



Caprice III



Photo by Timothy Du Vernet

Wooden boats are an integral part of Muskoka’s fabric. None more so than the Caprice III of Port Sandfield.

Caprice III was to be the poster boat for the 2020 MLA Antique Boat Show. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic our boat show has been deferred for the safety of participants and spectators. We are fortunate to be able share Caprice’s heritage thanks to Alf Mortimer, her former owner, who shared stories with his daughter Pam Blair, who is the mother of the current owner Jonathan Blair. Jonathan is the owner and manager of the Port Sandfield Marina. Pam shared the fascinating connection to Bob Silcox, who is another former owner of the Caprice and an MLA member.

The timeline below touches on the original owner, the second owner - his son in law, three generations of one of Muskoka’s most respected marina families, and finally a renowned boat builder. It is important to note Caprice was probably one of the most sophisticated victims of the trend to fiberglass boats.

Early provenance: Earl Barnes designed a

small number of boats for Minett Shields in 1935-36. One of them burned and was destroyed and another had her boat house collapse on her. Caprice is the only one of the three that we are aware of that still exists.

Caprice is a 26-foot streamlined launch with a unique design built for Harold Balm. She has a planing hull and is capable of 35 MPH.

In 1953 when Bob Silcox was in the market for a wooden boat, he went in his Duke Playmate to his father-in-law, Harold Balm’s cottage.

“Harold said pay me \$1,500.00 but you have to get the Caprice out of my boat house by 11:00 pm tonight” She was on timbers and according to Bob Silcox there were some challenges with working in the dark with chain hoists but he did it!

Bob Silcox’s family water skied behind Caprice. “The kids walked all over the decks, ran wild over the boat”. This kind of treatment was not unusual for powerful wooden boats in the 60’s and 70’s. It was not uncommon for a water-skiing wooden boat to sink in its boat house



Photo by Timothy Du Vernet

Continued on page 3

In this Issue...

President’s Message.....	2	Culinary Corner.....	5
Caprice III <i>continued</i>	3	Mirror Lake Radar Device	6
2020 MLA Bursary Winner	3	New MSDC Exhibit.....	7
RAMP & Boats in Motion	4	Local’s Corner.....	8



Get mad as hell, man the barricades, raise the battle flags and break out the pitchforks!



We have been in email conversations this spring with quite a few cottagers with various concerns and we have attempted to respond to all inquiries. One seasonal resident has been sending emails with constructive thoughts on the “hot files” in Muskoka and the MLA’s involvement. He has recommended that we get “mad as hell, man the barricades, raise the battle flags and break out the pitchforks” regarding

development and noisy boats, just to mention a few items. The truth of the matter is that the MLA is working on these files and many more, but the letter writer has made us aware that we may not be communicating comprehensively enough. In many cases “our wins” take a long time to get over the goal line. However, the letter writer has made sure we are not becoming lackadaisical.

Therefore, aside from our signature Regatta and Boat show (unfortunately cancelled this year) the following summary speaks to several of our hot files.

Opposing Unsustainable Development and Advocating for Better Development Policies

Through our government and land use committee, the MLA monitors all manner of development proposals that are being advocated for in the District of Muskoka, Gravenhurst, Bracebridge the Township of Muskoka Lakes and periodically Seguin Township. We participate actively in official plan policy reviews as well. Our work has identified many submissions that that are not in keeping with municipal official plan policies that seek to bend or sometimes break the rules. We prepare letters of objection and, for the most critical, attend council meetings to voice our objection and where necessary intervene through the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal (LPAT). We do our best with the resources at hand. You have supported us with funds to fight Touchstone, Villas and Legacy but it is here where we find the gaps in policy that are weak in preserving Muskoka. Hence, Directors of the MLA have joined the Minett Joint Policy Steering Committee and the TML official plan working group. We work closely with the Friends of Muskoka. Currently, three of their executives including their president are in leadership roles with us. One will become the President of the MLA in July 2022. Strong policy will provide the basis for sustainable development. Strong councils will uphold their policies.

Advocating for Seasonal Residents at District Council

Since the District was formed in the early 1970’s, seasonal residents have been counted as half a person (50% weighting) and each full-time resident is counted as a full person (100% weighting) for the purpose of calculating the number of seats at District Council. This disadvantages municipalities with more seasonal residents (ie the townships) and is grossly unfair. The MLA recently took the lead on submitting a joint letter with Friends of Muskoka to the District objecting to this 50% weighting and is in the process of actively lobbying the district politicians. We were very pleased that on May 28th, the District’s Municipal Modernization Committee unanimously supported our request for vote 100% weighting for seasonal residents. The MLA Board has formed a working group that will stay on top of this issue, and make our views known on other issues being dealt with by the Municipal Modernization Committee - including how to calculate the number of Seasonal Residents, whether the District

Chair is appointed by Council or elected, and District Council’s size. We have significant vested interests in all of the above.

Protecting our Environment and Water Quality

Our seedling program facilitates the planting of thousands of infant trees each year to help prevent erosion in Muskoka. Our Water Quality program has over 100 MLA citizen scientists sampling water in many locations across our lakes. Another environmental accomplishment of ours is one of our directors has been appointed to The Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group, reporting to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks. Their function is to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister to help protect and safeguard the Muskoka River watershed and advise on flooding mitigation strategies.

Helping to Address Unsafe and Noisy Boats

Dealing with obnoxious boats is something we are serious about. In fact, we have initiatives with Safe Quiet Lakes (SQL) to work on this. We are in the early stages of supporting SQL’s National Decibel Coalition created to convince Transport Canada on the need for national boat exhaust noise standards.

We have a traffic calming project on the Indian River near Mirror Lake with an MLA radar device and a second device on the Joe River at Ames Narrows. Our radar devices help slow down boats and lessen wakes and as a result reduce erosion.

Communicating about COVID-19

The MLA approached the District Chair and local Mayors in April to encourage them to provide clear communications to help with the strained relations between year-round and seasonal residents due to COVID-19. As a result, they issued a joint statement which we circulated in one of our regular updates with relevant information to address COVID-19 in Muskoka. On June 18th, we hosted a Webinar with all the Mayors in our catchment area and John Klinck, District Chair. They answered our questions relating to COVID-19 and other key issues of concern. We also mailed out personal cards to those seasonal residents not able to cross the border to Muskoka due to the pandemic.

Supporting the Local Community

This Spring awarded a bursary to a student graduating from a Muskoka high school to help fund their post-secondary education.

Good Neighbour Code

Finally, we recently created and sent to our members the Good Neighbour Code <https://www.mla.on.ca/MLACODE> to remind them and their guests and renters of how to be considerate to our cottage neighbours. This code was emailed to all our members and a plasticized version inserted in the Yearbook.

Membership

The trickledown effect of our assertive programming work is our membership renewals, ahead of last year’s, and new memberships, especially this spring are very strong. Our vibrant membership committee is responsible for these positive numbers. This does not mean we can rest on our laurels, but it does signify a bright future for the MLA.

No, we have not broken out the pitchforks, but we have raised the battle flags and when appropriate and on the important files at our land use meetings - we do get mad as hell!

Lawton Osler - President



Caprice III *Continued from page 1*

after rough use. Eventually there came to a time when Bob Silcox could not count on being able to get the Caprice's Chrysler straight 8-cylinder engine started. It was time for a boat that was not high maintenance and besides the popular thought, wooden boats were now going out of fashion. Bob went to Alf Mortimer at Port Sandfield Marina in 1973 and made a trade for a brand new Sea Ray outboard. However, Bob Silcox regrets trading Caprice to this day.

Caprice went straight to the Port Sandfield Marina's storage barn. She eventually went to Gary Clark for restoration including planking. However, after she had the woodwork done and varnish stripped, she went back to storage before work was completed. She was dissembled, her seats and engine were removed, and she sat hardware free for



The girl standing on the deck of The Caprice in this 1955 photograph is Isadora (Issy) Kelly, former owner Bob Silcox's niece. Issy cottages in Muskoka today.

approximately 20 years. Jonathan Blair, Alf's grandson is the current owner of Caprice and he wanted to finish the restoration for his Grandfather, so he sent Caprice back to Gary Clark. When restoration was complete it went back to Port Sandfield Marina for mechanical refurbishment and the engine was rebuilt and the two gas tanks were replaced.

Aside from the history of ownership and restoration there is always an interesting story when researching boat history and Bob Silcox and Alf Mortimer each had the same fascinating story about a Lazy Susan in the Caprice! In the second seat of the Caprice there is a compartment with doors that dropped down to reveal a Lazy Susan. Its purpose was to hold crystal glasses.

After four owners, Caprice III is fully restored back to her original condition in Port Sandfield.

The 8th Annual MLA 2020 Bursary Recipient is Makayla Smith-Lagrandeur



Makayla is a local resident, growing up on the Wahta Mohawks Indian Reserve in Bala. As an honor student from Gravenhurst High School, she successfully completed her grade 12 with an over-all average of 86%. Makayla will be attending the Law Clerk program at Georgian College in Barrie this fall. She looks forward to continuing her vision of becoming a family lawyer one day in

order to help people in her community. For more information on the MLA Bursary and Makayla please visit our website www.mla.on.ca/bursary

MLA Membership

Your contribution matters. Help to preserve the Muskoka you cherish for future generations. If you haven't already done so, please renew your membership at www.mla.on.ca or by calling our office at 705-765-5723.



Cottages are special places.
Let us help you protect them.

David Browne • Cockburn Island
dbrowne@mmlr.ca • 416-520-7042

Darcy Browne • Cockburn Island
dareybrowne@mmlr.ca • 416-520-7042

Philip Goad • Laurie Island
pgoad@mmlr.ca • 416-738-4412



RECOMMENDED BY THE MLA FOR MEMBER INSURANCE SERVICES

Empties Drop Off @ Eveleigh Transfer Station for Port Carling Lions Club

Each year the Lions have a Peninsula Sale to fund important programs that the club supports. This year it is cancelled due to the pandemic. In an effort to make up for this shortfall, please consider donating beer, wine and liquor empties at the Lion's drop off bin at the Eveleigh Transfer Station. Donations of empties will help reduce the shortfall in funding.

Unprecedented times call for unprecedented actions

A small group of Muskoka citizens started a group – RAMP (Residents Against Muskoka Poverty) – during the summer of 2019, recognizing an opportunity to shine a light on the issue of poverty in Muskoka. Plans were underway to launch this initiative in May 2020, and then COVID-19 happened.

Our reality shifted, but not the intent or the purpose of RAMP. In fact, the discussion around a strong Muskoka, the importance of understanding the impact on our community, and those who are living in poverty and the working poor, has perhaps never been so important.

In conversations with the West Muskoka Food Bank, new faces are showing up in need of support. Professionals, business owners, and others who would never have considered needing its service, are now reluctantly at the doorstep.

We continue to hear the phrase, “we are all in this together”. Members of RAMP believe that this focus on community, on working together, and

caring for our neighbours, speaks directly to our mission as an important initiative aimed at a unified and resilient Muskoka.

RAMP will be sharing more information throughout the season, with the sole intent of shining a light on poverty in Muskoka and supporting programs that are directly working to lift people “up” and “out”.

Our mission statement: To build awareness and encourage support of initiatives that build self-sufficiency in the Muskoka community.

Our vision statement: To create a community committed to a resilient and strong Muskoka with a focus on lifting people out of poverty.

While summer 2020 is likely to be an unusual one, we look forward to seeing our community members as soon as we safely are able. Stay safe and stay tuned for more information from RAMP.

A strong Muskoka is good for us all.

Please view our website: rampupmuskoka.ca



Wooden Boats in Motion, August 8, 2020

While COVID-19 required cancellation of the MLA's traditional August Antique Boat Show, it is certainly not a reason to keep keen wooden boaters from getting together... to go cruising.

On the morning of Saturday August 8, your boat show committee members will be on the water in their wooden boats looking forward to wooden boat enthusiasts joining them for an informal leisurely cruise. The aim is simply to enjoy our boats in motion, cruising together for less than two hours and then heading home again – a contactless way to have good fun.

Boats that choose to cruise on Lake Muskoka are invited to assemble by 10:30 AM on Mirror Lake just south of Port Carling on the Indian River, nicely out of the way of other boat traffic. Those that choose to cruise on Lake Rosseau will assemble by 10:30 AM in the bay on the Indian River opposite Echo Point near the canoe cut, nicely out of the way of other boat traffic. Boat show committee members will lead the assembled flotilla on a gentle cruise on their respective lakes, concluding near the mouth the Indian River by noon. Boaters can then return home or, better yet, arrange on their own to get together for lunch at venues nearby that may be open.

In early July the MLA will email prior Boat Show participants confirming arrangements. Any and all wooden boats will be very welcome as 'The Antique and Classic Boat Society is joining us in celebrating vintage boating' on August 8th!



New Members

Please welcome the following as new members of the MLA! From April 29, 2020 to June 28, 2020

Jamie AITKEN
David BOUNSALL
Deborah DELANEY
Janice FELLER
Catherine FENN

Anne Mette FILIPPINI
Christine GILLMORE
Martin GRAHAM
Julie GROSSMAN
Michael HARTT

Lisa and Mike HUDSON
Ann KATIC
Darius KNIGHT
Daniel LESLIE
David MELO

Kate MOSTOWYK
Lauren MOSTOWYK
John REUCASSEL
Brenda RYAN
Anne STANWAY

Raymond STEIN
Susan SUTIN



Culinary Corner

Are you a Foodie? We are! The staff at the office of the MLA love food! We love to explore it, eat it and cook it. Using delicious recipes and fresh ingredients. If you want to join us in the fun, please submit some of your favorite recipes for entertaining to info@mla.on.ca and with your permission to share, you could see it here in our new “Culinary Corner”

Watermelon Salsa



INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 teaspoons lime zest (from about 1 lime)
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice (from about 3 limes)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Freshly ground pepper
- 3 cups seeded and finely chopped watermelon
- 1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1 mango, peeled and diced
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 8 fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt
- Tortilla or pita chips, for serving

DIRECTIONS

Stir together the lime zest, lime juice, sugar and 3/4 teaspoon pepper in a bowl. Add the watermelon, cucumber, mango, jalapeno, onion and basil and toss gently. Chill the salsa until ready to serve.

Add the garlic salt just before serving. Serve with tortilla chips.

Reminder- Contactless Yearbook Pick up is Available!

Please don't forget to pick up your 2020 MLA yearbook.

Contactless pick up is available by calling the office at 705-765-5723 or emailing us at info@mla.on.ca.

We will place books in a bin outside the office door with your name on it, if you have called to arrange a pick up.

Please call or email in advance to ensure your book is waiting for you.



WHAT IS IN YOUR WATER?

Hydrogeology Consulting Services (HCS) is bringing comprehensive water quality testing to the Muskoka Lakes this summer to analyze your water supply for contaminants such as nitrates, phosphate, bacteria, metals, and pesticides, with a detailed report comparing your results to the Ontario Drinking Water Standards (ODWS).



Is the well or lake water you use for drinking, cooking, or showering safe?

HCS is bringing comprehensive water quality testing to Muskoka Lakes this summer.

From just \$350 for a 61-parameter potability package.

For information including sampling event dates, package prices, and to-your-door / to-your-dock service, please visit our website:

www.hydrog.ca/muskoka

or contact Chris Helmer:
905.550.0969
chrishelmer@hydrog.ca

APGO Licensed Hydrogeologist
MECP Licensed Well Contractor

The MLA Radar Device is part of the Mirror Lake Traffic Calming Project



Make sure you are smiling when you pass by the device! Kidding aside, it is not a traffic camera but a remarkably effective speed warning educational tool on the Indian River!

The MLA, Safe Quiet Lakes (SQL) and the Township of Muskoka Lakes (TML) have embarked on a traffic calming pilot project in the Mirror Lake and Indian River area on Lake Muskoka.

In March 2020, SQL director Colleen Kennedy delegated to TML about this traffic calming pilot project with help from Susan Eplett, the MLA's second VP. The pilot project involves educating boaters about speed and no wake restrictions, installing 9km/hour signs and no wake buoys along with the MLA's radar device, and working with the OPP to enforce these restrictions

SQL's ask to TML was:

1. To produce and distribute new 9 km/hour speed limit signs in the Indian River and Mirror Lake. SQL will assist with making arrangements with property owners to post the signs.
2. To produce and install 'no wake' buoys at key intervals in the Indian River and Mirror Lake; and
3. Help SQL educate the public about the speed limits and no wake restrictions, including in TML's written and online publications, and at a launch that we are planning with the OPP when public gatherings are safe again.

SQL explained to TML Council that the MLA is also participating in this pilot project and has agreed to supply and install a radar device that will clearly show boaters the speed they are travelling. This will be similar to the MLA's radar device that has been in the Joe River for the past five years.

The TML Council agreed on all three counts with the only adjustment being that SQL provides two 'no wake' buoys.

During May and June 2020, Colleen and our MLA President Lawton Osler scouted out a site for our pilot project on the Forman Narrows on the Indian River, Lake Muskoka side. Colleen arranged with Ray Dawson, a property owner in the area, for permission to situate the radar device on his neighbour's property. The MLA spoke with Dave Moffat of the OPP at another respectful boating event (decibel testing on performance boats) who agreed to provide help with the installation. Finally, Penny Middleton, custodian of the radar device and MLA Director, was asked to bring the radar device and her tools! The big day arrived on June 1st. Everybody was there on time and installation began. The site is on the south side of an oak tree a foot or so from the water on the south side of the Forman narrows. It was agreed to point the device to catch traffic coming from Mirror Lake towards Port Carling. The two main installers, Ray Dawson and Dave Moffat (OPP), decided to install the device more securely (they managed to dig a 4-6 inch hole to set the post in) and adjust its position to face a touch more SE towards Mirror Lake. Ray's wife did a test run in her fishing boat and was able to buzz by dead center in the channel and be consistently picked up by the radar device. It was a great morning.

Since the radar device was installed, Ray Dawson has reported that he has seen a noticeable decrease in speeding in the narrows.

Thanks to Colleen Kennedy for driving the Mirror Lake Project, John Ezard owner of the property where the radar device is installed, Ray Dawson our local advisor, and Penny Middleton for keeping the radar device in working shape. There are other MLA contributors involved in the radar project including Bob Ensor and John Bowlby.

Where does the Mirror Lake pilot project stand today?

Colleen has picked up and is installing 25 new 9km/hour signs and two 'no wake' buoys.

New 'Make No Wake' signage is being developed by SQL with the goal of having 20 signs posted in the area in July.

Media coverage of the traffic calming initiative is being arranged by SQL.

The MLA is delighted to be an integral part of this traffic calming initiative.

This pilot project started because people are passionate about our lake environment. We hope everybody will support this respectful boating undertaking in the Indian River and Mirror Lake, so we can all learn how to make our lakes safer and quieter, with less erosion of our shorelines. We all will benefit.



NEW – Muskoka Discovery Center to Increase Focus on Environmental Sustainability

Muskoka Lakes Association is excited to partner with MSDC in creating a Sustainability Exhibit to welcome visitors to the newly revamped exhibit space. Readers may know that MSDC is currently constructing a boathouse and exhibit space to house the Wanda III, an heirloom luxury yacht from the Eaton family of Lake Rosseau. Readers may also know of the fabulous Watershed Wonders exhibit which explores Muskoka's natural environment. New to MSDC is the recently completed Water is Life exhibit. It was developed in collaboration with Rama First Nation and explores an Indigenous perspective on water. Challenging people to re-examine their relationship with water, it showcases the important work of Indigenous women in their role as 'Water Keepers'. Knitting this all together MSDC is launching an umbrella Sustainability theme. It will focus on how we all have a role to play in protecting our precious land and water. Together we can and will make a difference. MLA looks forward to working with MSDC on this important topic that affects us all.

To learn more, please see the upcoming August edition of Reflections magazine or explore the MSDC website at www.realmuskoka.com. A Notice of when this publication is available will be communicated closer to the time of release.

Chris Cragg, MLA Director and Chair of the Environment Committee



Web Member Directory!

Do you have your yearbook at home or at the cottage? Did you forget to bring it with you? With our new password protected online Web Member Directory it doesn't matter if you forget your book! Launched in September of 2019 you can now connect with your Muskoka friends all year long, by looking up their contact information in the MLA Online Member Directory. If you haven't checked it out yet, we encourage you to take a look! It is easy, Log Into your account with your primary Email or MLA Membership Number and Password. You can then access the directory by clicking on "Member Directory" on the homepage of the website. You can use the alpha search, type in a first or last name, or event look up your MLA geographic code and see all the other MLA members in your area.



THE GARDINER
TEAM

CLIENT FOCUSED · RESULTS DRIVEN

JIM GARDINER* 705.646.7358
IRIS GARDINER* 705.646.6367

CHESTNUT PARK REAL ESTATE LIMITED, BROKERAGE
chestnutpark.com | Office: 705.765.6878
110 Medora Street, Port Carling, Ontario P0B 1J0

Call us for a **FREE**
and confidential
property evaluation

LIST LOCAL. MARKET GLOBAL.

CHESTNUT PARK
REAL ESTATE LIMITED, BROKERAGE
CHRISTIE'S
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

Local's Corner

Taylor Farm

You may know them for their great strawberries, or you may have just had your septic system constructed or perhaps they just graded your cottage road. Taylor Farm does it all, and very well.

Murray Taylor bought the farm in 1981, and took over the gravel pit. At the time he also had beef cattle on the farm, while running Murray's Meat Market in Windermere. His stepson Graham Shaw moved in to help with the farm, and decided to plant 10 acres of strawberries on the arable land. That was 28 years ago, and the both the trucking and gravel business, as well as the strawberry business, has thrived ever since.

The farm employs 10 people, including Graham's two sons, and the trucking business another 10 people. Four of his staff are from Mexico and have worked on the farm for years, planting, harvesting, maintaining and generally overseeing all aspects of the strawberry farm. This year COVID struck,



and Graham's Mexican employees were unable to cross the border. All hands on deck meant all four children helped with the critical spring planting, and the strawberry fields are now standing tall and firm.

Farming in Muskoka is not without its own set of perils. This spring was a really difficult one, with many temperature extremes and some really, really cold nights. One night in May registered -9 degrees Celsius! And there have been some years where the crop simply couldn't be saved. Luckily for us all this year, 2020 wasn't one of them.

The pick your own strawberries are now in season, and will be until almost Thanksgiving. Naturally Taylor Farms is following all the provincial COVID guidelines to ensure the safety of both staff and customers.

The farm market is open year round, and sells a tempting array of locally sourced frozen meat, fresh bakery items, vegetables, and frozen food. It also offers take out lunch items during the off-season.

Graham and his family feel blessed to run this business in Muskoka. They are actively involved in the business community both through their trucking and gravel business, as well as reselling to local retailers.

If you haven't dropped in lately, pop in to either buy freshly picked strawberries, or bring the family for some old fashioned pick your own berries. Does anything beat an Ontario strawberry?

1490 Dee Bank Road, Windermere

705 769 2368 (strawberries) 705 769 2100 (trucking and gravel)



Contact Us

Muskoka Lakes Association, Box 298, 65 Joseph Street, Port Carling, ON P0B 1J0
P 705-765-5723 | F 705-765-3203 | E info@mla.on.ca | W www.mla.on.ca

