

Dock Talk is a publication of the Healey Lake Property Owners Association (HLPOA)  
Stay connected with HLPOA at [www.healeylake.org](http://www.healeylake.org)

## *From the President*

*Dan MacLeod*

Seeing as how this is the last issue of Dock Talk for this season, I guess the season is really over. Time to put the boat to bed, put the lawn chairs away and lament about how short the summer was. This leads me to comment, "What's Irish and stays out all winter?? Patio Furniture.

On to more positive thoughts, the open competition for the design to emblazon our Regatta T Shirts is still open and remain open until May 24/2010. The response has been sporadic; therefore we decided to keep the submission open until the Annual Meeting in May 2010.

The Website will be featuring a Volunteer "Roll Call" section, featuring positions for upcoming events that need to be filled. Examples that come to mind are the Regatta (Winner sheet runners, prize buyers etc.) and the Bottle Run (runners to pick up bottles and run to the collection barge). I feel that if our membership knew that volunteers were needed and have advance knowledge of these events, more people would be giving of their time.

It has been decided that the Thunder Box Contest will be put off for next year, however it will be run in the near future.

Your Executive had a busy year what with the new Dam Dock, replacing roofs, making sure all the fire pumps and hazard lights were working and testing the water quality. These actions are not

completed on their own. While being President is both a gratifying and rewarding role, it is the efforts of the Executive and volunteers throughout the season that makes all the functions happen. The HLPOA executives are a dedicated, committed group and are a pleasure to work with and we also have fun. Thanks very much to all of you. If you happen to meet these people I would ask you to say thank you and if you want to get involved, please call me.

Do take care and have a safe winter.

As always if there are any questions or concerns with the HLPOA, please call me.

Regards,

Dan MacLeod

President

Cell 416-723-1999

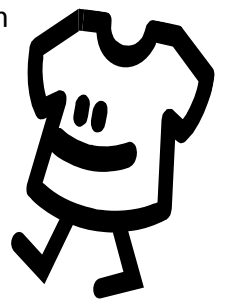
E-mail [danjohnmac@rogers.com](mailto:danjohnmac@rogers.com)

## *Mark Your Calendar Now!*

**T-shirt contest:** Deadline has been extended to May 24/2010. **The contest is open to cottagers to submit drawings to commemorate the 2010 regatta .**

**Criteria includes Healey Lake, Regatta and your imagination.**

Contestants are invited to scan their creation and e-mail to Dan MacLeod.



## The Hospital Beat

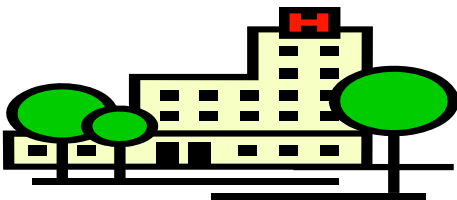
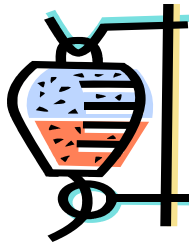
Over the summer *Dock Talk* has been reporting on the process for acquiring and dispensing antivenom serum for treating poisonous Eastern Massassauga Rattlesnake bites and also the need the hospital has for new ventilators.

First the antivenom situation: there is currently no central depot to track the number of snakebites but the West Parry Sound Health Centre (WPSHC) Foundation is reporting that 9 of the 14 bites that they are aware of were treated in the Emergency Dept. and Intensive Care Unit of their facility. This is in fact providing a regional service from an institution that is basically funded as a local hospital.

At a cost of more than \$20,000. to treat a single snakebite, the administration remains hopeful that they can recover these dollars from the Ministry of Health.

On Nov. 12, WPSHC reported the arrival of very much needed equipment: two ventilators and an IV pump.

This past summer saw the air ambulance land 27 times at the WPSHC. We are most fortunate to have access to health care in our own recreational backyard.



Contact your MPP if you want to encourage funding for the antivenom treatment programme. If you would like more information or would like to donate to the WPSHC, you can do so by contacting the Foundation office at

- Tel: 1 888 262-0436
- Online at <http://wpschcf.com/newsletter.html?action=view&id=13>

## A Word to the Wise Cell Phones & Fueling

If you don't want your cell phone to light up your life, think about this little device when fueling your vehicle.

A variety of incidents have been documented:

- A phone placed on a trunk lid rang during fueling and fire destroyed the car and the fire pump,
- Answering the phone during fueling ignited the gasoline fumes and resulted in severe burns to the person's face,
- A ringing phone in a person's pocket resulted in burns to the thigh and groin.

So... Four rules for safe fueling include:

- Turn off the engine of your vehicle,
- Do not smoke,
- Do not use your cell phone. Turn it off or leave it in the vehicle,
- Do not reenter the vehicle during fueling.

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## Gone Missing!

A small boat trailer that was taken from the trailer parking lot (by the marinas) just before the Thanksgiving weekend. The trailer was old, white and unlicensed but is still valuable for small boat removal on the lake. If someone mistakenly thought that it was abandoned, we would appreciate being contacted so we can retrieve it in the Spring. Contact: Dan MacLeod



### Apple Dip

- 2 blocks of Philadelphia Cream Cheese
- 1 cup of brown sugar
- 1 container of Sheriffs caramel sauce
- 4 - 6 Skors chocolate bars

Blend together cream cheese and brown sugar in mixing bowl. Spread mixture on flat serving plate (with edges). Microwave caramel sauce for a few seconds to loosen it, and pour it over the cream cheese. Chop Skors chocolate bars (finely) and crumble on top of the caramel sauce. Chill. .Serve with Granny Smith apples.

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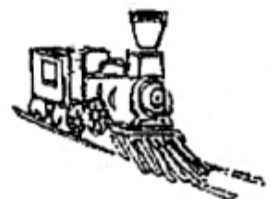
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*Loons ...*

*prepare for winter*

*Nancy Gilchrist*

Summer has quickly slipped by us once again. Our weather was certainly not record for heat but nevertheless any day spent at the cottage is truly appreciated. Loons were spotted in many locations on our lake and the last weekend in August I spotted a loon parent and their one young loon fishing in back bay. If anyone else saw any young I would appreciate a telephone call (705-375-2324) for I will be completing the loon survey for our lake soon and it is important to have as accurate information as possible.

This issue I wanted to concentrate on the loons and their behaviour as well as the rogue or “floater” loons.

Loons are perceived as very calm “peaceful” birds that bring joy to many cottagers. Loons are large, usually the largest swimming creature on the lake and they assert their dominance by bold intimidation. Although they can intimidate some other animals, loons don’t always use their power. Beavers, one of the only animals that can match the loon’s size do not shy away from confrontations with loons. Mother ducks with their brood of ducklings in tow have much to fear. I have researched information, but have heard of nothing similar happening on our lake, of loons diving at a distance and swimming to the ducklings. Typically, the ducklings disappear as they are pulled below the surface and are killed, but are not eaten. Larger ducklings and adults are killed by a powerful thrust of the loons sharp bill into the abdomen. Even Canada geese, which are large and aggressive birds are vulnerable to attacks from loons. While the duck –killing behaviour of loons is not common and widespread, it happens often enough to make scientists wonder what purpose it plays in the life of loons. The aggressive side of the loon’s personality is clearly demonstrated by these behaviours although there is not a clear understanding of why it occurs.



Loons have also been documented to harass other animals that are not aquatic. Believe it or not they have been observed harassing a black bear that was attempting to swim across a lake. A group of loons has also surrounded a coyote that was swimming across a lake. At first the coyote was trying to catch the loons as they called, swam and dove around it. After a few minutes the coyote moved away from the loon group, but some of them continued to harass it. Before it could reach shore, it became fatigued and drowned. It is hard to believe that those peaceful birds can be this aggressive.

Many large lakes, particularly in areas with high loon populations, have small or large groups of adult loons that are not members of a breeding pair. They move around to nearby lakes throughout the summer, and on any one day, several or all of them may be in an identifiable group. Loon experts refer to members of these groups as rogue loons or “floaters”. Floaters are adult loons who don’t have territories or mates. They are capable of breeding and sometimes take over a territory during the summer or in a future year. Floaters arrive soon after the territorial pairs in the spring and stay on the lakes until fall migration. Not all members of a floater group are non-breeders. Occasionally, a member of a breeding pair from a small nearby lake flies to a large lake to feed and join the group for a time.

Floater groups trespass into the territories of nesting pairs frequently. During the incubation period, the loon not on the nest typically joins the group and interacts non-aggressively with them. The group swims together, and it appears that the territorial loon tries to lead them out of the area. At times, the peaceful nature of the group becomes agitated and aggressive displays occur. Occasionally, both members of a territorial pair will join the group, particularly in late summer.

After the chicks have hatched, the floater groups pose a threat to the territorial pairs. When they approach a territory boundary or a nursery area, the pair moves out to intercept them and escort them away. The chicks are often sent into the weeds

along the shoreline where they wait until they are retrieved by the adults. Floater loons sometimes kill young loon chicks. The purpose of these attacks is related to natural selection and is a common occurrence in the animal world.

The loons on our lake have headed south for the winter. Here are some migrating facts about the Common Loon. During September, group feeding is quite common as loons gather on larger lakes while migrating. Our loons will be migrating south sometime in the month of October to the area around the Gulf of Mexico. For the loons to be able to “take off” from any lake, the loon runs along the surface into the wind. The distance needed to gain flight depends on wind speed; in calm times the bird may run as far as several hundred meters before it gains enough speed to take off.

Young loons must wait until their flight feathers grow and their wings are strong enough which usually doesn't occur until late November.

Loons are usually found in groups on the wintering grounds in the Gulf of Mexico. The Common Loon is flightless for a few weeks after moulting all of its wing feathers at the same time in midwinter. All loons have grayish feathers in the winter time (they lose their distinctive black and white checker markings and white necklace). Immature birds resemble adult birds in winter plumage however the white feathers of the belly and wing are present all year long. Loons moult again in late winter before returning to nesting grounds in spring. The dull winter coat is replaced by their beautiful black and white coat.

Next spring, the loons will return in pairs, when the ice starts melting, to their nesting grounds to claim their territory. They are solitary nesters. Until recently, loons were thought to mate for life. Banding studies have shown that loons will sometimes switch mates after a failed nesting attempt even between nestings in the same season.

If anyone has any information they would like to share about the loons on our lake or have any concerns about the loons please feel free to

contact me, Nancy Gilchrist at 705-375-2324 in the summer months.

One other interesting fact to leave you with about our Common Loon is that they are related to the penguin and their life expectancy may be anywhere between 15 and 30 years.

Have a wonderful winter and see you all next year on the lake.

## *Bear Essentials*

In the early Fall Eunice MacLeod mentioned that Ken Ludlow, long time cottager on the north shore of Healey Lake had what so many cottagers had reported this summer – a bear visit. Since it was an extraordinary visit, *Dock Talk* followed up with Ken.

On a recent Sunday afternoon, a cub accompanied by mother bear appeared on Ken's property. Of course mother bear was not about to leave until her offspring was ready to move on but in due time they both meandered off. Over the next couple of days, there was evidence of more bear visits with clear paw marks evident on the van. But more surprises were still to come: the following morning the sliding door of the van was open and the door latch had been moved. Ken was able to adjust the latch and close the door but the bear was not finished yet. The next day the latch had been removed and once again the sliding van door was standing open. This time however there was no easy fix. Ken tied the sliding door closed and following his prearranged plan drove to Toronto where he was able to have the car dealership repair the door - at considerable expense.

Prior to the bear visit, Ken had done some grocery shopping and had stored a bag of potatoes and onions in his van thinking this would be a cooler spot than in the cottage. Although there was no damage in the van, in hindsight he thinks this was the attraction. In the end those were two expensive bags of veggies.

## Stay Connected!

Just a reminder to stay connected by accessing the website at [www.healeylake.org](http://www.healeylake.org). Ralph Courtney kindly responded to our web master Dave Duggan's request for photos. Following is a sneak preview. Don't miss Ralph's amazing photos that have been posted to the web site. Questions! Comments! Contact Dave Duggan via the web site.



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### *The Final Word*

There is just about enough space left for me to say "thanks" to Nancy Gilchrist for the interesting journey that we have been on with the loons. After reading her informative and knowledgeable columns in *Dock Talk*, I have had a new appreciation as I have watched these lovely birds. Obviously we humans are not the only ones with complex lives.

And now as the final issue of 2009 goes to press, my wish for each of you is that you will know the peace and joy that truly is Christmas. From my family to yours, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Here's to the 2010 cottage season. Until the next time ...

*Nancy*



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