

BBLA Newsletter

Summer 2021



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Chairman's Letter

Welcome to the Big Basswood Lake Association's Summer 2021 newsletter.

We sincerely hope that all of our members and their families are safe and well. I don't think any of us thought that when this pandemic began well over a year ago that we would still be subject to public health restrictions as we entered the summer of 2021. The good news is that we are seeing clear signs of progress in the battle with vaccinations going well in both the US and Canada. In Canada we were hit with a major third wave of infections and, consequently, our government has taken a cautious approach to reopening – particularly the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, this has had a direct impact on border crossing restrictions. I know from talking to many of our American friends how much you missed Basswood last year and we certainly have missed seeing you. We are all anxiously awaiting news from our federal government about the reopening of the border. We can only wait and hope at this point.

However, in spite of the restrictions of the pandemic emergency, the board has continued to work extremely hard on your behalf.

We held our spring board meeting on June 21st, conducted virtually again via Zoom. In fact, so had so much material to cover that we did not complete the agenda after 2.5 hours and to reconvene June 29th.

We have continued activities on all of the following files:

- . Membership
- . Web Site
- . Septic Inspection Program
- . New Hydro One Rate Structure
- . Lake Partner Program
- . Lake Stewardship Award
- . Loon Survey
- . Water Levels
- . FOCA
- . TFN Boundary Land Claim

Please see articles on all of these topics in this newsletter.

We have made a decision to once again delay our AGM from its scheduled date in July to August 15th. Our hope in delaying the meeting is that the border restrictions will come off on July 21st and that many of our American friends will be physically back at the lake. At the same time, this will give us the maximum time as the Ontario government continues to reduce the limits on group size for outdoor gatherings. So we are going to plan for an outdoor meeting on August 15th and at the same time, be ready to revert to "plan B" which would be to hold the meeting via Zoom again if we can't gather in person. Stay tuned for further announcements on this.

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Membership

Membership Matters More Than Ever

It's hard to believe we've been isolated for 16 months with the global pandemic. We miss seeing members who have not been able to enjoy the lake due to border closures and travel restrictions. We remain hopeful that things will improve as more vaccines are administered and case numbers decrease.

As always, your BBLA board has continued to work on various initiatives, using virtual technology to temporarily replace our face-to-face sessions.

We're keeping an eye on developments around the lake and in the municipality so that we can share news with you, fulfilling our commitment to inform and educate the members of our community.

As in 2020, we really need your help in ensuring that our association can continue to thrive. Membership numbers were down this past year. We understand that many of you renew at the AGM and we were unable to gather last summer which made things difficult. We're hopeful that we can hold this event in person in 2021, but will have a virtual back-up plan just in case. We do have several renewal options available for everyone, so please consider joining or renewing at your earliest convenience.

As always, your annual membership in the Big Basswood Lake Association provides several benefits:

- Attendance at events focused on
 - o Lake stewardship
 - o Area history
 - o Ongoing education
- Participation at the Annual General Meeting
 - o Providing input on issues that affect property owners and the preservation of Basswood's pristine waters
 - o Electing directors to represent your interests
- Savings on your cottage insurance through FOCA – the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

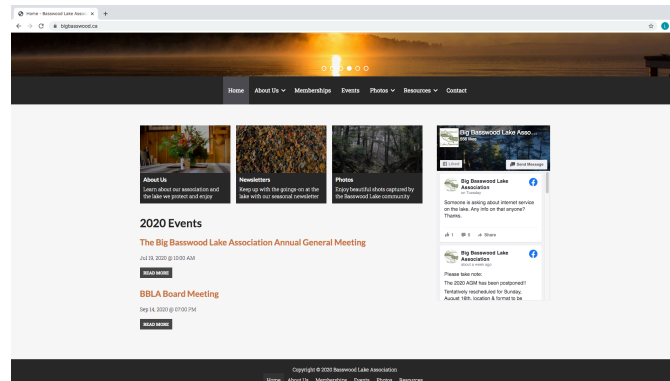
The annual membership fee remains at \$25 per year. Friends and family who don't own property, but visit regularly, are also welcome to join as non-voting associate members for the same great price.

Payment options:

- Use Paypal on our website: www.bigbasswood.ca/memberships
- Send a cheque to Big Basswood Lake Association, P.O. Box 377
Thessalon, ON P0R 1L0
- E-transfer from a Canadian bank account to our treasurer, Cynthia Wood, at since48@gmail.com

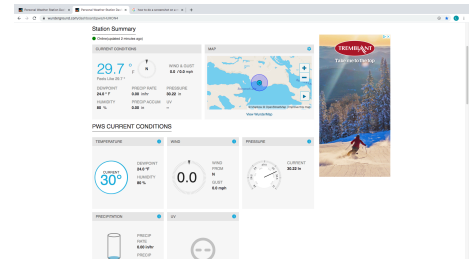
- submitted by Joanne Falk

Revised Web Site



Another summer and another opportunity to enjoy the benefits of our beautiful lake. We are certainly hoping for a summer ahead with some of our US friends joining us this year for at least part of our year.

Please take the opportunity to visit our newly improved website with its easy access to things like great photos of nature and sunsets, previous news items and newsletters, history, upcoming dates for meetings and socials, and a link to real time weather on the North Shore of the lake thanks to one of our members.



Lastly is the link to our very important Lake Association annual fees which you can pay conveniently on our site using Pay Pal. Thank you in advance for your support of the BBLA as we continue to serve you in keeping our lake the beautiful pristine gem that it is today. Your membership contribution is greatly appreciated by your Board as we continue our work on your behalf.

Submitted by Phil Conley

AGM Date Change

2021 AGM

is now scheduled for...

SUNDAY, August 15th, 10 AM

Please make note of the date change for the 2021 AGM and stay tuned for the location. Hopefully we can hold an in-person gathering that can include all of our members!! As you can see, BBLA has been quite active and there is lots to cover. And....we have missed the opportunity to catch up with everyone face-to-face. Stay tuned for further details



Mark These Dates for 2021

Spring Board Meeting	June 21, 2021
Annual General Meeting	August 15, 2021
Sweet Sowerby Social	TBD
Fall Board Meeting	September 13, 2021

Septic Inspection Program

In the summer of 2019, many of you took advantage of the chance to review your property's septic system and surface water drainage. These assessments were done by Tulloch Engineering, with funding from an Ontario Trillium Grant and administrative assistance from the Municipality of Huron Shore. One hundred and eighteen residential lake properties were inspected last summer.

The majority of properties inspected were seasonal residences (104). Well over half of the properties had a septic tank and field bed. Some properties had multiple types of systems (e.g. privy, holding tank). Over 40% of the systems were 30+ years old.** Sixteen minor deficiencies were noted (e.g. not enough setback, parking on a field bed, never been pumped out). These were discussed with the property owner on site. No major deficiencies were noted.

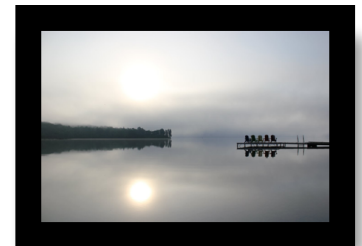
The full report can be found on BBLA web site and the Huron Shores website

**Of note: Three quarters of major deficiencies were found in systems over 30 years old
Regular pump-outs (3-5 years) can prevent system problems

(Source: Septic Re-Inspection Programs in Ontario-A Guide for Lake Associations, FOCA, 2019)

Summer 2020 Septic Re-Inspection: As we announced in the last newsletter and at the 2020 AGM, our Trillium grant had been extended to the end of this year and we were offering septic inspections to those that had not had them done in 2019. Unfortunately, because of the unusual circumstances this year, only 2 additional inspections were booked.

Wrap Up: In March of 2021, the Trillium foundation informed us that the extended grant deadline (extended by over a year) was now expired and that we would have to terminate the program. This we did by issuing a final report to Trillium and by returning a cheque for just over \$8000 – of the original funds advanced of \$52,000. The surplus happened because we ended up doing fewer inspections that originally anticipated.



So this initiative is now officially completed. Thank you to all of those who volunteered to participate. I think everyone would agree that anything that can be done to protect the beauty of our lake is worthwhile. We will continue to educate our membership on the benefits of properly working septic systems.

The final report from Tulloch Engineering will continue to be available as a link from the BBLA website as well as from the Huron Shores website.

New Hydro One Rate Structure

Hydro One is proposing to the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) that the seasonal rate class be eliminated and that seasonal customers be reclassified as residential customers. The residential customer class is driven by the density in a particular area. This would affect the delivery charge on your Hydro One bill. The commitment is that the increase be limited to 10% per year for the next 7 years. Implementation is proposed for Jan 1, 2022 or Jan 1, 2023.

FOCA is acting as a lobby organization, as is it's mandate, on behalf of all member organizations. They have established a link on their website at:

<https://foca.on.ca/electricity-pricing/>

where you can obtain current updates on the status of the OEB application and sign up to receive a special alert on electricity pricing.

We will continue to monitor and update the membership as the application unfolds.

Chairmans Letter (continued)

And finally, please pay careful attention to Joanne Falk's article on membership. We normally sign up the bulk of our members at the start of the AGM and last year that wasn't possible because the meeting was held virtually. Consequently, as Joanne reports, our numbers are down for 2020. After reviewing the newsletter, I hope you will agree that the BBLA is doing worthwhile work in promoting your interests and the stewardship of our beautiful lake. Please take a few minutes to use one of methods that we have set up to pay your \$25 membership for this year.

We're looking forward to the day, hopefully soon, when we are all together on the lake again.

Larry Allcorn

Chairman - Big Basswood Lake Association

Changes to Board Election Process

As you know, we normally hold board elections every two years. In order to avoid having all directors up for election at the same time, your board has discussed staggering our terms. There is some work to be done before making this change, including a by-law change that members would vote to approve. We will keep you informed as we work to enhance this process.

For this year's elections at our upcoming AGM, we welcome nominations in advance. If you are interested, or know someone who might like to serve on the board, please contact Joanne Falk; joanne.falk@gmail.com by July 31, 2021 so that we have our slate of candidates ready to go.

Lake Partner Program



The Lake Partner Program is back in business this year. The water samples testing for the phosphorus and calcium levels from Big Basswood have been collected and submitted. Monthly secchi disk readings are being taken.*

2021 Ice Dates

Ice on: January 23, 2021

Ice off: April 9, 2021

For more information and data check out:

<https://foca.on.ca/lake-partner-program-sampling-assistance/>

*Once again, thank you to Bobby Swain and Laura Foley for collecting the above data.

Explore Local Map

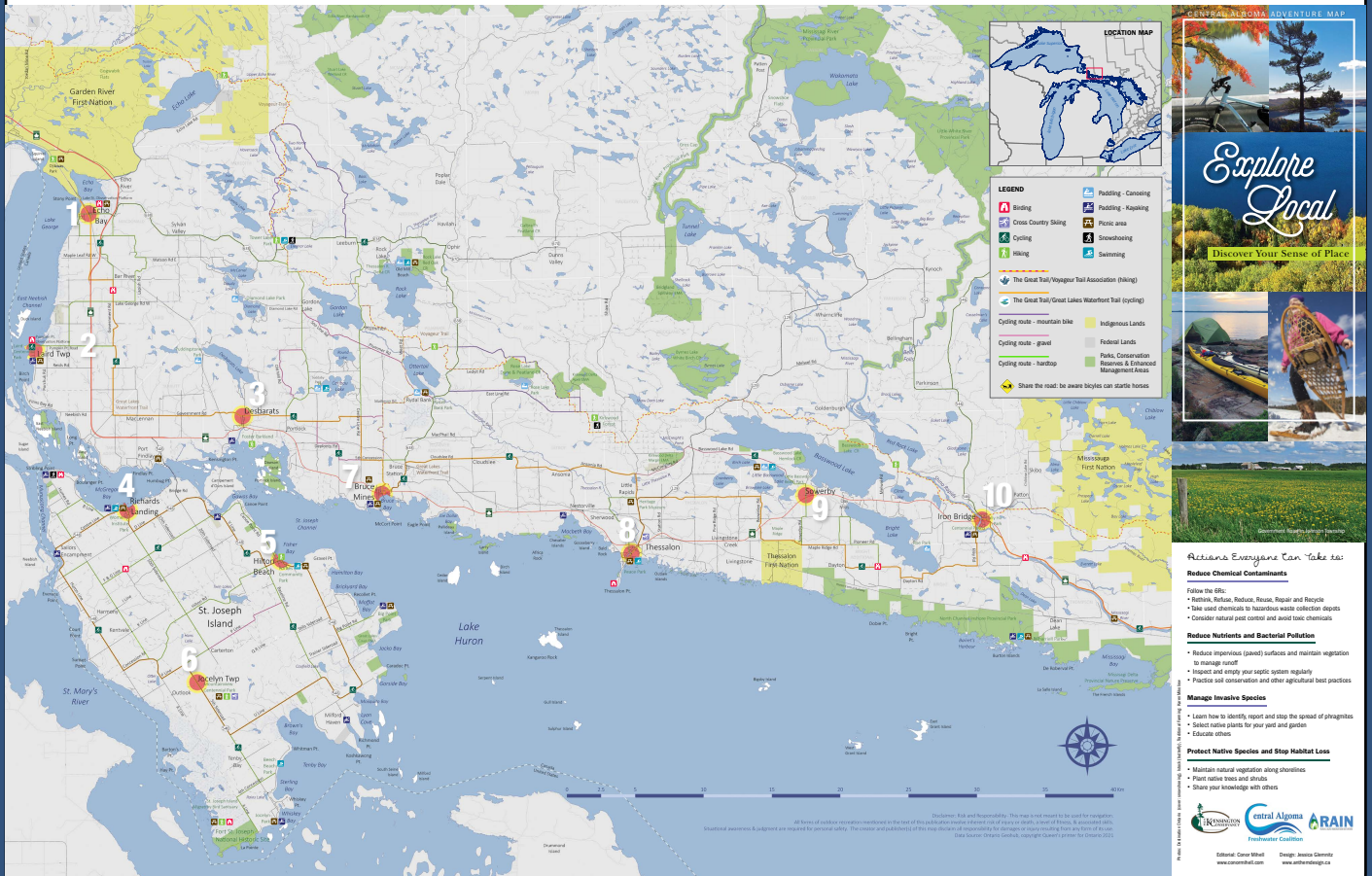
Discover Your Sense of Place

The Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition has published an excellent map which outlines 10 "Points of Departure" for exploring Central Algoma by Cycling, Hiking, Snowshoeing, Birding or Paddling.

Hard copies of these maps will be distributed from the lake association's table at the Saturday morning Sowerby market or can be obtained by contacting the CAFC directly at:

www.centralalgomafreshwatercoalition.ca

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Lake Stewardship Award Update

We are pleased to announce the details for the Mike Hunting Stewardship Award Program, named in honour of our past president and friend.

The winner of this annual award will have demonstrated outstanding leadership and/or contribution to the stewardship of Big Basswood Lake and the surrounding area.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Citizen Science, which may be defined as the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care
- Preservation of water quality/pristine condition of Big Basswood waters
- Preservation/improvement of natural shoreline/surrounding areas
- Contribution to the elimination or mitigation of risk from invasive species
- Any other unique/outstanding contribution toward the preservation of our pristine lake

Entrants are encouraged to be creative and innovative; however, projects do not need to be started from scratch. Individual or collaborative initiatives already underway will also be eligible.

Submissions / nominations are to be submitted by Aug 31st of the year the project gets underway, for consideration by the board at the fall board meeting of the same year. However, with the ongoing border closure, we understand that some projects may still be in the idea stage while others may be underway. It is our hope that lake residents will have an opportunity soon to start or continue projects that focus on the preservation of our lake and its shores. Therefore, we will be asking for submissions by August 31, 2022 for projects started this year or next, with the inaugural award to be given at the AGM in 2023. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to directors for further assistance.

Evaluation criteria:

- Overall impact
 - Demonstrating a positive impact on environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility
- Creativity / innovation
 - The 'wow' factor
- Applicability / reach
 - Providing potential for others to adopt the idea, in order to have a broader impact
- Ease of implementation
- Collaboration

2021 Loon Survey

Citizen Scientists at Basswood Lake

Loon sightings for the summer of 2020 were "hit and miss" as many of the participants were not able to get to their cottages due to the pandemic. An official Canadian Lakes Loon Survey was not submitted to Bird Studies Canada. In the three previous years, volunteers from all areas of the lakes contributed data to the surveys designed and recorded at Bird Studies Canada. They reported loons sighted from May through August. This represented categories such as:



1. Number of days surveyed in May – for example
2. Maximum number of adult loons
3. Maximum number of mated pairs
4. Maximum number of young
5. Maximum number of Large Young in August
6. Number of nests observed and number of eggs present

Here is a link to the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey:

[Canadian Lakes Loon Survey | Birds Canada | Oiseaux Canada](#)

There is lots of information on recording data information. And lots of tips and information on observing and getting to know loon behavior. I am always happy to receive information of loon and other bird and animal sightings, informally this summer. I am hoping to be able to observe in person when the border finally opens!

We are also hoping to be able to work with the Kensington Conservancy, located in Desbarats, to learn of opportunities to be involved in citizen science. Hope to have more information on that when things get back to "normal".

For more information contact Leigh Olmstead (Photo Credit Jill Glaser)

Thanks to Erin Ferlaine who had created this Little Free Library at the end of 142 McMillan Lane. There are kids and adults books and puzzles - please feel free to "leave a book or take a book."



Big Basswood Water Levels

As previously reported we received a copy of the dam operating plan from the MNRF for Basswood Lake. This plan outlines the targeted operating levels for the lake that the MNRF normally works toward and how those levels were determined.

It outlines the following key considerations for determining the best target levels for the lake:

- A stabilized lake level for Lake Trout fall spawning in October/November
- Adequate water being supplied to Bright Lake from the end of April to the first week of June to support Walleye spring time spawning
- Water levels stabilized for the summer by early June to support shore infrastructure for the seasonal and full time residents of Basswood Lake

Therefore, it has been determined that the following are optimum levels for the lake.

- Not more than 20 cm over wall – ideal is 5-10 cm over – March to June
- Water level with the top of the wing wall on July 1st with gates closed.
- Water dropping to 12 cm below the wing wall though natural evaporation by the end of the summer
- Water returning to 5 cm below the wing wall by first of December

Because of the low snow cover this winter, the relative lack of precipitation in the spring and the hot early summer we did start with lower than usual water levels this year. However, the MNRF has done a good job of keeping water flows through the Harris Creek Dam at a consistent rate. Water levels did begin to drop with the dry, hot early summer but recent rainfall has returned them close to target levels.

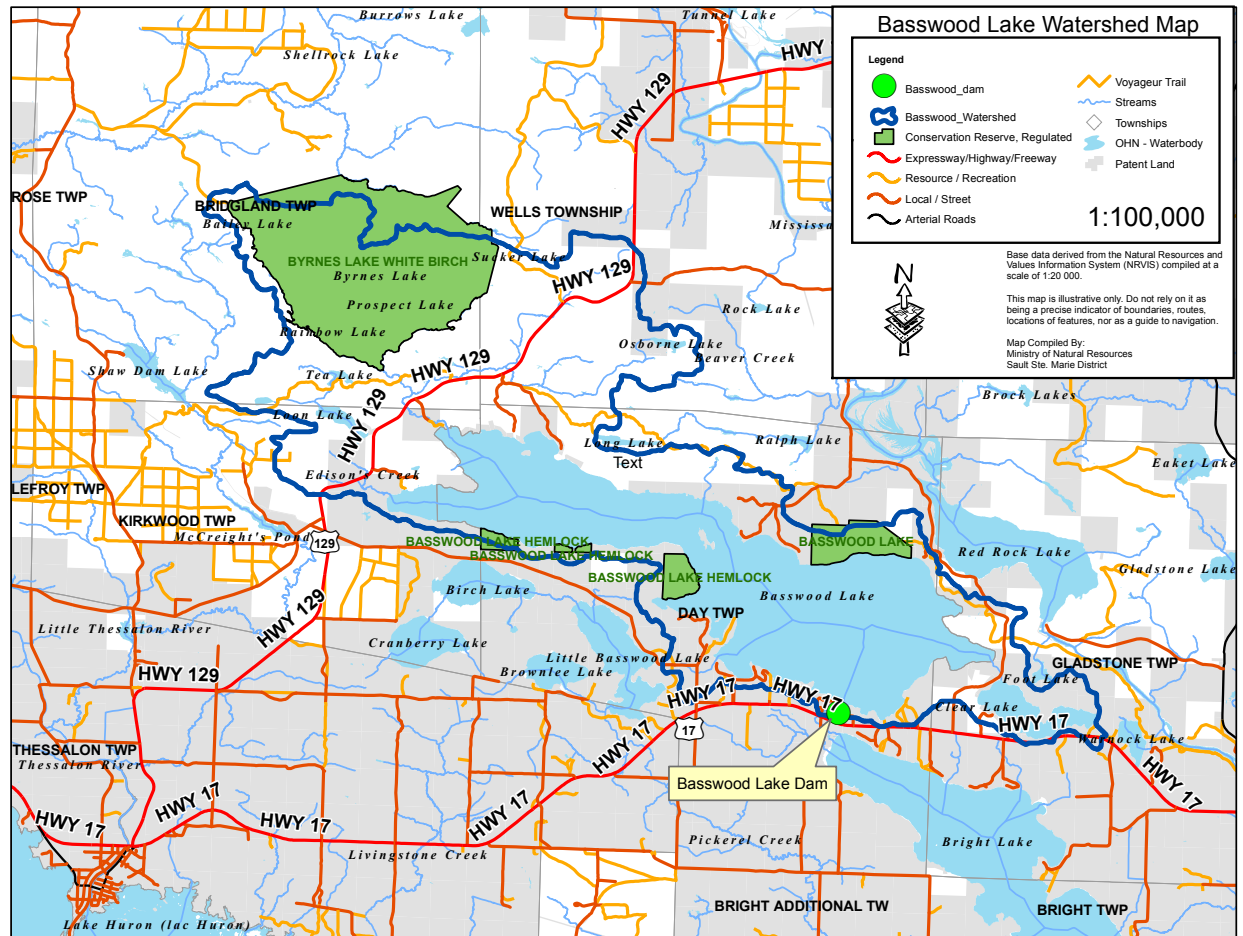
The MNRF has been very responsive to our communication out of the Sault Ste Marie office. They tell us that a dam replacement is still being planned although time frames are still unknown. The first step would entail an engineering study followed by public consultation on the new design. They will keep us informed as the process unfolds so that can update our membership.

If you have questions on lake levels and the operating plans, please contact me and we will get the response from the MNRF. We encourage lake residents to contact the lake association first if they have questions – we may already know the answer or can get it quickly from the MNRF.



Local Water Levels (cont'd)

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Big Basswood Watershed Map

Thessalon First Nations Boundary Land Claim

We have been in touch this week with Jane Thomas, the Ontario negotiator for the land claim. She informs us that "the negotiations have been on hold since September of 2020".

She tells us that the negotiation web site will be updated this week to reflect this status. If you have any questions, she invites you to reach out to her directly at:

Jane.E.Thomas@ontario.ca

Dick Brown, November 17, 1929 - June 21, 2021

Each generation has its elders who carry the working knowledge of local history and the colorful characters who shaped it. With each passing we become increasingly distant from the people and events that defined prior generations.

Dick Brown was such an elder. His obituary opens: "Richard Brown, 91, a lifelong resident of Huntingdon (Pennsylvania), died peacefully surrounded by his loved ones at his home on Monday, June 21, 2021"

I had the pleasure of sitting with Dick at Indian Point on several occasions, listening to his enthusiastic responses to whatever historical questions I posed about that location and the people who frequented it. He seldom spoke in a linear fashion, so even when taking notes, I was in a constant state of mild confusion about who did what when. What detracted from my compulsion to nail down details, did nothing to diminish my enjoyment of the time we spent together. Dick was an outgoing and engaging, old-school gentleman who had earned the right to carry-on about whatever he chose, which was often Big Basswood Lake.

We first met Dick and Jane Brown the mid 1990s when I noticed the stern of a beautiful wood boat bobbing securely in the Brown's distinctive white boathouse. Our cold call was greeted with a warm welcome on their dock where it was quickly established that Marilyn and Jane shared careers in student health services. Dick and I were left to talk about all make and manner of questions I had about the boat and the history that brought the Browns to Indian Point. That introduction was the forerunner of several similar exchanges over the years. Given the eighty-ish years he spent summering on Big Basswood, it is no surprise that he knew something about most everything in his end of the lake.

In the 1930s Dick's father, Carl Brown Sr., was introduced to Basswood Lake by fellow Huntingdon resident Dr. Fred Hutchison, who had married into the Dobie family. The Senior Brown and his wife Ada's tenure at Indian Point began in the 1940's. The senior Browns had three sons, Carl Jr., John and Richard. Prior to the Browns, Indian Point had been operated as a lodge with numerous guest rooms and free standing cabins that attracted turn-of-the-century Americans in search of wilderness adventure. Before that, the bay had staged saw logs prior to shooting them down Harris Creek to the Harris sawmill.

In the winter of 1947 Carl Sr. fell ill during the delivery of his new launch as it was skidded across the lake ice into the Brown's new boat house. He died without ever having seen it in the water. That left it to his three sons to break-in the new boat. It is to their credit that the JO-CAR is still intact and cruising the lake. It is also to their credit that their three families have shared the joys, trials and tribulations of caring for the former lodge, boat house and flotilla of watercraft. It is no surprise that the Brown legacy of love for the old lodge and the Lake it graces is carried on by Dick and Jane's four children, Rich, Tim, Alice, Emilie, and their families.

Dick wore his enthusiasm for life on his shirtsleeve. He manifested the wonderful qualities of making the listener feel both welcome and valued. We can only guess at his disappointment at being denied the opportunity to visit the lake one last time. Dick was a treat to have known and a credit to the lake community.

-Bob Kellum



A reminder to all of our members that a membership in the Big Basswood Lake Association includes a membership in the Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association.

The association is currently some 500+ members strong representing over 50,000 waterfront land owners in the province. They provide us with a number of valuable services:

1. Ongoing participation in their lake partner program. We submit our lake test results for clarity and phosphorous levels to the lake partner data base every year. This continues to show Basswood as one of the clearest lakes in Ontario
2. FOCA holds a spring and a fall meeting every year, both of which usually feature valuable information. This fall's meeting was held on Nov 21st and the spring event was held on March 6th. Both events were held virtually this year and were attended by Larry Allcorn on behalf of the Big Basswood Lake Association, Note that any of our members are free to attend these events. The spring event, in addition to the regular AGM, featured presentation on the Lake Partner Program, Invasive Species Control and Lake Association Best Practices.
3. Also, the FOCA web site contains a large amount of valuable information on lake stewardship and the ongoing initiatives that FOCA is working on. Please visit the website listed above for access to this information. We encourage our members to take advantage of this powerful tool as there is a lot of excellent information and reference material found there.

www.foca.on.ca

4. FOCA also offers ongoing discounts on a number of products and services. These are also listed in the website above.

Submitted by: Larry Allcorn

DIRECTORS OF BBLA

Larry Allcorn, Chairman, 416-407-2158

Phil Conley, Vice Chairman, 519-670-4551

Cynthia Wood, Treasurer, 705-946-0623

Marilyn Kellum, Secretary and Lake Stewardship, 734-717-1290

Joanne Falk, Membership, 705-987-6225

Nancy Bakemeier, History, 705-842-5385 (June - Sept)

