

Lake Wah Wash Kesh

C O N S E R V A T I O N A S S O C I A T I O N

- FALL 2000/WINTER 2001 NEWSLETTER -

TEAM LEADER'S MESSAGE

Reflection

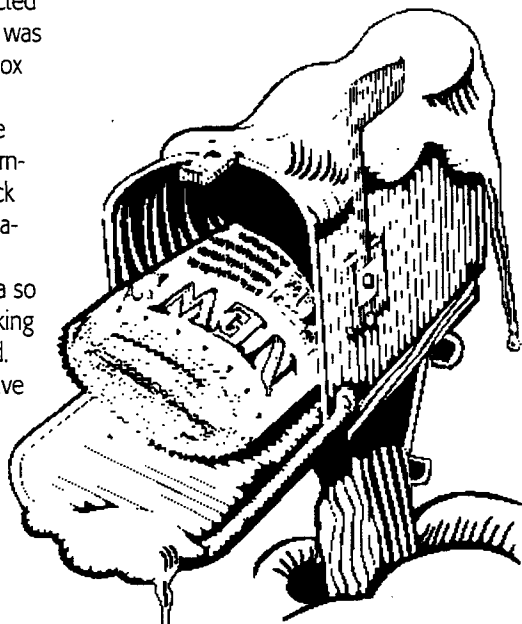
This message is being prepared in October after having spent 5 glorious days at our cottage on Toggle Point. The leaves were beautiful and the frequent October sun along with warm fires, cold nights and the smell of chimney smoke made for a memorable time. It allowed Julia and I to come to terms with the reality of closing. We dilute our sad closing emotions by mentally reviewing the highlights of the past season and by planning winter visits and further by making our project lists and plans for the following spring and summer. We already can't wait for the seasons ahead. I must say I was a bit envious of the moose hunters who were coming in by the truck load as we were leaving. Every hunter was happy and looking forward to the adventures and good times ahead.

New Executive

Subsequent to the "Annual Meeting" the directors met and elected the executive for the coming year. Terry Tweed was elected as secretary—Duncan Robertson was elected as Treasurer—Andy Vurma was elected as Vice President and I (Dalton Ferris) was elected as President with Wayne Lennox acting as Past President. Directors Ken Taylor (Fish Committee Chair), George Ross (Constitutional Matters and government reporting) and Ted Heggart (dock liaison) round out the complete association leadership team. We all help with every aspect of the association agenda so it is interesting and I know we are looking forward to the many challenges ahead. Technology has made being an effective team, while separated by a long distances, practical and possible.

Team Leadership and Participation

As you may have noted I entitled this article "The Team Leader's Message". We have a great team of willing and gifted people with each taking initiatives and getting things done without a lot of pushing by others and keeping others informed at the same time. We have a common interest—that beautiful Lake and the interests and friendships of the many wonderful people who make WWK such a special place. We develop all of our actions and plans with the best interest of the Lake and the majority of its citizens in mind. These actions may be modest initiatives in a relative sense or major initiatives such as the dam and docks. Feel free to contact any one of us with your views and concerns. Members taking time to communicate their concerns and views are what causes the leadership to reshape its ongoing and future plans. I might specifically add we want to hear from the younger generations as well—so do not be reticent. We would like to launch some new initiatives involving young people—more on this later.



Municipal Elections Whitestone

During October we worked hard to assemble information regarding candidate's views on matters that we felt would be important to all of us on Lake WWK. Ten of the 11 candidates answered our telephone questionnaire and we summarized the responses for mailing to you and for our use later. Unfortunately a series of delays prevented us from mailing the summary in time for voting. We are both disappointed and sorry that we failed to complete this project on time. You did receive a useful bio on each candidate from the Hagerman Ratepayers Association. We certainly appreciated their bio work.

The voting occurred on Nov. 13 and the successful candidates are as follows:

Reeve

Don Carter (705) 389-3380

Councillor

Debbie Brear (705) 389-1295

Councillor

Bill Church (705) 389-1956

Councillor

Sherry Green (705) 389-1283

Councillor

Olive Duggan (705) 389-3324

This is the very first council for Whitestone elected on a municipal wide basis and so it is somewhat of an historic event. All Councillors and the Reeve are responsible for serving the whole area as there is not a ward system. I would suggest you call the reeve and a councillor nearby and introduce yourself—congratulations are in order—but make it clear that we have expectations—mention the dam, the docks, taxes and the fact that we as seasonal people have access to or the need of few services. At the moment my view is that no new services are needed as we would only pay and not have access but at the same time our democratic society causes us to see needs of others as important as our own. The association directors look forward to working with the new Whitestone Council—in fact we must build an effective working relationship and that is underway already.

Social Initiatives

For many years Ross and Pat Willet and others have worked hard to make the weiner and corn roasts a success. Many people enjoy these events and they will be held again next summer as per usual. The executive is committed to supporting these social events and will be very visible—additionally we will make available association memberships and dock stickers at these events. Donations generally pay for both of the corn and wiener roasts. So make a point of attending next summer—it is a good place to visit and socialize. Thank-you Ross and Pat for your dedication.

This year we held a successful “fireworks” on the evening of the annual meeting. Doug Marks coordinated this and I believe was the master pyro-technician—that reminds me I am going to check my cottage fire insurance. Thanks Doug and we are looking forward to next year. There was a very large turnout for this show. There were a few donations and \$500 seed money from the association to make the fireworks possible. Next year we will do things to make the need for donations more visible so that the fireworks is sustainable and hopefully bigger and better.

Newsletter

We were very pleased to have Lesley Hugill volunteer to be our newsletter coordinator and organizer. Getting out a newsletter is a major undertaking and involves all members of the team helping in any way they can. It is important that the newsletter be excellent because this is our main communication vehicle and a vital link with the membership.

You will find lots of information in this newsletter and I am sure it will help keep the WWK Flame burning brightly in your heart. From now on in the newsletter we want to include a “human interest” story or stories in each newsletter and the first enthusiastic contributors are the Sperry Girls—Ginnie, Anne and Robbie. You will enjoy their story and the memories and images it creates.

We hope the “Sperry” story motivates other families to contribute—“their story”—or a funny story about people around the Lake. If these human interest stories blossom we could use them as a basis to create a second edition of “The Early Years”. The vision is that these stories would cover the many families that have been at the

Lake for years but were not, for whatever reason, included in the “Early Years”. I will be initiating contact with likely contributors as I must work several months ahead of newsletter publication, but meanwhile you can take initiative and send me your story—by mail or e-mail.

Committees

Most committees will report later on in the newsletter and so I will only say thank-you to all committee members who are working hard for all of us: Dam Committee, Dock Committee, Fish Committee, Planning Committee, Executive Committee and all the newsletter helpers.

Planning

Recently I learned from the Whitestone CAO Roger Labelle that John Jackson had been hired to do a new “official plan” and a new “comprehensive zoning bylaw” for the complete municipality of Whitestone. This will involve a public meeting process and we will need to be involved so that our views are heard. The comprehensive zoning bylaw report that was done by “Skeleton Brumwell” will not be put in place in the former unorganized areas of our municipality—in favour of this new initiative that uses John Jackson as a consultant. The goal is to have all this in place by the fall of 2001.

Over the next few weeks we will have to develop a team and a strategy—anyone interested in helping with this matter should contact myself or Duncan as soon as possible.

Lake Stewardship

At the annual meeting we talked briefly about lake stewardship and that it would be a productive and beneficial way to involve younger people and the rest of us in activities that benefit the lake and its environment. Later Paul Thomson came forward and said he would come up with a project or activity that involves youth next summer and so we are looking forward to his initiative—thanks Paul. I know others would like to help with the fish study whether it be helping with a census or implementing remedial actions. Also FOCA has numerous packaged programs that one could utilize at our lake eg “The Great Ontario Dip In” this is a kit to measure water quality and is coordinated between FOCA and the MNR (1-800-470-8322).

Some associations through their municipality and the MNR are involved in Septic inspections and remedial action monitoring. I plan to purchase FOCA’s manual on lake stewardship entitled “Take the Plunge: Stewardship of Ontario’s Waters” as a resource manual for our association.

You must now realize that I am planting seeds re Lake Stewardship and want individuals out there to take initiatives that involve their own activities as well as others—so while the winter limits our time at the lake do a little planning, learning and communicating re Lake Stewardship. We at the association will be most supportive welcoming and facilitating

Pine Saw Fly

Late in August we noticed this strange larvae near and on our pine trees—it was 25mm and was marbled white, yellow, and black with a jet black head. Later this fall in talking to Ross Willet I learned that it was a stage of the pine sawfly. In unchecked large quantities this insect has the potential of killing pine trees—it eats the needles and makes the tree look bare near the top. The MNR has said this is a concern in our area and along the Georgian Bay shoreline of the Parry Sound District. Apparently the MNR, in the past few years, sprayed organized townships to try and control this insect. The contact at the MNR is Taylor Scarr (705-945-5723). There are no plans to spray our area in the near future. Take the time to learn about this—the net has good information—call Taylor Scarr as part of the process. I expect that the Association will be formally expressing our concerns and strongly articulating the need for action. By the way is there someone who would like to take this on as a Lake stewardship project—if so we will funnel our efforts through you—please contact any member of the executive and express your interest

In closing I hope you find this newsletter interesting, useful and entertaining. Your feedback is important.

Best Wishes –Dalton Ferris



Gary Dimmick Watercolors



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RECOGNITION

As you may be aware in 1999 the association put in place a policy that results in members of the association and lake friends of the association being formally recognized and thanked for their contributions.

The citation reads as follows:

"The Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association citation may be awarded to an association member or friend of the association who has distinguished himself or herself through outstanding, dedicated service to the association and its members over an extended period of time or has contributed very significantly to a special project that is of great benefit to association members."

During the summer of 2000 we recognized Wayne Lennox for his many years of dedicated and committed leadership of the association. We also recognized Kenny, Jean and Donnie Hayward for their many years of friendship and great service to people of Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh. This award is certainly special to receive and I must say very special to present. All recipients have been most deserving, appreciative and moved and this summer I remember Kenny saying "thanks but we just like doing all the things we do for everyone." The Hayward's enjoyment of lake life is apparent to everyone.

We would appreciate your thoughts regarding who should be recognized in 2001—please forward your ideas and support to myself or any other association board member. Recognition will be on the agenda of February's meeting so we need to hear from you by the end of January.

Dalton Ferris



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Fish Committee Report

The Fish Committee would like to sincerely thank the members and friends of the Association who have supported our fund-raising activities. The sale of beer after the Annual General Meeting raised \$205. A special thanks to Brian Cadotte and his friends from Chatham who organized the pig-roast held in September. The roast not only provided an excellent meal but also raised \$880 which was donated to the Fish Committee. Thanks Brian!

We would also like to thank the MNR for their work on the lake during this past year. The results of their studies and our on-going work will produce benefits in the years to come.

By the time you read this, the Committee will have the second phase of the biologist's report in hand and will review her findings with both the MNR and the consultant we plan on hiring.

The application process to the Ontario Trillium Foundation is continuing to try and obtain the funds necessary to continue the work of the committee. No fish surveys are planned for this fall but trout spawning may be monitored.

Anyone wishing to assist the committee should contact Ken Taylor, Ed Bennett or Don Comrie.

Don Comrie
Fish Enhancement Committee

Cottage Directories Available

During the summer, we put on sale (at cost) copies of our new cottage directory. They were available at the AGM, Bennett's store and at Hayward's Trading Post. This is our 2nd edition. The first edition was published in June 1993.

If you would like a copy, we still have some available for sale at \$10.00 Canadian (a bargain for our US members). This cost includes postage.

Just indicate on the attached membership dues form, how many copies you would like and we will mail the directories to you along with your membership sticker.

Andy Vurma



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Volunteers Needed

The association executive would like to have a group of volunteers available to do our newsletter mailing and to do the occasional telephone blitz. The newsletter package is mailed twice per year once around mid May and once towards the end of November. This volunteer effort would appeal to those who may not necessarily want to be on an ongoing active committee but at the same time would like to help out with association matters. The executive often ends up suffering from volunteer fatigue as a result of the many and frequent demands of association business. Today we are not sure about how all this would be organized but we know we need to start with some willing and able people.

If you are interested and able to volunteer in this manner please contact our secretary Terry Tweed.

Dalton Ferris

"THE DOCKS"

First and foremost I would like to extend a very special thank you to Rod Anderson, Ross Willet and John Kormos for all their dedication and time spent on improving and maintaining the docks.

We are also grateful to those of you who contributed with donations totaling \$54.00 and to those who purchased their dock permits (113) for the 2000 season: up from 102 last year for total sales of \$2,825.00. The price for the stickers will remain at \$25.00 for the year 2001 and we are assured that there will be an ample supply for next year.

The major project of replacing the flotation under Bennet's Bay dock was completed last summer.

Current projects planned for the upcoming year include:

- **Increasing the docking capacity at Bennett's Bay dock either with an edge rail or more tie rings.**
- **Installing assist ladders to help people get into and out of their boats at both the Bennett's Bay and Indian Narrows docks.**
- **A yellow area marked for "loading and unloading only" is being considered. This would insure an area of availability for this purpose at all times. Input on this issue would certainly be welcomed.**
- **Flotation will be added to both ramps to minimize the winter damage.**

Once again we thank the committee for all their support and look forward to another successful year of operations.

Ted Heggart

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Early Memories of the ROYAL WAH WASH KESH HOTEL

from Ginnie & Anne Sperry & Robbie Sperry Schweiger

In the 1920's and 30's, our grandfather had a summer cabin about a mile up from the mouth of the French River. To get there, his family took a train from Toronto to Parry Sound, then a milk train to a whistle stop at Key River Junction, where someone met them and took them down to Key Harbor by handcar. There they were met by a launch and taken on to the cabin. As grandchildren came along, he worried about that long trip OUT if a child became very ill or was injured. So he scouted around for a less isolated place where families with children might stay. Someone in Parry Sound told him about the Royal Wah Wash Kesh Hotel, so he checked it out and recommended it to our mother and her sister.

The following August, 1934, Aunt Harriet and her son Tom went up to see what the hotel and lake were like. They were very enthusiastic about the hotel, situated on a beautiful lake, with good fishing, so they sent a telegram to Mother and Dad saying something like "This is great - come on up!" So we did.

In those days, the trip up was very different than it is today. It was a long drive from Ohio! (Later, during WWII, we took the C & B overnight ferry from Cleveland to Buffalo several times, to save gas. It was an exciting experience for us, to sleep in the upper bunk of our cabin.)

The first few years we could only drive about as far as Aurora, Ontario, where we stayed overnight in a tourist home. The next day we tried to get off early to drive up Hwy. 11 to Huntsville on paved roads, then on a gravel road to Burk's Falls. Dad would stop there to buy some fishing lures while Mother bought crack-



ers, cheese, and pickles to snack on later. From Burk's Falls on, we drove over narrow dirt roads to Dunchurch, then to Whitestone. (Actually, we were never sure exactly WHERE Whitestone began or ended, since there were no signs.) We often met a road grader along there - a man guiding a horse pulling a wide contraption that smoothed off the road. On several occasions, we slipped into a ditch trying to pass, and paid the operator to pull us out with his horse! (Robbie always cried, after that, whenever she spotted any road grader!)

We were told to look for Little Joe's - a small roughhewn building - on the right side of the road in Whitestone, that was a tiny store. Little Joe was to call the hotel - via a phone that used a line strung overland by Cliff Bennett, from the store to the hotel - to let them know that we had arrived. (Often the phone line was down due to a storm, so we just had to hope that the Bennetts had received Dad's telegram and knew approximately when to meet us!)

From Joe's store, we would drive about a mile down a narrow lane (actually two tracks that went through fields and across a few small ditches or a stream, with 2 logs over them - just the width of a tire and spaced the width an auto would use). We kids were scared that the wheels would slip off those narrow logs, but they never did! We learned

"The next day we tried to get off early to drive up Hwy.11 to Huntsville on paved roads, then on a gravel road to Burk's Falls. Dad would stop there to buy some fishing lures while Mother bought crackers, cheese, and pickles to snack on later."

what real corduroy roads were...logs placed next to each other perpendicular to the road. They were great for covering muddy holes, but certainly were bumpy! The lane wound through trees grassy areas till we finally came to a space where cars could park, at the top of a hill leading down to water.

Then we would unload all our baggage and carry it down to the shore. Dad would string the fishing rods while we kids would change from cotton dresses to

shorts or corduroy pants (that Mom had to buy in a boy's department since there were no warm slacks for girls in those days). Then we would eat our crackers, cheese and pickles on a big rock or practice casting off the rocks—anything to keep us occupied while waiting for the transportation to the hotel.

From the rocks on the shore of Parker's Bay we looked across the water of the small 'lake' and saw a white building that we assumed, the first year, must be the hotel. So we wondered why we had to wait so long for someone to come across to get us. We learned why when Cliff Bennett arrived in a launch, about an hour later, coming in around some nearby rocks. What we thought was the shore of a little lake, was a small bay and we were looking across at Edgewood Inn. The Royal Wah Wash Kesh Hotel was a good 45 minute ride in the 'Betsy' (or later in the 'Lila') across the Big Lake, through the Narrows, and into Bennett's Bay.

We were really excited to see the hotel—it was a BIG white clapboard building with rosy red trim, on a hill that rose well above the waterline. It had a long wide porch, supported by cedar posts,

across both the first and second floors. (The third floor had no veranda.) There was a long boardwalk leading up over the big rocks from the 'T'-shaped dock. Huge logs provided the flotation for the docks, but if too many people stood there together, they were likely to get their feet wet! A smaller dock, attached to the main dock, contained a gasoline pump and a hand-cranked oil drum, near the spot where the launch docked.

We had rooms at the back of the second floor, which Mom liked because it was a shorter drop to the ground on the back side. She encouraged us to learn how to shinny down the cedar posts to the ground, in case we might need to escape fast in case of fire! Most of the bedrooms had 2 double beds, a single light hanging down in the middle of the room, a dresser, a china water pitcher and wash basin, and the inevitable chamber pot! The rooms on the second floor had inside walls that didn't go all the way up to the ceiling, so we used to throw socks back and forth over the wall to our cousin Tom in the bedroom on the other side of the wall.

The middle of the main floor of the hotel was a large area that went through the building from front to back. There was a huge fireplace on the left side of the room, with a log settee in front of it (that must have seated 4 or 5 people) as well as other chairs and tables. (Robbie remembers seeing a bunch of logs set aflame one day and several baby snakes crawled out of the fireplace!). On the mantle above the fireplace there must have been about 15 fungi with drawings and inscriptions people had drawn on them. Many had been there for years.

On the right side, as you entered the living room, was a pool table. There was a ping pong table in the back of the room and an area with several shelves of books, a piano, and

some other seats. On the right, at the back of the room, was a small enclosed area that served as an office, post office, and place to stock some candy bars, cigarettes, and postcards for sale. The counter held a big Guest Register that we enjoyed browsing through each year, to see who had been there before us. The names Dimmick and Roberts and Cramblett appeared every year, in July, before we arrived, so we didn't meet till about 10 years later. (Dad claimed it was cheaper to go to Canada about the 18th of August than to pay for hay fever allergy shots for all of us!)

The doorway to the large dining room was in the middle of the right side of the living room, closed with a lattice gate. We kids were usually standing right there before meal times - Breakfast at 8am, Dinner at 1pm, and Supper at 6pm. Meal time was announced by the ringing of a big brass bell, which we always volunteered to ring! The dining room had narrow wooden cross pieces near the ceiling that held fragrant cedar boughs, which often were quite dry by the end of August. This was a concern to Mom, who always thought about fire hazards.

There were several rows of long tables in the dining room so we had a chance to get to know other guests. Robbie called one boy 'The Brown Sugar Boy' because he usually took most of that sugar for his cereal before she could get any! There were always plenty of sugar cookies on the tables - breakfast, dinner, and supper. We weren't allowed to drink the unpasteurized milk, which came

direct from cows that grazed to the west of the hotel just beyond the present-day federal dock. So we drank either powdered or canned milk, which we hated, so we added Ovaltine to it.

The meadow where the cows were kept was a good place to catch frogs. Later it was where Cliff kept a pair of big black and white wolf dogs chained. They were ferocious, so it was off limits to us.



Mrs. Bennett, Cliff's mother, was the proprietess and was noted for her delicious pies. Someone wrote 'An Ode to Mrs. Bennett's Pies', which hung on the wall near the dining room gate. Mrs. Bennett was always willing to have her kitchen helpers pack

"One day the ladies asked the adults at the table where they could take their husbands for a good time at night. Ardbeg was recommended!"

big hampers of food for shore dinners, when people asked ahead. The big baskets usually included cans of baked beans, bacon, homemade bread, jam, some fruit or dessert, a small pail to make tea, a big fry pan, and fat to fry any freshly caught fish. After Cliff and Mona Bennett

were married, Mona took over most of the household responsibilities for the hotel, including the cooking. Among the specialties we remember were her marvelous butter tarts, and her homemade bread.

The kitchen, just beyond the dining room, was usually off limits to guests, but the cook sometimes slipped us some cookies. (Delicious sugar cookies were on the tables at every meal!). Just beyond the kitchen was an Ice

House filled with huge blocks of ice cut from the lake in the winter, then covered with saw dust to keep them from melting. Nearby was a building used as a Work Shop. A few years later a cottage with 4 bedrooms and a big porch was built, on the left side of the hotel, and named the C & R, for the Cramblett and the Roberts who used it every year.

Behind the hotel, up a hill in the trees, were two paths leading to separate outhouses for Men and Women. There were often what we called 'outhouse spiders' there - huge ones! It was a slippery path in the rain and you definitely needed a flashlight at night!

The front porch of the hotel was a wonderful place to sit,

since it had a full view of the bay, both by day and at night. We would sit on the steps at night and feel you could almost touch the stars, or watch gorgeous Northern Lights flash their vibrant colors. It would be so very quiet there at night, too, and you rarely ever heard the sound of a motor - only some frogs. Our favorite item of furniture on the front porch was a huge swing that must have been about 6 feet wide. It had a high, slanted back, with some cushions, and the seat must have been about 4 feet long so you could really relax - with your feet straight out - and read, knit, enjoy the view, or look out at the water. It could hold 4 or 5 people at a time. There was lots of storage space for boats under the front porch, since the ground sloped so much there, and they were shielded by lattice work.

On the porch, there were chairs and some tables made from logs, as well as a big water dispenser with paper cups nearby to quench your thirst. This water dispenser was a real novelty to us. A huge glass water bottle with a long thin neck was turned upside down on a stand about 2 or 3 feet high, and it had a spigot to fill your cup. We were a bit leery of tasting that water at first because there often were some little things swirling around in the bottle that looked like tiny ferns! Cliff would make trips down to the spring, on the river across from the entrance to Deep Bay, with about a dozen big water bottles to refill about once or twice a week. We kids sometimes went along on those jaunts, too.

Our family loved being at the lake. In the early years we rented a boat that we rowed around the bay and out beyond, to fish, and rented a 5hp. motor only when we wanted to go up the river or down to the dam. One night we rowed over to the beach in the Narrows and camped out using old blankets that Mrs. Bennett let us borrow. It was great fun to

cook our dinner on the campfire, then sing and tell stories.

A favorite spot to fish was near the dam because we kids could catch 5 or 6 rock bass on one worm. That kept Dad busy taking off the fish and throwing them back and it was really exciting for us! Once in awhile we would rent a larger boat, with a 10hp. motor for a day, and

water, about 20 or 30 ft. from the hotel boat dock, where it was fun to stand. Once in a while Cliff and Glen Mundy would entertain us by riding a homemade surf board around the bay, pulled by one of the few Chris Craft type boats on the lake. They were ahead of their time in water sports! We loved going to Straub's Beach, too. One time we

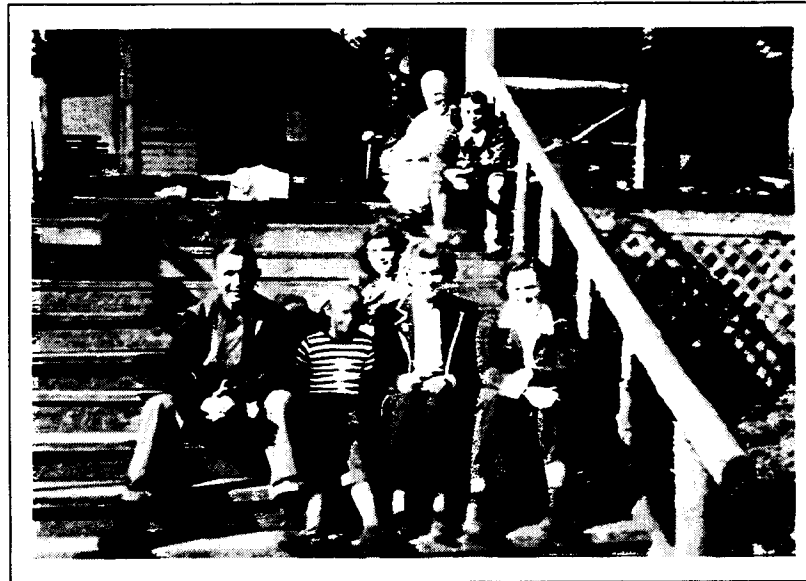
picnic at the top of the rapids at Burnt Chutes. It was exciting to shoot the Lovesick Rapids on the way back! One time Aunt Harriet had a snooze, while we were portaging the canoes, and we discovered her lying in poison ivy! (Her cure, which really worked, was to scrub with Fels Naphtha soap.)

Once or twice a summer there would be a Square Dance either at the hotel or at Auld's boathouse. The living room would be cleared, except for chairs around the edges of the room. People would come from miles around for this event. It was fun to watch all the dancers, or be invited to join in, as they twirled around the room. One time a heavy fog crept in - so thick that some of the dancers stayed and slept wherever they could, while most of those who tried to make it home in boats had to pull in to shore and sleep there till the fog lifted the next morning.

Another event that hotel guests loved was when Cliff would bring in a case of ripe melons just before the time for Lights Out. (The hotel had a small gasoline generator which powered one light in the middle of each guest room, plus others in the main areas of the hotel.) 'Lights Out' was whenever Cliff was ready for bed - usually at 10 pm - but he made an exception for a Square Dance or for a Melon Feast.

Certain people stand out in our memories from those years. Frank and Achsa Schauer had come from Pittsburgh for many years, with their son, Hap. They would take a long canoe trip almost every year into some of the outlying lakes. Mrs. Schauer fascinated us - she was so friendly and kind to youngsters, and we were intrigued with her camping outfits - jodhpurs, a cotton shirt, a leather vest, and high topped

*Guests sitting on the front steps of the hotel
Dad, Robbie, Anne, Mom, Ginnie and other guests in background*



would go over to explore the big lake. We'd ride over to Taylor Bay, walk the trail back to the hotel for

lunch, then return to get the boat and bring it back around to the hotel again, exploring a bit as we came. So it was an all day excursion! We kids were allowed to row a boat out in Bennett's Bay, but not beyond that. With our cousin Tom, we once rowed over to a place on the shoreline where we could cook our own lunch - fried eggs and bacon. Tom was convinced that we had found gold in the rocks there and we came back very excited, but Dad had to explain that it was iron pyrite - fool's gold.

We swam almost every day. There was (and still is) a big rock about 3 or 4 ft. down in the

“Another event that hotel guests loved was when Cliff would bring in a case of ripe melons just before the time for Lights Out.”

were stranded there for a few hours when our boat almost swamped coming back from Lovesick Rapids in very heavy waves. The motor drowned out and Dad had to row us into the beach. When it got dark, he built a small signal fire. Cliff came out in a Chris Craft to search for us, rescued us when he saw the fire, and towed the boat back to the hotel.

We always enjoyed walking up to Porcupine Lake or over to Boundary Lake. We also would picnic at Farm Creek, where we would hunt for blueberries. Another great trip was to portage canoes and go up the river to pic-

boots that laced up. We can still picture her in our minds, sitting on the rocks in front of the hotel, mending a tent! She and her husband each had a good sense of humor. We loved to listen to tales of their adventures. In later years, they had a small cabin built, to the left of the hotel, close to the lake, with a nice fireplace to keep it warm in cold weather.

Mrs. Millie Anderson was a tiny, frail looking white-haired lady who truly enjoyed just being at the lake. She often sat on the rocks in front of the hotel enjoying the sun and the view. She loved to swim, too. So did Hap Schauer, and Doug Haines, who would jump into the lake almost every morning before breakfast for a swim and let out a loud yell! Doug and his wife Thelma were lots of fun. They always brought their own Beautyrest mattress and a trunk of clothes with them! Doug played the piano by ear and would play requests for hours. Bill Harrison owned Turkey Island and every night, rain or shine, he would paddle his canoe over to the hotel to play pool. Mr. Thompson was a professional photographer from Hamilton, Ontario, who took lots of photos every year. Many of those views were used on the hotel post cards.

Bill Taylor lived in the cottage on the bay that bears his last name. He often walked over to the hotel, using a narrow path through the woods, to talk to people. He had many interesting stories about the lake. Mrs. Ketchum, an older lady, used to paddle a canoe from her small island in Paddy's Bay over to the beach in Taylor Bay. Then she walked the trail to the hotel carrying a canvas bag which held mail to be sent out, picked up mail that arrived for her, then paddled back to her island again. Two new couples from Culpepper, Virginia arrived at the hotel one year. The men were avid fishermen who spent their days out on

the lake, while their wives were left at the hotel. They happened to be seated at our table in the dining room. One day the ladies asked the adults at the table where they could take their husbands for a good time at night. Ardbeg was recommended!

What a joy it was when a road was constructed into Bennett's Bay! One morning in the 1950's, Dad went out in the boat and was gone a long time. We were sitting on the front porch of the hotel, heard a motor in the back, looked up, and there was our car driving across the grass by the hotel! We couldn't believe our eyes! Cliff had told Dad that a new road under construction was just about finished and it was probably OK to try driving in to the hotel, so he did! The problems came later, after we packed the car to go home - the car was so low that we kids had to get out and walk over all the places that might scrape the undercarriage of the car. So we walked up all the hills, over the rocks and through mud, etc. The road in to the Top Lake today is a super highway in comparison!

Over the years, since we first went to the lake, there have been many events that have changed the way people live there now. We remember the very first time we saw a *float plane* fly into the bay and land at the old dock - it must have been in the late forties! Mona reminded us that the pilot was Ab Dinan. Most cottages on the lake now rely on *electricity*, which was almost unheard of in our early years. It must have been in the fifties that a Hydro line finally came into Bennett's Bay, and even later till some underwater lines were installed.

After the Royal Wah Wash Kesh Hotel and surrounding buildings burned in the 1950 devastating fire, sleeping cottages were built and people walked to the new dining room (the old mill building, moved from Taylor Bay

and converted to a kitchen and dining room) for meals. A new building (the Lodge) was constructed as a home for the Bennetts, with a Rec Room. Many of the cottages on Bennett's Bay were built in the 50's or 60's, with bedrooms and living areas. After the Lodge also burned, in 1970, and there was no longer a dining room, the cottages were rented strictly for housekeeping. Gradually, indoor bathrooms with hot water and a kitchen area were added. (This must have been a relief to Mona Bennett, who no longer had all the cooking to do.)

The opening of a store by the Bennett's was a wonderful occurrence. What a convenience it is to buy food and other necessities there and not have to make frequent trips into Parry Sound. The gas pump was moved to land then, too, with an underground tank and a hose long enough to fill boat gas tanks easily.

The ongoing improvement of the roads into the lake has made it much more accessible for cars. The construction of the Federal dock was a highlight since it provided access to outlying parts of the lake for people who owned cottages without road access, and large parking areas were provided. The Provincial Dock in the Narrows provided further access. These docks opened all parts of the lake to cottagers. Another event that changed the lake was the sale of lots on Crown land, in Indian Narrows. There are now 17 cottages in that area.

Boats have changed a great deal over the years. Some of us remember wooden row boats, 5hp motors, frequent use of canoes on camping trips, and quiet days and evenings. Now we hear motor noise much of the day - especially on Civic Holiday weekends. Family boats are much bigger and faster, and *personal watercraft* are a new mode of transportation. *Waterskiing* and

tubing are favorite activities now. *Snowmobiling* is popular when there is a cold snowy winter. The *Cramadog Club* helps groom the trails and sponsors a Big Barbecue Dinner in the summer, at Bennett's Boathouse, where annual meetings of the Wah Wash Kesh Conservation Association are also held.

Fishing has deteriorated over the years, unfortunately - especially for big pickerel and bass. There is no longer a *Post Office* at the lake, but there is rural delivery. More people have *telephones* at their cottages (some *radio phones*), most now have TV's, and some have *satellite dishes*. Many also bring *computers* to the lake.

Water levels in the lake have fluctuated widely over the years. We remember that when the original dam went out, it was tricky to go down the river toward Deep Bay, or to get through Indian Narrows. When the current dam was built, some of the rocks in the river were blasted out so navigation wasn't so tricky. Many cottagers will remember helping with sandbagging the present dam, too. Over a hundred volunteers worked on that project, which probably gave the dam an additional 10 years of use. But low water is certainly a hazard in dry summers. So now we're all eagerly waiting for the *new dam!*

What has meant the most to us over all these years are the friendships - generations of families and people we have come to know and love. Someone once remarked that it's an amazing group of people who go to Wah Wash Kesh each summer - unusually intelligent, committed to families, passionate about the environment and our natural resources, and enjoying a life where people truly appreciate each other and are not dependent on the whims of weather or the attractions of city life to find creative ways to entertain themselves.

Dam To Be Built In 2001!

At the Y2000 Annual General Meeting, I outlined an estimate of the funding required to build the dam at \$375,000:

- Phase I - \$20K (prelim study completed)
- Phase II - \$45K (detailed engineering study nearly completed)
- Phase III - \$15K (contract supervision yet to be done)
- Phase IV - \$295K (estimated construction costs to build the dam)

I also outlined the sources of our funding for the rebuilding:

- Hydro One - \$25K (committed)
- Association - \$27K (fund raising completed)
- MNR - \$198K (committed, yr2000 budget only 100K)
- FEDNOR - \$125K (approval still pending)

We felt that FEDNOR approval would come reasonably fast and that we could go to tender this fall and have the dam built by now. Unfortunately, that has not happened yet! Our consultant RG Robinson did tender the job and arranged a site visit to the dam for all potential contractors at the end of August. Then the contractors had about 1-2 weeks to prepare their bids. Five contractors put forward bids. However, before we could award a contract, we needed confirmation from FEDNOR that all approvals had been completed and that FEDNOR funding had been secured. As of this writing (Nov 1), this approval has still not been received.

Naturally, we could not accept any of these bids and turned them back to the contractors. Although the FEDNOR process has been slow, I have every reason to believe that it's just a matter of time before the funding comes through.

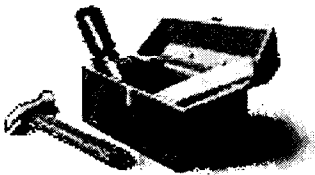
So our plan now is to re-tender the construction in the spring of 2001. This will have the advantage of giving contractors more time to prepare their bids and thereby reduce the cost of the project. Materials can be accumulated at the lake over the summer and construction can then begin in late summer when water levels have traditionally been the lowest.

MNR continues to be very supportive. They have offered to set up a Memorandum of Understanding (an agreement we would sign with the MNR) as a vehicle for transferring MNR's current year's budget (~\$100K) to a trust fund managed by the Association. Then next year, MNR can budget for the additional funds needed to rebuild the dam.

Andy VURMA

Tim Stiles CONSTRUCTION

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WAH-WASH-KESH CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION BUDGET FOR 2001

INCOME	
Dues.....	\$8550
Interest	\$50
Fund Raising	\$1000
TOTAL:	\$9600

EXPENSES	
Phone	\$1200
Copying	\$900
Insurance	\$1400
Postage	\$900
Office Supply	\$900
Bank Charges	\$60
Meals	\$250
Travel	\$750
Prof. Fees	\$900
Misc	\$1400
TOTAL:	\$8660
PROJECTED SURPLUS:	\$940

NOTE: The Dam Fund is being held in trust in a separate account and currently stands at: approximately \$400.

FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE DOCK

(Based upon Preliminary Data) (Based on Estimate for the year 2000) by Ted Heggart

Sticker Revenues:	\$2,825
Major Contributions:	\$350
Donations:	\$54
TOTAL REVENUE (year 2000).....	\$3,229
Maintenance Estimate	\$3,300
Docks In and Out.....	\$200
TOTAL EXPENSES (year 2000)	\$3,500
NET EXPENSE (year 2000)	\$281

DOCK RESERVE FUND	
(Beginning of year 2000)	\$2,060
Net Expenses	\$281
ESTIMATED RESERVE	
(End of year 2000)	\$1,779
Projected Revenues (for 2001)	\$3,300
Projected Maintenance Costs (for 2001)	\$500
ESTIMATED RESERVE FUNDS	
(end of 2001)	\$4,579

Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association Membership Renewal

Please fill out the membership renewal form, tear if off & MAIL it & your cheque to:

- **Duncan Robertson - Treasurer**
346 Kerrybrook Drive
Richmond Hill, Ontario L4C 3R1



Wah-Wash-Kesh DOCK Renewal

Please fill out the DOCK renewal form, tear if off & MAIL it & your cheque to:

- **Duncan Robertson - Treasurer**
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2001 WAH-WASH-KESH CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
(Please return this form with your cheque as soon as possible - \$30.00 per member)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: () _____ CB Handle: _____

Cottage Phone: () _____ E-mail: _____

2001 Memberships for the following individuals in your household @ \$30 each:

Number of Cottage Directories you wish to order @ \$10.00 each: _____

DOCK PERMIT DECALS - for all Indian Narrows Dock & Bennett's Bay Dock users
(Please return this form with your cheque as soon as possible - \$25.00 per boat)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Number of boats @ \$25 each: _____