard has long been a beloved Cognashene picnic spot and protection by the Land Trust means it will remain this way forever.



The Lizard



island is a fantastic paddling destination and an ecological treasure.

Looking ahead to the next 25 years of conservation on Georgian Bay (and beyond), the GBLT is guided by our Natural Area Conservation Plan, developed in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy of Canada. This plan provides a vision for maintaining the ecological health of our region by identifying priority land for conservation based on a series of scientifically-

American Camp Island – Wah Wah Taysee

Another treasured picnic spot, American Camp Island is rarely seen without a family enjoying a swim in its beautiful blue waters. Visitors to American Camp are at the heart of a group of over 40 small islands protected by the Land Trust, many of which are notable for their remarkably flat surface left by the glaciers.

Sandy Island – Sans Souci

At 425 acres, Sandy Island is the GBLT's largest property, and along with its neighbour Ingersoll is among the most ecologically fascinating and diverse islands on the Bay. This is due to Sandy and Ingersoll's unique ecology, which combines the characteristics and species of both the southern moraine and the Precambrian Shield. This is what creates Sandy Island's distinctive sandy beaches, and what makes it a birder's paradise.

Little McCoy – Pointe au Baril

For a remote outlying island, Little McCoy is home to a startling number of plant and animal species that normally make their homes closer to the mainland. This includes several at-risk reptiles – Blanding's turtles, Eastern foxsnakes, Five-lined skinks, and Massasauga rattlesnakes are all found here – and a high diversity of flora, including an extensive Leatherleaf bog community. This 35 acre

grounded targets. You can read more about the Natural Area Conservation Plan in our summer LandScript newsletter, available at www.gbtl.org.

Georgian Bay has always been valued as a place of wilderness. But as development continues to intensify, we risk losing the open spaces and wilderness places that make our Bay so special. There are currently 21,000 ecologically significant natural acres on the Bay at risk of development. The goal of the Land Trust is to collaborate with landowners to protect some of this wilderness forever, so that our children and all the species we share this Bay with can enjoy the many benefits it provides. There is a great opportunity for landowners on Georgian Bay to become involved in conservation and receive tax benefits in return – please contact us for more information.

The GBLT will be hosting a series of free events in the summer of 2016 to celebrate our 25th anniversary and notable conservation accomplishments in different areas of Georgian Bay. Each event will feature a guest speaker on a topic relevant to the location, and will be a chance to connect with other

conservation-minded individuals in celebration of our beautiful area. We will also continue to host free educational events on our properties, including our very popular "Rock Walks" with University of Toronto geologist Dr. Nick Eyles. See *Upcoming Events* in this issue of *UPDATE* and please visit www.gbtl.org/events for more information and a full event calendar. ■



Blanding's turtles on Little McCoy

The Steamship Era on Georgian Bay

By John Carson,
Editor, GBA UPDATE



GBA's old logo featured a sailboat and though sailing was a significant cottage activity in the early 20th century, it was the steamship that really opened up most of the unique island communities along eastern Georgian Bay to cottagers and other recreational users.



The SS *Keewatin* comes home to Port McNicoll accompanied by a flotilla of boats, June 23, 2012. Source: sskeewatin.com



The SS *Keewatin* leaves Port McNicoll on active service. Source: sskeewatin.com

Even before the arrival of steamers, shipping was a major commercial activity on Georgian Bay in the 19th century. Throughout the century sailing ships plied the waters of the Great Lakes, but sailboats were much slower than steamships and needed to run in the direction of the wind. Increasingly sail was replaced by steam, starting in the Lower Lakes in 1815.

By the 1850s the arrival of railways and commercial logging and fishing activity brought steamships to Georgian Bay, including large passenger steamers and lake freighters. Most shipping linked Southern Ontario railway lines to the West via the Lakehead (then Fort William and Port Arthur), and made ports like Midland, Port McNicoll, Collingwood and Owen Sound bustling transportation centres. The railway arrived in Collingwood in 1857, making it the first connection point to steamers travelling up Georgian Bay and to the West. By 1873 the railways reached Midland and Owen Sound, which for a period became boomtowns as a result. By the early 20th century the Canadian Pacific Railway was operating five large steamships between Port McNicoll and the Lakehead. The trip through Georgian Bay and Lake Superior took 2 ½ days.

One of those ships, the SS *Keewatin*, built in Scotland in 1907, operated until 1965 and was among the last of the large Great

Lakes passenger liners. The ship was brought home to Port McNicoll to great fanfare in 2012, where it is the anchor attraction for the planned new park and resort village development around the old deep water port. Guided tours are available that show visitors what the stylish transportation of the era was like on the Great Lakes. See www.sskeewatin.com

Smaller steamers carried local passengers and freight around the Bay. These local boats linked isolated communities on the east shore of the Bay for over a century. By the end of the 19th century steamers were transporting cottagers to local seasonal communities in Georgian Bay and Muskoka.



Steamer *Masonic* circa 1898 at Go Home Bay

The first steamer to service Go Home Bay and nearby communities was the *Masonic*, according to Madawaska Club records from 1898. The much larger *City of Toronto* provided service from Midland to Parry Sound from about 1895.



Steamer *City of Toronto* heading up the Georgian Bay coastline.
Source: madclub.org



Steamer *Waubic* on Georgian Bay (postcard c 1909).
Source: www.maritimehistoryofthegreatlakes.ca

The steamer *Waubic* replaced the *City of Toronto* in 1909, and ferried passengers between Midland, Penetanguishene and Parry Sound for the Northern Navigation Fleet. The ship also served cottage communities en route. Built in Collingwood, this 504-ton steamboat was propeller driven, 134 feet long and had a beam of 25 feet.

Built in Glasgow, Scotland in 1870, the *SS Midland City* originally served the Thousand Islands on the St. Lawrence River under different names. It covered the route between Midland and Parry Sound from about 1920 to 1955 for the Georgian Bay Tourist Company, including stops at Honey Harbour, Cognashene, Go Home Bay, Wah Wah Taysee, Manitou, Copperhead, and Sans Souci. The steamer also served Camp Hurontario in Twelve Mile Bay. It took 6 ½ hours

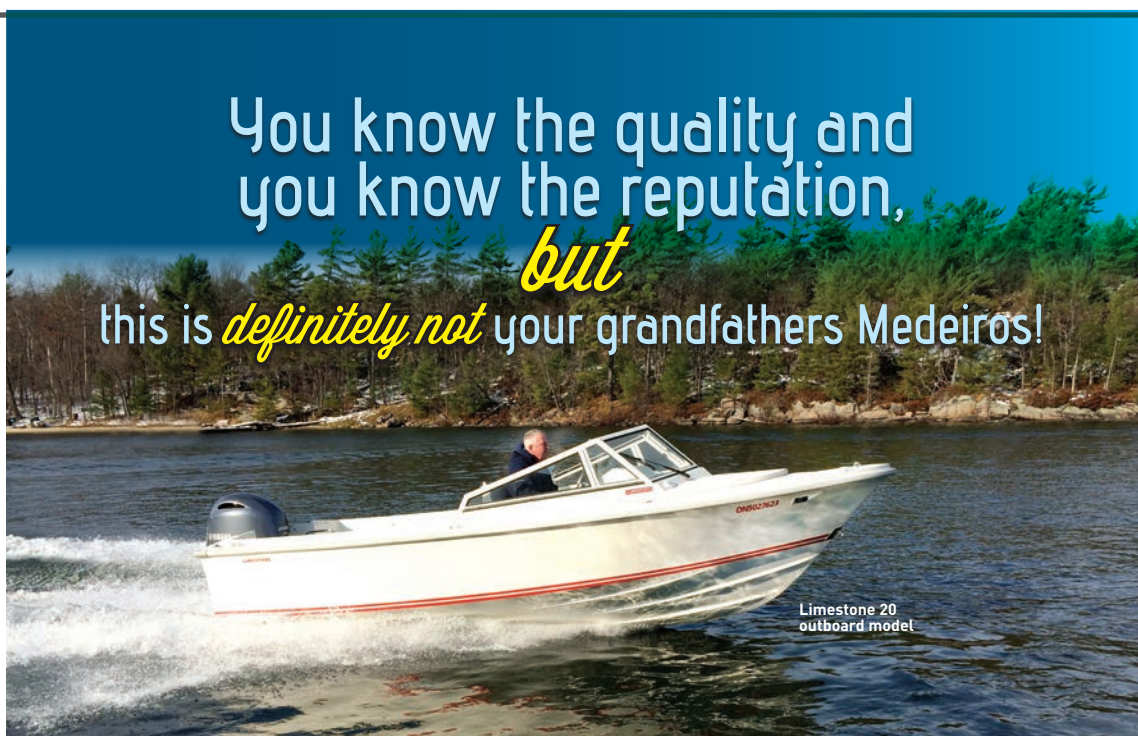
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to make the journey to Parry Sound – quite a contrast to the approximately 2 hour trip from Toronto to Parry Sound by expressway today!

Rebuilt several times – and sunk several times – during its years of service, the *Midland City* was converted to a diesel propeller-driven ship in 1933. The ship was 84 years old when she was intentionally wrecked in 1955 in Midland Bay. The wreck is still visible today.



SS *Midland City* on its run to Parry Sound



SS *Waubic* arriving at Wah Wah Taysee.
Photo courtesy of the Alexander Family Archives at wahwahtaysee.com

In the early days shipwrecks on rocks and islets, boats running aground, and wrecks in storms on Georgian Bay were common. In fact the Great Lakes were the site of over 5,000 shipwrecks. The passage to Parry Sound was particularly treacherous, especially since ships' navigational tools were very simple, even early in the 20th century. The magnetic compass was the most sophisticated piece of equipment, but was subject to error. Besides the compass the main tool was the lookout, a person still in use by many cottagers when exploring the Bay today!

In 1879 the steamship *Waubuno* went down in a November gale, and 70 people perished. In 1883 150 people lost their lives when the steamship *Asia* sank in the Bay, leading to calls for a hydrographic survey of the Great Lakes to make navigation safer. That same year the Georgian Bay Survey was established by the federal government, which became the Canadian Hydrographic Service. Its mission soon expanded beyond the Great Lakes to include all Canadian waterways. Precise water level gauging of the Great Lakes began in 1912. By 1915 the federal government had also installed over two dozen lighthouses on the eastern shore of the Bay to warn ships and boaters of hazardous rocks and islets.



Lighthouse range on the Bustard Islands near the French River, opened in 1875. Source: pointe-au-baril.com

Steamships continued to be important, and for many cottagers vital, modes of transportation until the 1960s. The rapid expansion of automobile use and the construction of new highways, including a new highway along the southeastern shore of Georgian Bay that opened in 1958, were the main reasons for the demise of steamships. The town of Killarney first became accessible by road when Highway 637 opened in 1962. Until then, the Killarney region was serviced by ships, and regular service boats still operated along the eastern shore of the Bay into the 1960s. Tougher regulations and air travel also played a role in the demise of steamers, especially in the closure of large passenger ships' routes heading to the Lakehead.

Today it is rare to see a large ship on Georgian Bay south of the main shipping route through Sault Ste. Marie, but during the steamship era the shipping routes from the south end of Georgian Bay were among the busiest in Canada. ■

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Wikipedia, SS *Midland City*

My Own Recollections of the Bay



Just over 100 years ago several of our ancestors came together to discuss the merits of creating an organization that could speak for all cottagers on the east coast of Georgian Bay. On Saturday March 11, 1916 they agreed to form the Georgian Bay Association and a constitution was struck.

In this issue of *GBA UPDATE* you will read stories of the history of GBA and see pictures from our archives, as well as a report on the celebration that we held in April to mark this auspicious anniversary.

In preparation for all of this I spent many hours digging through the GBA archives. As I did so I reflected on my own history with "the Bay". Please indulge me as I do a little walking down my personal memory lane. I hope that it stirs memories of your own.

As a January baby I was an advanced age of 5 months when I first experienced Georgian Bay. I say advanced as I know many, including my wife who, thanks to the timing of their births, got to the Bay when they were days old or a few weeks of age.



Hwy 400 entering
Holland Marsh - 1960s

My first recollections of cottaging were from the time I was 5 or 6 in the early 1960s. Going to the cottage back then meant climbing into the back of our family's big green Pontiac station wagon together with my siblings and a pet or two. No seat belts required! We made our way up old Highway 400 hoping that one of the two lanes would not be blocked with an accident. North of Barrie the road narrowed to one lane and wound its way through Coldwater and Fesserton packed with cars as we all inched our way north. On hot afternoons, in our non-air conditioned car, the cold burst of air as we crossed the bridge over the Coldwater River was a real treat.

Turning off onto the Honey Harbour Road meant we were almost there...but not quite. I can't imagine the patience required of parents with young children back then who had to press on to Sans Souci, Pointe au Baril and beyond! The winding, bumpy and seemingly endless trip along the Honey Harbour Road (some things have not changed!) was only made slightly better as we tried to be the first to spy the old abandoned Toronto street car that was in a field along the way.

When we finally arrived at the Honey Harbour Boat Works we stretched our car-weary legs while our father went to the

taxi boat office to arrange the next leg of our trip. Once in the taxi boat we donned life jackets that had dubious life saving capability in comparison



with today's PFD's. With supplies, kids, pets and ancillaries all aboard, we headed up the channel on the way to Go Home Bay. Thanks to there being no speed zones or police back then we could usually make the dock to dock trip in 45 minutes, unless the renowned west winds were blowing down the Bay.

Cottaging for us in the 1960s was a lot more basic than today. No electricity meant you used kerosene lamps and gas appliances. There were no telephones, no internet and no TV in Go Home Bay back then. Water systems were gravity fed, their supply tanks being filled using manual pumps. Outboard engines and wooden boats got you to where you wanted to go but at their own speed. The times were certainly simpler and, through the lens of time and age, magical. But the rocks, water and trees of the Bay are timeless and picnic food will taste every bit as good this year as back in the day.



Reminiscing is wonderful but I have a day job to attend to and my day job, as your Executive Director, continues to be all-consuming. Over the past few months the GBA has weighed in on a range of issues on your behalf. A Private Member's Bill in the Ontario Legislature calls for public access to shorelines, and another aims to formalize trail access across private and public properties for snowmobiles and others. A court decision has the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry reaffirming the need for land use permits for all docks and boathouses of 15 sq. m or larger. We have been active in the roll out of the Great Lakes Protection Act. And we are continuing to provide feedback to elected officials at both Queens Park and Parliament Hill on the evolving aquaculture rules and regulations.

All of these political initiatives could have an impact on how you enjoy your corner of Georgian Bay. After 100 years, GBA is still there to make sure that the voice of the cottage community is heard loud and clear.

Once again this summer I look forward to going to community meetings to hear directly from cottagers and what is on their minds. I hope that everyone has a restful and memorable summer. ■

New Crown Land Permits for Docks and Boathouses



Due to a recent Court case the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests (MNRF) now requires persons wanting to build a dock or boathouse with a total surface area greater than 15 square meters (or about 150 square feet) to apply for a permit to occupy Crown land. The surface area is in essence the size of the shadow a structure casts on the lakebed.

This is a significant change from MNRF's previous approach, which only required a permit if the area of the lakebed physically occupied by cribs, posts or piles exceeded 15 square meters. An extremely large floating dock, or dock or boathouse built on piles, could be installed without exceeding that limit! Under the new rules most docks and all boathouses will be subject to MNRF's permit application process.

Why the change? Some years ago MNRF realized that it would be difficult to deal with the workload involved in issuing permits for all docks and boathouses. In practice, most cottagers did not apply for permits in any case. Consequently MNRF changed their policy so that permits were seldom required. However, the underlying law – the Public Lands Act – and regulations under that Act remained in place; the law was “reinterpreted” to suit reality.



Recently, in response to a court ruling on construction of a large dock and boathouse in North Kawartha Township, the Ontario Superior Court ruled that MNRF must issue permits for all docks or boathouses exceeding 15 square meters of total surface area. Basically the policy in place for many years was ruled invalid because it was not consistent with the law as written, which states that a permit “shall” be issued. The Court also ruled that:

- Municipal by-laws apply to lakes (and rivers) unless the municipality specifically states that they do not. This means that municipalities can control construction of docks and

boathouses through zoning by-laws.

- Municipalities must require and issue building permits for docks and boathouses under the Ontario Building Code Act where appropriate, regardless of the fact that lakebeds are Crown land.

These last two rulings do not really have any practical effect in the Townships of Archipelago or Georgian Bay because both municipalities considered docks and boathouses to be subject to zoning by-laws and issued building permits for boathouses. Some municipalities, including North Kawartha Township (Jack Lake) where the lawsuit was generated, were taking the position that they could not control building of docks and boathouses through zoning by-laws and that they were not in a legal position to issue building permits. This created a sort of free-for-all on the water.

Current Requirements

- **New Docks** – if you want to build a dock or boathouse with a surface area larger than 15 square meters you should contact the Parry Sound or Sudbury MNRF district office:

Parry Sound - Carolyn Roy, Lands and Water Intern
Carolyn.Roy@ontario.ca - 705-773-4260

Sudbury - Bruce Richard, Resource Operations Supervisor
Bruce.Richard@ontario.ca - 705-564-7849

The Townships of Archipelago and Georgian Bay have decided that they will not issue building permits until MNRF has issued land use permits for the dock or boathouse. See their websites for more information.

- **Existing Docks** – MNRF has advised GBA that they are encouraging landowners to obtain permits for existing docks and boathouses (if the surface area is larger than 15 square meters), but they will prioritize applications for proposed structures.

GBA Position

The Georgian Bay Association believes the new permit requirement for existing and small docks will create a needless administrative burden for cottagers, and is impractical for MNRF to deal with. The GBA is advocating that the Public Lands Act and regulations should be amended to streamline permit requirements so that no permits are required for:

- Existing docks and boathouses if they comply with municipal requirements;

- Replacements of existing docks and boathouses if the "footprint" is not changed or expanded;
- New docks under 30 square meters in size.

The GBA has written to the Minister of Natural Resources urging that the legislation and associated policies be revised to this effect. In the meantime you must apply for a permit if you want to construct a dock or boathouse with a surface area in excess of 15 square meters. It is likely MNRF wants to change these requirements too – they do not have the resources to administer thousands of land use permits –but it may take some time to do so. We will keep members posted on developments. ■

Boating & Safety Committee Notices

Have Your Boat Flares Expired?

If your flares have a manufacture date of 2012 or earlier they have expired or will expire this year. You can't light them, throw them in the water or in your household garbage to dispose of them. Under Transport Canada requirements, flares are approved for four years from the date of manufacture. This means that boaters need to replace their flares every third or fourth boating season.

Disposing of expired flares has been an ongoing dilemma for boaters across the country. To help boaters dispose of expired flares in a safe and environmentally responsible manner CPS-ECP and selected CIL/Orion Dealers are hosting Safety Equipment Education and Flare Disposal Days. On these days, you can learn about required safety equipment and bring your outdated flares to be properly disposed of, free of charge.

Visit www.cps-ecp.ca/?WCE=C=47|K=240853 for disposal locations and updates. Unfortunately, none of the locations are on Georgian Bay.

Safe Boating Guide is Online

Transport Canada is not reprinting the Safe Boating Guide. It is available on the Transport Canada website: www.tc.gc.ca/media/documents/marinesafety/TP-511e.pdf

A direct link to the "Safe Boating Guide" is available on the GBA website under Boating. Go to www.georgianbay.ca and click on boating to see the drop down item "Safe Boating Guide". ■



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GBA Mission Statement:

To work with our water-based communities and other stakeholders to ensure the careful stewardship of the greater Georgian Bay environment.

The Georgian Bay Association is a volunteer umbrella group representing 19 community associations with over 3,200 dues paying property owners and over 18,000 residents.

Patrons of GBA:

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Facebook: facebook.com/GBayAssociation

2016 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

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Upcoming Events

We have received the following information from our sister Georgian Bay organizations on upcoming events.

Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council

Native Plants Sale & Workshops – All plants must be pre-ordered before May 20th. Visit www.georgianbaystewardship.ca for details on ordering. Plant Pickup & Workshops on native plants – Saturday, May 28, 9 am – Noon, Museum on Tower Hill, 17 George St., Parry Sound.

Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve

Stewardship Workshops:

Saturday, May 28, 10am – Noon at Wasauksink Lands Inc. office,
14 James St., Parry Sound

Saturday, June 18, 9am – 11am at Georgian Bay Biosphere office,
11 James St., Parry Sound

Saturday, June 25, 10am – Noon at Township of Georgian Bay Council Chamber,
99 Lone Pine Road, Port Severn

Attend this free workshop hosted by the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve to become eligible for funding through the Community Stewardship Program. For more information or to register for the workshop visit gbbr.ca/communitystewardship or contact Delaina Arnold at 705-774-0978.

Explore Our Shores: Hike in the Biosphere!

Saturday, July 30, 9:30am-Noon, Moon Island Docks, Woods Bay (boat access only). All are invited to attend Explore Our Shores with the GBBR, Friends of Massasauga Park, and Woods Bay Community Association. The event will feature a Phragmites information session with a guest speaker from Georgian Bay Forever at 9:30am followed by a guided hike with GBBR staff at 10:00am. At 11:00am a Stewardship Workshop will be held. No registration required. Free event for all ages.

Eat Around the Sound Workshop Series

Hosted by the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve & Canadore College. Space is limited, please register early at gbbr.ca/food or call 705-746-9222

Hike for Edible Wilds – Saturday, August 6, 10am – Noon by donation, Georgian Nordic Ski & Canoe Club, 8 Nine Mile Lake Road, McDougall. Many common plants around us have long histories of food and medicinal uses. Discover when and where to find edible plants, how to identify them, how to prepare them, and which plants are dangerous look alikes!

Sweet Honey Festival – Saturday, September 17, 10am – 1pm, \$20/person, Canadore College, Parry Sound. Visit the apiary, enjoy a honey tasting session. Participate in a honey, wine and cheese pairing. Registered participants will take home a honey sample.

Fun with Fermentation – Sunday, November 27, 10am – Noon by donation, Canadore College, Parry Sound. Learn the simple tradition of preserving food. Use local ingredients to make healthy foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi, and others.

Georgian Bay Forever

Fighting Invasive Phragmites 2016: Helping wetlands

Coming to your community this summer... Phrag Busting events. Check www.gbf.org/upcoming-events/ for cuts in your community, or contact your local association for details. Register your Phragmites cutting event(s) with Georgian Bay Forever, and we'll help spread the word. Contact heather.sargeant@gbf.org

Georgian Bay Land Trust

25th Anniversary Celebrations – Celebrating GBLT's 25 years of land conservation, featuring a guest speaker and refreshments.

Sans Souci: Saturday, July 16, 4 – 6 pm,
SSCA Community Centre, Frying Pan Island

Honey Harbour & Cognashene: Saturday, July 23, 4 – 6 pm,
Honey Harbour Schoolhouse

Go Home Bay & Wah Wah Taysee: Sunday, July 24, 4 – 6 pm,
Jim Ballantyne's cottage

Pointe au Baril: Friday, August 5, 4 – 6 pm,
Ojibway Club movie hut

Rock Walks – Join "rock star" geologist Dr. Nick Eyles for a fascinating tour of the geological secrets seen in the rocks beneath our feet.

Southeast Wooded Pine (Go Home Bay – Wah Wah Taysee):
Wednesday, July 20 (rain date July 25), 1 pm

West Lookout (Pointe au Baril): Thursday, July 21 (rain date July 26), 1:30 pm

The Bustards (Key Harbour): Wednesday, July 27 (rain date July 28), 1 pm

Kids' Conservation Quest – Thursday, August 4, 10 am – 1:30 pm,
American Camp Island, Wah Wah Taysee. Kids ages 8 – 12 will love learning about Georgian Bay flora and fauna and how to be a good steward of this precious environment. Bring a lunch and drinking water.

Rock the Bay – Saturday, August 6, 3 pm, Arthur Island, Cognashene. This very popular dock concert is back for a second year! More details at www.gbtl.org/rockthebay

Nature Walk on Sandy Island – Wednesday, August 10, 11 am. Join us for a guided nature walk from the southeastern side of Sandy to the Western shore.

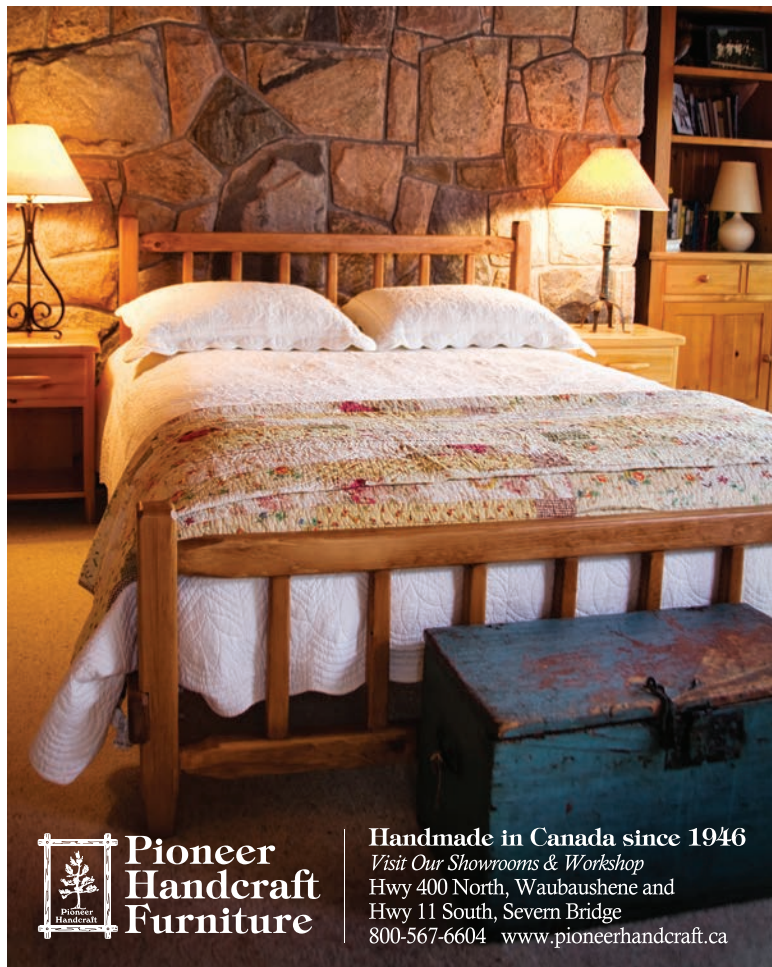
Phragmites Removal Workshop on Giant's Tomb Island – Thursday, August 11, 10 am – 1 pm. Learn all about identifying and removing invasive Phragmites with Kristyn Ferguson and Laura Robson of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and help us protect Giant's Tomb from a fledgling invasion.


"Cocktails & Canvases" on Southeast Wooded Pine Island – Wednesday, August 17, 3 – 5 pm. Bring your art supplies and/or a cocktail, and join us for an informal afternoon enjoying this beautiful property.

For more information about any of these events please visit www.gbtl.org/events

Other

The Great Lakes Public Forum 2016 – October 4-6, Allstream Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto
The Forum takes place every three years, and covers the implementation of the 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, bi-national government discussion and receipt of public comments on the state of the Lakes and science and action priorities. The IJC also has the opportunity to discuss and receive input on the governments' Progress Report. For more information, see <http://binational.net/2016/01/20/forum2016/>



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Your MPAC Property Assessment is Coming Soon!



The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) determines current property values in Ontario that are used in calculating municipal taxes. Every four years MPAC updates these assessments. 2016 is one of those years. You will soon be receiving, by regular mail, their assessment of what your property was worth as of January 1, 2016, and what values will be used in each of the next four years for property tax purposes.

There are some important changes for 2016. Firstly, the notices will be sent out at different times of the year, depending on where you live. Notices for properties in the District of Sudbury were mailed on April 25; notices for those in the Districts of Muskoka and Parry Sound will be mailed on July 11. Most areas will be covered by August, though notices

for non-residential properties will not go out until October.

Secondly, the deadline for filing a Request for Reconsideration (RfR) has changed. If you do not believe your assessment accurately reflects the value of your property on January 1, 2016 you must file an RfR within 120 days of the date on your notice. If your notice is dated July 11, your deadline for filing an RfR is November 8. For notices dated April 25 the deadline is August 8. The deadlines are shown on your assessment notice. Previously the deadline was March 31 for everyone. If you miss the deadline, you can still file an RfR, but any resulting changes in your assessed value will not go into effect until the 2018 tax year.

The design of the assessment notices has also changed. The most pertinent information is on page 1. Once you get over the possible shock at your new value, I recommend that you go to www.aboutmyproperty.ca, where you can learn about the market trends in your neighbourhood. By entering your roll number and access key (found directly below your roll number on your notice), you can learn details of your assessment as well as the values of up to 100 properties nearby. This will enable you to better determine if your property has been fairly assessed.

MPAC likes to remind everyone that even if your assessment goes up significantly, your property taxes may not. What counts is whether your value grew at a higher or lower rate compared with others in your municipality. If everyone's assessment increased at the same rate, you will pay the same share of property taxes as before (which will still be higher if your municipality increases its mill rate, or tax rate). But if your property increased in value at a higher rate than your neighbours', you will have to be a little more generous when you pay your municipal taxes.

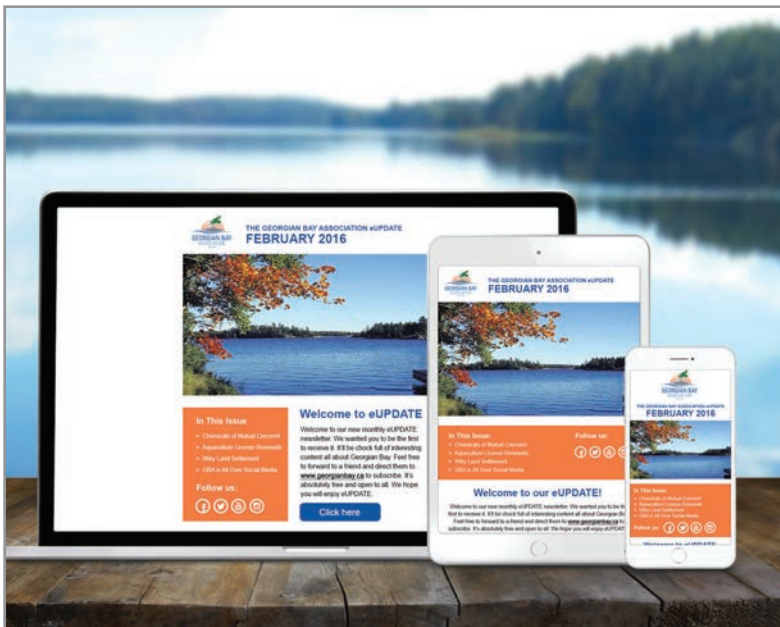
For more information, go to www.MPAC.ca before you receive your assessment, or www.aboutmyproperty.ca after the good news has arrived at your door. ■

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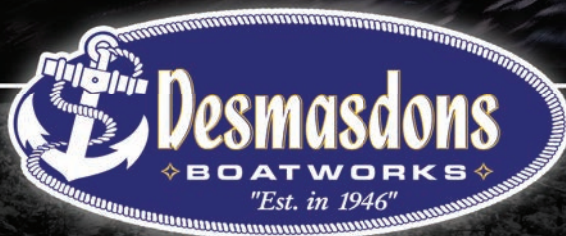


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