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## President's Message

Well, apparently winter is going to come again this year; it snowed in many areas of Ontario much earlier than usual. The juxtaposition of winter in the city and winter at the cottage amazes me every year. In the city, the beauty of a winter snowfall disappears within a day or two as the pristine white snow turns to dirty brown slush and the damp cold goes through to our bones no matter how many layers of clothing we pile on.

But at the cottage, it's a different world. The snow remains sparkling and pristine; it brightens the night sky and deadens unwanted sounds, the stars shine more brightly through the crisp air and the sharp cold never gets past my jacket. It is the embodiment of peace and tranquility. My family uses our winter weeks quite a lot, even if only for a weekend, and I'm often surprised when I find only a few cottages in use over a winter weekend.

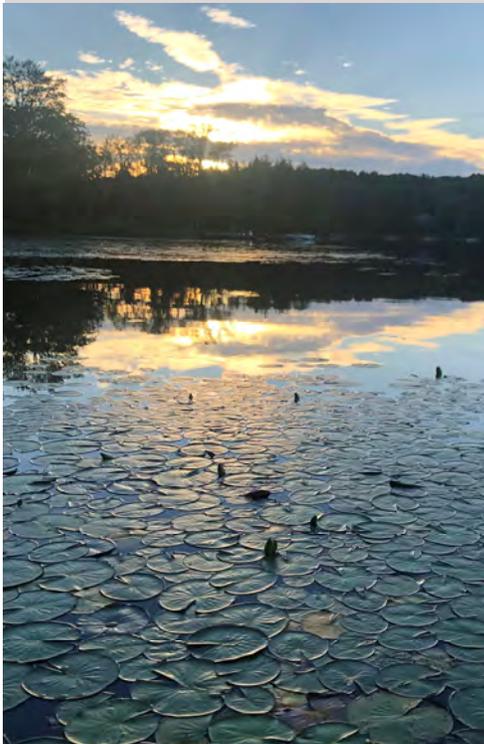
I understand that driving in winter can be a challenge but with a little care and a good set of snow tires, its reputation is arguably worse than its reality. I encourage all of you to enjoy your cottage in the winter; it's beautiful, cozy and safe.

Late in November, the Board held an on-site meeting at Marcus Beach where we spent some time reviewing our updated Capital Reserve information. I'm pleased to say that we remain in very good shape and now have much improved information to manage the Reserve into the coming years.

As we hit our 13-year mark for the cottages, our spending will be turning from buying the occasional new item, to repairing and replacing our appliances and assets as they age. This is completely expected and the appropriate use of our Capital Reserve funds.

I hope everyone has a great winter season and we look forward to seeing you at the AGM in April.

Peter Symons, President MBCOA



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Carefree  
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## Survey Feedback

First of all, a big thank you to all of the owners who participated in this year's survey. Feedback from this survey is essential to help the board chart a path moving forward that is aligned with the wishes of the owners. The first five questions are repeated each year to provide a benchmark to see how we are doing. We have shown this year's results along with last years for comparison.

**Question 1:** Overall the quality of my cottage experience is being maintained and enhanced.

95% of respondents indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied compared to 94% last year.

**Question 2:** In general, how well do you think the Board is doing? Keep in mind all non-financial aspects of the Board- providing oversight of the property management, ensuring significant issues (e.g. landscaping) are being dealt with in an effective manner, communicating with owners, etc.

87% responded very satisfied or satisfied compared with 78% last year.

**Question 3:** How well do you feel the Board manages the finances of the Marcus Beach Cottage Owners Association? This includes ensuring our capital reserve is well invested, its funds are used appropriately, maintenance fee increases are kept reasonable, etc.

87% responded very satisfied or satisfied, compared to 78% last year.

**Question 4:** How well do you feel the Property Manager (Lori Roberts) is doing? Keep in mind all aspects of the role - ensuring cottages are kept clean and supplied, managing maintenance projects, demonstrating a good customer service attitude, helping out wherever needed, etc.

84% responded very satisfied or satisfied, compared to 79% last year.

**Question 5:** How well do you feel our Property Maintenance person (Saul Dicks) is doing? Keep in mind all aspects of the role - making minor cottage repairs quickly and effectively, keeping the property clean and well-maintained, demonstrating a good customer service attitude, helping out whenever needed, etc.

91% responded very satisfied or satisfied compared to 90% last year

We were very pleased to see a high level of satisfaction among all owners for these five questions and once again we can all reflect on how fortunate we are to have Lori and Saul taking care of us.



## 2020 AGM

Put it on your calendar now! Our Annual General Meeting is a chance for you to meet the Board and your fellow cottage owners and a great opportunity to ask questions of the Board directly. Among other items, we review MBCOA finances, investments, and upcoming projects.

**Saturday, April 18, 2020  
Hilton Garden Inn  
Thornhill, ON**

An agenda and more information will be sent to you via email in March.



# Cottage News



*No doubt exhausted after a long pickle ball game!*

## Check it Out!

Feedback from our cleaners is that it typically takes longer to clean a cottage after it's been used by a non-owner. As a result, check out times for these guests have been moved back by one hour. Check out times **for non-owners** are:

- 10:00am (Cottages 1,3,4,6,9,11, 13,15,17,19)
- 1:45pm (Cottages 2,5,7,10,12,14, 16,18)
- Noon (Cottage 8)

It is hoped that by making this change, owners will have a sparkling clean cottage, ready on time for their arrival.

## Survey Feedback (cont'd)

**Question 6.** We are trying to gauge usage of the tennis court, pickle ball court and basketball court. Please click off the box that best describes your use of these facilities.

72% of owners indicated they use one or more any of the facilities.

[No changes are anticipated to current facilities at this time.](#)

**Question 7:** The kitchen appliances will need to be replaced shortly and we are looking at replacing them with either white or stainless steel finishes. Assuming a similar cost which do you favour?

64% of the respondents expressed a preference for stainless, with just over 31% favouring white appliances. (a 2 to 1 vote for stainless). In the comments section a recurring statement was if we get stainless, let's get the kind that does not leave fingerprints.

[This feedback will be incorporated into future decisions on appliances.](#)

**Question 8:** The board is trying to reduce the time it takes to sell a cottage unit. Feedback has been received that currently prospective purchasers do not get to see "their" cottage when looking to purchase and owners are enjoying it. Would you be in favour of vacating your cottage for 15 minutes when a qualified candidate is interested in purchasing?

Roughly 87% of the respondents indicated they would be willing to make their cottage available for showings to a qualified prospective buyer, with a variety of good ideas proposed.

[The Board will work with Charlie Hughes to see whether this approach can be implemented.](#)

**Question 9.** The kitchen countertops are showing signs of wear and will need to be replaced within the next few years. The board is looking both Formica and granite. Which do you favour?

There was not a clear direction on this one, with just over 50% of owners preferring granite and several asking about different alternatives.

[When it is time to replace countertops, a more thorough investigation will be conducted.](#)

**Question 10:** If there was one thing that we could do to improve your experience at Marcus Beach, what would that be?

There were dozens of suggestions with concerns about trees being one of the more common topics; some owners want more removed to improve their lake view while others are concerned that we need to aggressively plant more.

[The Board will be investigating increasing tree density between cottages to improve privacy. Saul is aware of the desire for a lake view and will continue to ensure that plantings at the lake edge are appropriate for low growth while discouraging geese and controlling erosion.](#)



# Cottage News

## Dock Update

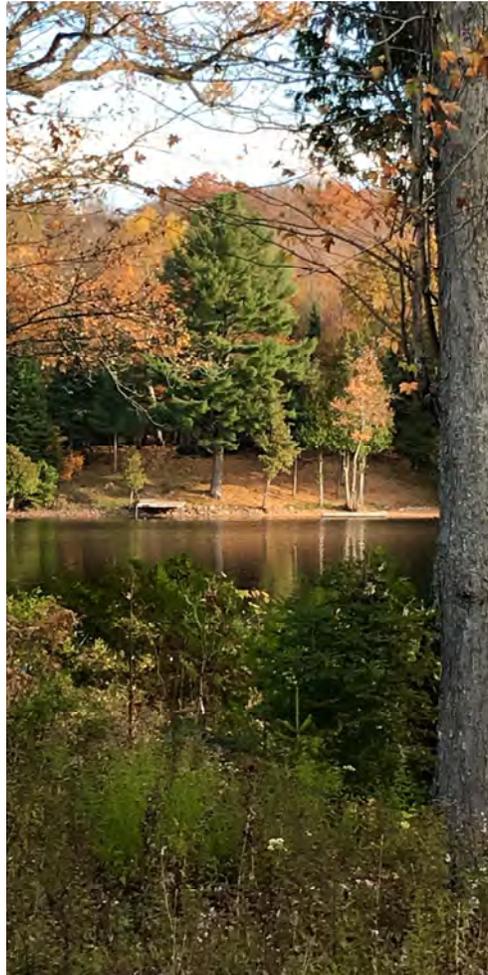
As you undoubtedly saw this summer, Marcus Beach undertook a major project to replace all four docks. Each cottage now has a new, pressure-treated wood dock that is the same (or larger) size and shape as the original. They look great!

It was necessary to undertake this project this year as most of the docks were nearing the end of their lifespan and, as such, were starting to require constant and extensive repair.

In addition to the diminishing aesthetic appeal of the docks, many of them were starting to pose safety risks to the cottage users, especially to young children. Most of the docks had splintering wood and many had significant rot.

In the spring of 2019, the Board analyzed various replacement/repair options and identified several potential suppliers. Given the cost and extent of repairs required, we decided to act quickly and proceeded with an immediate replacement plan.

By late spring, we had contracted with a local small business owner to complete the dock replacement project, which was accomplished within approximately one month. As



such, most of the cottage owners were able to enjoy their summer weeks on the new, improved, and most importantly, safe docks.

We would like to thank all cottage owners for their patience and flexibility as we undertook this project. In addition, a big thank you to Lori for her efforts in coordinating the dock replacements to ensure minimal disturbance and inconvenience to owners.

Lori and the Board have received many positive reviews on the docks. We encourage you to continue sharing your thoughts and concerns with the MBCOA Board.



## What's new in 2020?

Every year, the Board looks at what is scheduled to be repaired or replaced, and balances that with the general state of the items.

For example, back in 2007, we thought we might need to replace our kitchen tables around now—but a quick look at the cottages confirms that that furniture will be good for many years yet. On the flip side, we had hoped our docks would last 15 years but in truth, we now know that 12 years is a much better estimate.

With all that in mind, the Board is looking at replacing the following items this year:

- Furnaces if they need replacement.
- Desk chairs in the master bedroom
- Mattresses on all beds that haven't yet been replaced
- Washers and dryers in those cottages which haven't yet received one
- Kitchen faucets
- Saul's tractor, which is currently being held together (literally) with duct tape

We are also purchasing a couple of new items:

- Each dock will get a second small table
- After safety concerns were raised, we are evaluating options for a fireplace screen so that little ones can't get burned on the hot glass



# Cottage News

## Winter is Coming

Or maybe it's already arrived? Please come to Marcus Beach prepared for all types of weather:

- Murray comes to plow our internal roads after the snow has stopped falling and more than 10cm of snow has accumulated.
- If you see Murray plowing near your cottage, please take a minute to move your car so he can plow your full driveway.
- The entrance to your cottage (stairs, porch) is shoveled out on your changeover day. If you are there during the week, keeping it clear of snow is your responsibility. There should be a shovel and salt next to your BBQ. Please do not pack down the snow by simply walking on it; it creates a layer of ice that is difficult to remove and dangerous for the next owner.
- Please monitor the weather—Mother Nature can be unkind on changeover days and the cleaners also need to drive to and from work. Please be considerate by diligently following the check-out list to help ensure the cleaners don't have to stay late on a cold blustery winter day.

Above all—don't forget your winter tires! You may not need them in the city, but they're a must in Minden County.

## Skating Rink

The skating rink is usually ready by early January. We need weather that is consistently below  $-10^{\circ}$  C to form the ice and keep it from melting.



## Electronics

If you bring a game system, laptop, or other device that you connect to the television, please reconnect all cords properly before you leave. And take a moment to test everything to make sure. Not everyone is technically savvy!

And don't forget to log out of your Netflix account or other streaming service that's accessible through our televisions.

## Dock Cribs

Now that we have such beautiful new docks, the cribs suddenly look a little tired (the "crib" is that part of the dock which is completely on land.)

The crib boards are splintering and in some cases rotting. However, they are different from the docks in that the underlying support structure is solid and still in great shape.

Consequently, the Board is taking the following approach for crib replacement/repair:

- Docks 1 and 4 have cribs in the worst condition, and these will be resurfaced in 2020 (replacing top boards while retaining the existing supports).
- Cribs at docks 2 and 3 will be resurfaced in 2021. Any boards that need more immediate attention will be replaced

## Haliburton Forest

The **Haliburton Forest & Wild Life Reserve Ltd.** (Haliburton Forest) is a privately owned forest, comprising 300 square kilometres in Haliburton County.

The Haliburton Forest offers lots of things to do during the winter, from dog sled tours, snowmobiling and ice fishing to a visit to the popular wolf centre.

Check out this link:

<https://www.haliburtonforest.com>



# Cottage News

## Lori's Corner

Most owners understand the issues around sharing cottages with many co-owners, but there are a few items always worth reminding folks about:

- PLEASE check the lost and found baskets in your cottage basement; some are overflowing. There will be a major cull this winter.
- Many owners have added items to kitchen cupboards. Spices, special glasses, etc. should be kept in your bin in the basement. Items which are not part of the standard inventory will be removed this winter and placed in the lost and found basket.
- Remember to label all your basement bins with your name and interval number. That way, if you leave something behind, it can be put next to your bin.
- Some basements are quite crowded. Tubes and other inflatable toys should be deflated. Ensure that there is lots of space around the doorways and that all owners can move around the basement easily.
- Remember to use Cottage Action Sheets to highlight anything in your cottage that needs to be replaced or repaired. Leave them in the office or put them through the office door slot.
- If you rent or loan your cottage, don't forget to inform the Property Manager.

- The cleaners can launder all the sheets in the cottage in the change-over time. But if you ever take linens out of the cupboard, that's a signal that you'll need to do additional laundry. The mattress protectors and comforters are not washed weekly; please do not include them in your laundry pile.
- Some kitchen garbage containers have lids that no longer work well. We know... and are working on a solution. Since that size and style of container is no longer available, Saul has crafted a way to keep the lid spring working but we need your help in being gentle with the container.  
  
Eventually the lids will likely need to be removed entirely but with your help, we can put that day off a little longer.
- If you move furniture, either inside or on your porch, please put it back before you leave.

Have a great winter!



*Some sports-minded snowmen from last winter*

## Fish Stories

In our last newsletter, we asked for pictures of fish caught in and around the lake. We had a few responses... and so the winner of the best fish picture is this little guy who caught his very first fish - a whopping 3" sunfish off the dock and he couldn't have been happier!

If you have a fish story to share, please send your photo and story to [marcusbeachboard@gmail.com](mailto:marcusbeachboard@gmail.com).



## Did You Know?

Halliburton is famous for things other than Marcus Beach! Fleming College has a renowned arts program which offers a variety of courses including more than 300 courses that are either weekend or week-long courses making them ideal for owners who are in town for a short period. For more information please view <https://flemingcollege.ca/school/haliburton-school-of-art-and-design>.