

# NEWSLETTER — August, 2005

*This Newsletter is produced and distributed by the Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association (BSRA), an umbrella group of residents/beach/cottage/subdivision associations, as a service to the shoreline residents in Hay West and Stanley West Wards. It is funded by the Member Associations, its Affiliate Associations and Individuals. For information on membership, please contact the Membership Secretary, **Jim Chapman**, at (519) 235-1644 or (519) 565-5303, or by e-mail. BSRA's Postal address is **BSRA, GMB #411, RR 2, Zurich ON NOM 2T0**. BSRA's web site is [www.bsra.ca](http://www.bsra.ca), and its e-mail address is [bsra@bsra.ca](mailto:bsra@bsra.ca) Click here for contact email address.*

**This is to remind you about the BSRA Annual General Meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 10, 2005 at St. Peter's Church Hall on Highway 21 North of St. Joseph. Please mark your calendar now and plan to attend. Although only the official delegates may vote, all residents of the shoreline wards of Stanley West and Hay West in Bluewater are invited to attend and participate. This newsletter is being distributed early in order to include flyers for important events on Aug. 27 and 28.**

## **Special Thanks to Our Distributors**

Those very special people who distribute the Newsletters and other information to the Shoreline Residents continue to deserve our hearty appreciation for their efforts, especially in light of the extra load in delivering special flyers, etc. It is only when we hear compliments on the effectiveness of the Newsletter, and how well the BSRA members are informed, that we realize that no information would get out to all of the Shoreline Residents without the Distribution network, and those who make it work. MANY THANKS!

## **New Officers Appointed by the Executive Committee**

You will recall that BSRA's First Vice President, Glen May, re-located to Niagara-on-the-Lake, and so resigned his BSRA office. The Executive Committee is pleased to announce that, according to the BSRA Constitution, it has appointed Paul Mennill to be First Vice President Pro Tempore, and has appointed Gary Rose to be Second Vice President Pro Tempore, taking the office formerly held by Paul Mennill. You will note that both of these positions are in effect until the Annual Meeting on September 10, when all offices are open for election/re-election.

To provide a brief introduction for Gary, he is from Sunset Cove, and has a life-long connection with the Bluewater shoreline, with many relatives along Highway 21, and his mother, (née Rau), still has a Summer home on Highway 21. Gary lives in Novi, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, where he is an attorney and investor. He is also very interested in environmental issues. The Executive Committee welcomes both to their new offices and responsibilities.

## **The Changing Face of the BSRA Area**

A new venture is on the horizon for the BSRA area with the development in Stanley West ward of Bayfield Mews, a 55+ Adult Community on the Life Lease concept. Thirty-six townhouses and 20 apartment Units are being planned, together with community amenities, just South of Bayfield. This project, when completed, will add to the number of Shoreline Residents served by BSRA. For further information, call (519) 482-3516.

## **Pre-Authorized Payment Plan for Taxes**

At the meeting of Bluewater Council on Monday, August 8, the Financial Services Manager for Bluewater advised that, following the letter re Pre-Authorized Payment of Taxes from the BSRA President on behalf of the Association, the Municipality of Bluewater will be offering a 10-month pre-authorized payment plan for its municipal taxes, similar to that now available in London, starting with the February 28, 2006 installment. Tax Payments can then be automatic from your account. A notice of this option will be in the tax circular mailed with the final tax bill for this year in September 2005. The information will also be posted on the Bluewater website once the details are finalized to process this payment option.

It should be pointed out that, as indicated above, this decision was the result of an initiative by the BSRA Executive Committee, with the agreement of the Bluewater Councillors, who saw the merit in the proposal. At the same time, it should be pointed out that this is only an option, and those who wish to pay their taxes by the

other methods currently available will be able to continue to do so.

### **On the Environmental Front**

Research continues on the water quality issues, as information at the conference in Goderich on August 27 will show. BSRA has been encouraged by the positive response to its efforts at research, and to the support from Bluewater and Huron County.

### **The Care and Feeding of Septic Tanks**

In spite of preliminary moves being made to initiate a sewage treatment system serving at least part of Bluewater, (see below), it is likely that at least some BSRA members are going to need working septic tank systems for some years to come. With this in mind, it may be helpful to review some aspects of septic tank operation..

For one thing, the traditional septic tank systems found in our area essentially separate the solids from the liquids. The solids are supposed to stay in the septic tank where some breakdown occurs, and the liquids pass on through the tile bed, and are absorbed into the ground water, although there is also some evaporation as well. If there are too many liquids flushed down or drained into the system, the tile bed may not be able to get rid of the liquids. On the other hand, if there are too many solids over time, (when the septic tank is not cleaned out frequently enough, for instance), the solids may be carried into the tile bed and block the tiles from allowing water to pass through and drain away.

Thus, it is important to have regular cleaning and inspection of septic systems. With heavy use, (e.g., from lots of renters and guests, or year-round use), perhaps annual clean-out is indicated. On the other hand, for those who weekend at the cottage only during the Summer, it may take several years to accumulate enough solids to warrant a clean-out.

Changing lifestyles have increased the demands on septic tanks as well. Gone are the days when cottages had no bathing facilities, and, for many, all bathing was done in the lake. Tubs and showers are much more numerous now, and dishwashers and clothes washers also add to the grey water from sinks, and enter the septic system. This extra water puts extra strain on systems not designed to process the water from these appliances.

So, in order to avoid having to dig up your septic system and replace it, remember to

- ⊙ be cognizant of the amount of various liquids entering your septic system
- ⊙ avoid putting substances into your septic system that will clog it or inhibit the natural decomposition processes, e.g., avoid kitchen grease and harsh chemicals.
- ⊙ have your septic tank cleaned out and inspected at appropriate intervals.

### **Septic Tank Re-inspection Program**

Huron County established a voluntary septic tank reinspection program, arising out of a BSRA initiative, and six municipalities have been selected to ask for volunteers to permit an examination of their septic tanks for the re-inspection program. In Bluewater, St. Joseph Shores was selected for voluntary testing, (perhaps because of the water quality studies on the local ravine), and its residents have responded positively. Representatives from the Huron County Health Unit visit each property thus volunteered, properly locate the septic bed and tank using a Global Positioning System, inspect the septic system and insert dye into the tank. If the dye does not appear on the ground, or flowing in nearby watercourses, then the system is considered to be working properly. To date, the program has received a positive response in the communities. Not only can the program locate problem installations and potential problems, but it can lead to eradicating the issue of septic tanks being a source of water pollution. (See below for related information.)

### **New Directions Research Grant Approved**

A research grant of \$150,000 over three years has been granted for water quality initiatives in Huron County, and has three components:

- ✓ an evaluation of the County septic reinspection program, (above), and development of a model for application across the Province, based on the Huron County experience,

- ✓ the development and application of a manual similar to the Environmental Farm Plan for rural non-farm property owners, (including “cottagers”), and
- ✓ the development and implementation of a process aimed at improving communications between the lakeshore and farm communities.

The project will be under the direction of Dr. Wayne Caldwell. Jennifer Ball, Dr. Karen Landman and Dr. Douglas Joy will contribute. Again, BSRA had a hand in pointing out the original direction when it encouraged the reinspection program as a means of ensuring that septic systems were not the real culprits in the water pollution of Lake Huron. This project should be of great benefit to BSRA members in years to come.

### **Proposed Sanitary Sewers and Sewage Treatment Facilities**

On Tuesday, August 9, there was a public information session in Grand Bend to present the results of current studies by the consultants and to answer questions. It was noted that the Municipality of Bluewater is part of the study and implementation process, with Lambton Shores and South Huron as well, and centred on Grand Bend and its sewage treatment facilities. The study looks at an upgrade to the Grand Bend sewage treatment facilities, and it is proposed that sewage collection take place as far into Bluewater as St. Joseph and inland to Dashwood. On the opposite side of Grand Bend, the system would extend to the Ausable River cut near Port Franks, but not across the cut.

Among the rationales for the project, the aging of septic tank systems, the changing standards required of septic systems, and the growth in population were noted as factors. As well, water quality issues, (i.e., beach closures), and malfunctioning septic systems, (see above), were cited, and the report states, “if this factor, [malfunctioning systems], is removed, (by centralized treatment, disinfection), focus would shift to other contributing causes, (e.g., agriculture)”.

Two different methods of upgrading the sewage treatment plant were considered, a lagoon upgrade (New Hamburg Process), and a mechanical upgrade, (Orbal Oxidation Ditch System), both costing about the same to install, that is, roughly about \$12 Million to serve at least 7000 people, and would reduce the pathogens going into the Lake.. On balance, the mechanical upgrade was recommended, even though it has higher operating costs.

Various collection systems were also presented, including gravity flow, vacuum collection, low pressure collection and septic tank effluent pump system. Again, comparing advantages and disadvantages, the low pressure system was recommended. This requires every household to have a “grinder pump” in a small holding tank, from garbage-can size to septic-tank size, (even making use of existing septic tanks, if desired), to receive the household sewage, including grey water from washing, etc., and pumping it into the sewage collection pipe and sending it to the treatment plant.

Although there are some problems to be overcome with location of sewage collection lines, (not being permitted on Provincial Highway rights-of-way, for example), those familiar with the installation of the water pipeline will remember that such issues are solvable. Furthermore, the system can be built in stages that are affordable to the users and to the municipalities’ borrowing limits, once the plant is upgraded to process additional sewage.

One of the Bluewater Councillors at the meeting asked a perceptive question about the advantages if the collection lines were extended through Hay West and Stanley West Wards, and was told that there would be considerable advantages of scale in the sewage treatment plant that would lower overall costs. It would appear that the need for upgrading will drive this project through to completion, so at least some BSRA members will be involved in this project. This whole issue will obviously be a concern and consideration of Bluewater Council. We’ll try to keep you posted as plans gel.

### **Wind Turbines on the Horizon in Bluewater**

BSRA Treasurer Harlie Johnson has done some research on the Province of Ontario’s Wind Turbine project, and how it affects BSRA members. The concept is to build wind turbines along the Eastern area of Lake Huron in order to generate “green power” from the prevailing winds, and reduce the demands on Ontario’s electrical generating system. Harlie says that there will be 48 turbines over a stretch of 18 km from Dashwood Road to Danceland Road, or roughly 5 per concession, depending on a number of factors. The windmill structure will be fairly large, with a height of about 400 feet to the tip of a blade when at the top of its rotation. It

is normal that there be only three blades catching the wind, and, because of their size, they appear to be rotating relatively slowly, but the speed at the tip is quite rapid. They are also relatively quiet, but because of steady rotation they tend to provide a "white" sound, akin to background sound.

At present there are two wind-metering towers erected in Bluewater to evaluate the feasibility, one East of Highway 21 opposite Norman Heights, and another further inland near the corner of the Zurich-Hensall Road and Black Bush Line. The project should be completed by October 2007, (said by cynics to be the date of the next Provincial election), and generate between 84 and 100 kw per turbine, for a total of 80 megawatts, enough to power 1500 homes, that is, more than the population of Stanley West and Hay West Wards combined, if occupied by year-round residents. The towers are planned to be staggered, and not close enough to each other to create turbulence for each other. Test metering may prove that stronger and more reliable winds are found at or near the top of the moraine, (locally called Huron Ridge, but properly called the Wyoming Moraine), and help dictate the sites chosen, perhaps on the horizon.

The only negatives in the picture may be the perception by some of visual pollution, the loss of a relatively small amount of productive land, and the difficulty in storing the power generated. In other words, wind turbines are only an addition to the present sources of energy, not a stand-alone replacement.

John Gillespie, President

Compiled by Doug Banks, Newsletter Editor