

BIG RIDEAU LAKE ASSOCIATION



FALL UPDATE - 2018

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"What a summer! ...and a busy year for the BRLA!"

In order to keep members up to date on Association activities, the BRLA Board determined that we should bring back the popular *DriftWords* newsletter. We are working on a new web based style for the newsletter that will be ready to launch next Spring. In the meantime, we are sending you this 'BRLA Fall Update' to give you an overview of 2018 activities. In addition, we are adding a biannual letter that will be sent to all members (mid-winter and mid-summer) to keep you further updated on BRLA priorities and initiatives.

The Board of Directors commenced the year with planning sessions that resulted in identifying priorities for the Association, among others:

- A revitalization of the Board structure and Director Roles, along with a more robust policies and procedures framework
- Water quality testing by Association members to develop water quality trend data and investigate increased algae blooms
- A new communications and community outreach strategy to reach all lake property owners
- More proactive lobbying of the Townships and other government agencies on issues of concern to lake property owners such as water quality, waterfront development and the excessive noise from boats running "off muffler"
- The development of a comprehensive Lake Plan for all aspects of the lake that will include input from lake property owners

All this while maintaining our social and recreational, shoal marker, fireworks, government relations and other longstanding program activities.

The fall season is upon us with hauling boats and buttoning up for the winter on most everyone's agenda. On behalf of myself and all the members of the BRLA Board, we wish you all the best for the winter season and have a great Thanksgiving!

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Portland Community Center on July 14th. The Board presented a summary of the organizational re-alignment and priorities for the current year, as well as updates by the various Directors on the activities under their areas of responsibility.

The election was followed by a question and answer session that allowed members in attendance to voice opinions and pose questions on issues of concern to them. For more details on Board priorities and program activity, you can see the full report presented at the Annual General Meeting by [clicking here](#).

The members in attendance elected a President, Grant Leslie, and 8 Directors to the Board for the coming year. At its first meeting, the Board assigned responsibilities to the Directors as follows:

BOARD UPDATE

President - Grant Leslie

Director - Phil Albert (Vice-President)

Director - Gayle Mathe (Secretary)

Director - Brian Hawkins (Treasurer)

Director - Doug Kirkland (Government Relations)

Director - Buzz Boles (Environmental Affairs)

Director - Nancy Watters (Social and Recreation)

Director - Lyse Prendergast (Communications / Community Outreach)

Director - Chris Laflamme (Operations and Lake Safety)



HISTORY POSTER

The 2018 Annual General Meeting also saw the unveiling of a new weather proof poster to honour BRLA history: The Big Rideau Lake Association – The Legacy and Cow Island. The 4 by 6 foot poster features the BRLA Mission and Objectives, a timeline of key milestones from 1922 to the present and includes 5 newspaper photos – most from a 1956 Ottawa Citizen feature article – the year the BRLA took over Cow Island for social and recreation activities for its members.

The culmination of an almost 2-year research and production project – the poster was mounted the next day on the side of the Cow Island Clubhouse. The wonderful historical photos were retrieved from the scrapbook of Murray Ault – son of one of the three founding trustee owners of Cow Island.

In 1956, Cow Island was purchased from the Gallagher family for \$5,000 by George Ault, Orion Low and Davis McCarthy acting as Trustees on behalf of the Association. In 1968, ownership of the island was transferred to the BRLA when it became incorporated.

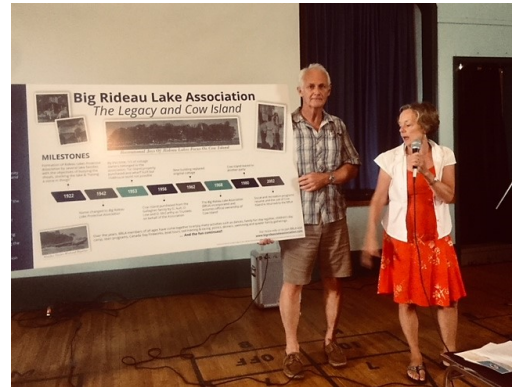
The inspiration to create this long-lasting commemoration of BRLA's corporate history came from Brenda Howes. The research and production was shepherded by Nancy Watters with approval by the BRLA Board of Directors.

Members are invited to stop by to peruse some of BRLA's historical information and enjoy the photos!!

FINANCIAL

The BRLA Financial Statements, prepared by our Auditors and filed with our 2017 tax returns, can be found by clicking [here](#).

The current fiscal year's financial statements are not complete as we have yet to receive several bills including fireworks and shoal marker removal which are among the largest. We can assure you that with revenues on track to meet our budget and with the Social and Recreation programs more than covering their costs, we will end the 2018 year in a comparably strong position to 2017.

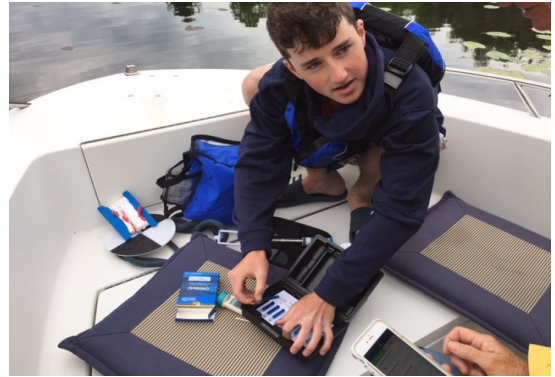


ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRONT

The Environmental Committee has been active with a number of initiatives including water quality testing, monitoring the progress of the bass tracking study and cormorant counts and activity.

WATER QUALITY

BRLA gets a lot of inquiries from members about algae blooms. Algae blooms are the result of excess nutrients in a body of water, usually in the form of phosphorous entering from storm water run-off and the effluent from septic systems that are malfunctioning. In order to investigate the increased incidence of algae blooms and excessive water weed growth, the BRLA joined the Water Rangers program. This is part of a wider strategy, complementing RVCA's testing program, to develop substantiating data on identified water quality problem areas on the lake that require remedial action by the townships and other government agencies. Water Rangers is an international non-profit organization based in Ottawa that provides test kits for citizens to participate in the monitoring and testing of water quality. For more information on algae blooms [click here](#).



BRLA currently has 8 Water Rangers doing bi-monthly testing using three test kits. The data from the testing process is posted live on the Water Rangers website. For more information about Water Rangers [click here](#).

In the mean time, here are some tips on practicing water quality friendly activities:

- If you have a lawn use phosphorus-free and slow release organic fertilizers
- Have your septic system pumped every 3-4 years and ensure it is properly maintained

SEPTIC SYSTEMS INSPECTIONS

Members should be aware that the Township is implementing a program of mandatory septic system inspections. Ensuring that your septic system is operating effectively is something you should attend to. You can [click here](#) to find helpful information on why it is important to maintain your septic system and key do's and don'ts. Additional information on septic systems can be found on the BRLA resource page [here](#).

BASS STUDY

The results of the Carleton University study led by Professor Cooke is scheduled to be completed this fall and will provide in-depth insight into what happens to Bass caught in tournaments and released at Rideau Ferry. Additionally, the social impact of tournaments on lake residents a feature of the study will be part of the reported results.



Carleton
UNIVERSITY

Canada's Capital University

CORMORANTS

We have a more accurate count process in place now and here are the results:

- Current - 137 / Nest Count 16
- Overall Count Slightly Higher
- Nest Count down from 22

The double crested cormorant colony on Big Rideau Lake is facing natural population reduction challenges as are other colonies throughout the Great Lakes region. A fatal neurological disease called Newcastle Disease is spreading through the population, and is contagious amongst the cormorant flocks and other birds. It was first reported in Michigan last summer and now has spread as far as Lake Ontario this summer. The cormorant colony on Big Rideau Lake showed some signs last summer but no specimens were obtained to confirm. Anyone finding a dead cormorant can help by bagging and freezing it and notifying a BRLA Director to arrange collection. Please also report any sightings of sick birds that may be evident by showing partial paralysis and/or a complete lack of fear of predators or humans. It is best just to leave them alone for nature to take its course. There is no cure. This disease is an example of population control nature applies to various species whenever they get in very dense congregations such as cormorants typically do.



SOCIAL AND RECREATION

BRLA's Mission is to "build a strong community in a safe and healthy environment on and around Big Rideau Lake" and one of its four key objectives is to "Foster a sense of community in members of all ages through recreation and social programs (2006)."



With a spirit of renewal and fantastic team effort - the past two seasons of BRLA recreation and social programs have been the most active and successful in recent history. During the just completed 2018 season, BRLA members of all ages participated in our three social events (Summer Sounds, Family Fun Day



Regatta & the August Harvest Dinner) and our two child/youth programs (Day Camp & Sailing Camp). These activities attracted a wide range of members from newborn to 80+ years and met our goal of being cost neutral, with most generating a small surplus. The value of the BRLA Social and Recreation Program to members is evidenced by not only the successful attendance, but also by designated donations by members, at the time of membership renewal.

None of this would be possible without the generous donation of time and effort by a core team of about 25 BRLA members who fill about 42 volunteer roles across these activities.

BRLA events and programs are well advertised on our website (Go to the Recreation tab from our home page) and most registration takes place online. We depend on you - the members - to spread the word and invite your family and guests. Announcements go out about each event & program by email. Please let us know if there is someone else in your family – who may be the one most in tune with your social calendar – who should also be getting these announcements. We are happy to add them to our mailing list.



Have you checked out the [photo gallery](#) from 2018 or even earlier? You might just find a fun picture of yourself or your neighbours , friends or family!

SAVE THE DATES

About 20 BRLA volunteers met for a team meeting Sept 15th at the Cow Island Clubhouse to reflect on the revival of BRLA Social & Recreation programs over the past 2 seasons and to consider next steps including facility needs. Plans for next year include repeating our most successful programs and tentative dates were discussed:

- Summer Sounds: Saturday: July 6th or 13th
- Family Fun Day Regatta: Sunday August 4th
- August Harvest Dinner: TBD
- Day Camp: Tuesday July 2nd to Friday August 2nd
- Sailing Camp: We will request Aug 5-9 as our first choice (dates confirmed in December)

NEW IDEAS

We welcome member suggestions for existing or new programs. Some ideas discussed at the September Team Meeting included:

- Offering 2 weeks of Sail Camp to allow for further skill progression
- Organizing Sailing Race(s)
- Organizing a Parent-Child Camp Weekend on Cow Island
- Offering Saturday Morning Day Camp for “weekender” families
- How to attract more boater members
- Increasing accessibility to programs for local families



- Using the Cow Island clubhouse for other interests (road association meetings; yoga classes; bridge club)

REQUEST

We are looking for a family who would be willing to billet two OSA sailing instructors for one week. Room only is required as they look after their own food needs. You can reach us to volunteer help, ideas or feedback by [clicking here](#).

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

We are reminding everyone that **all Big Rideau Lake (Canadian) property owners are eligible to vote for candidates in the township to which they pay taxes regardless of where their principal residence is located. 70%** of the revenues of the Township of Rideau Lakes alone come from lakefront property owners who do not see much in the way of services for this contribution to revenue. This is an important voting year and that as many property owners as possible need to get out and vote.

This year you will receive a pin from the Rideau Lakes and Tay Valley Townships confirming how you can vote by phone or on line. Drummond North Elmsley does not have the phone or on line options. For more information, [click here](#) for Rideau Lakes Township - [here](#) for Tay Valley Township and [here](#) for Drummond North Elmsley.

In addition, BRLA is sending questions on various issues to Candidates for their written responses which will be made available to all BRLA members.

The BRLA has been active in providing input to the Township on the redevelopment of the Portland Harbour, in particular additional public dock space and the plans for Portland village redevelopment.

OPERATIONS AND LAKE SAFETY

Cow Island is BRLA's base for Social and Recreational events and a renewed effort is under way to update the management of this valuable asset. Currently, we are studying the addition of docks. Our new Director Chris Laflamme will also be working with the Board on a plan which will include looking at ways to spruce up the clubhouse and related facilities.

The core of the Lake Safety program is the shoal marker management, always critical for boater safety.

Last, but not least is the annual fireworks event which continues to be as popular as ever. Volunteers are needed for this, especially for helping with set up and clean up support.



COMMUNICATIONS

Updating and improving our website is a continual process; our intent is to provide both BRLA members and the general public with information about association events and activities (see our [Photo Gallery](#) for a look at some of this summer's happenings), as well as news and resources affecting the broader lake community (e.g. water quality studies, municipal election 2018). These are supplemented through our email notices to members and social media postings.

In coming months, our priorities are the revival of the *DriftWords* newsletter and revamping it in a web-based format, and exploring social media opportunities to keep people informed and to promote our association's activities.

BIG RIDEAU WORKING GROUP

Through our liaison the Big Rideau Working Group, we have been working with the OPP and Transport Canada to identify offshore boats that choose to run 'off muffler'. This is illegal and the OPP are committed to issuing tickets to offenders. If you are bothered by this, the best thing you can do is to call the OPP Call Centre to log a complaint. Even if you cannot identify the boat, logging the call is helpful as the OPP focuses on areas that receive the most complaints. The OPP Call Centre # is 1-888-310-1112 or visit the OPP [website](#). [Click here](#) to view the full 'off muffler' article on BRLA's website.



MEMBERSHIP AND CORPORATE SPONSORS

Membership has increased slightly and currently stands at 316 members. If you have not yet renewed your membership or would like to join the Association, please go to our [website](#).

The Board position that deals specifically with membership recruitment has been vacant since the Annual General Meeting but we are pleased to announce that Robin Copestake has agreed to fill this key role. In future, you will no doubt be hearing more from Robin with membership updates.

The BRLA appreciates and needs the support from the business community in and around Big Rideau Lake. This is important to BRLA's future and as we build on the 100 year + history of BLRA. We believe that being a Corporate sponsor is a win / win for all.

OUR VALUED CORPORATE SPONSORS

- B Blackburn Ltd.
- Bayview Yacht Harbour
- John Callan - Coldwell Banker Rhodes & Company
- Jamesview Builders
- Cooligan Carpentry
- Le Boat
- Millar-Potter Boat Restoration
- Northland Power Inc.
- The Chandlery
- Len's Cove Marina

LAKE PLAN

The Board has looked closely at Lake Plans from other jurisdictions and feels that it is the right time for BRLA to embark on this comprehensive process. It has been shown that the Lake Plan process strengthens relationships and commitments from government and regulatory agencies. The initiative documents the issues, concerns and interests of the broader lake community through focus groups, committee involvement and resident surveys.

We are looking for volunteers to help us with this ambitious project which is expected to take on average two years to complete. If you have experience in the consultative process and want to contribute your time and skills, please contact us. Every effort will be made to be clear on what the tasks will be and align those tasks with your available time.

HEARING FROM YOU

We encourage you to let us know what you think. Don't hesitate to contact BRLA on waterfront and recreation issues that are important to you. You can reach us [here](#).

Keep a look out for the President's letter this winter and the new DriftWords newsletter coming out in Spring!