

NEWSLETTER — May, 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 at this email link. BSRA's Postal address is **BSRA, GMB #411, RR 2, Zurich ON NOM 2T0**. BSRA's web site is www.bsra.ca, and its e-mail address is BSRA information.*

This is to remind you about the BSRA General Meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 18, 2004 at St. Peter's Church Hall on Highway 21 North of St. Joseph. Please mark your calendar now so that you can 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.

Welcome Back to the Warmth of Summer

Another Summer season is upon us, and it is time to review some of the Association's activities since our last Newsletter, and note some changes in personnel. Your attention is directed to last October's Newsletter, which listed names and contact information for the Association and for the Municipality. You were advised at that time that Milt Dietrich, the Chief Building Official, was retiring, and we note that he was succeeded by his son, Brad Dietrich, whose contact information remains the same as before.

Members of the BSRA Executive Committee have been diligently attending Council Meetings and Public Meetings on your behalf, and some of the details are included below, and will be discussed at the June General Meeting noted above.

Information Distribution, and Some Consequences

With this Newsletter, you should receive a flyer about the collection of large household garbage items. This is being delivered through BSRA as a special service to members, in co-operation with Bluewater, rather than incur the cost of mailing, or rely on ads in local papers. This is quite typical of the services provided to BSRA members by the Association, and is reminiscent, (in a small way), of the efforts of BSRA in getting less expensive insurance coverages, in having the natural gas pipeline extended, in achieving road allowances from the municipality in lieu of road services, in working on environmental issues, taxation issues, and on and on. The provision of these services is dependent on the credibility of BSRA, which, in turn, is dependent on the support it receives from shoreline residents. It is to be hoped that the few pockets of shoreline residents who have not organized themselves into associations, (and thus be eligible for full BSRA membership), will be able to pull together in even rudimentary forms, so that they can each become a full part of the decision-making process in BSRA. At the same time, BSRA still has Associate Individual membership for those not in an active shoreline community. These concerns are triggered by some cost-saving comments by some who feel that only full member associations should receive Newsletters, flyers and services, including appropriate political considerations, especially heading into another election cycle. Meanwhile, all it takes for a new association to organize is some initiative, some effort and some political will. BSRA stands ready to help. Just contact an Executive Member, write to the address shown above, or e-mail.

BSRA Executive Committee Resignation

It was with some disappointment that the Executive Committee learned that its First Vice-President, Glen May, had decided to move to Niagara-on-the-Lake, and so would be unable to continue his duties as First Vice President of BSRA. The Association appreciates very much the contribution Glen made while he was a member of the Executive Committee, and wishes him and his wife the very best in their new home and community.

The Executive Committee of BSRA has been organized in recent years in such a way that a person passing through the various offices on the way to becoming President, and thus guiding the Association's activities, would have a chance to experience various facets of BSRA's efforts by being made responsible, in turn, for

different sets of duties. With the resignation of a senior officer, it remains important to cover the various responsibilities with a specific person or persons responsible for those concerns. Thus, the particular duties of the First Vice President have been shared among other Officers of BSRA, and nothing has been left in limbo.

Nonetheless, any resignation begins the process of succession, and those who have attended meetings of the Board of Directors are aware that the Nominating Committee does some background work and makes recommendations in the form of nominations for office. In a perfect world, officers would be chosen on the basis of their knowledge, abilities, skills, (including political and people skills), good judgement, interest, their leadership abilities, their interest in acting on behalf of others for the greater good (altruism), and their willingness to attend meetings which may become somewhat boring, (probably in that order, or close to it). Half of them would be women, and their properties would be evenly spaced along the shoreline area, with some lakefront dwellers and some highway dwellers, with an appropriate proportion of full-time to seasonal residents, and various variations in between. They should be of various ages, including those with young families, as well as retirees and various others in between. Some should come from a farm environment, some from villages and some from cities. Above all, they should all be willing to make an extra effort for BSRA. Although the responsibility of office is by no means a life sentence, it is helpful if potential officers can commit themselves to a few years' service. Unfortunately, the reality is that it is not possible to fulfill all of the criteria that would be nice to have in a team, but that it is most important for the members of the team to have the requisite personal qualities in greater or lesser strengths.

In selecting various candidates for office in BSRA, the Nominating Committee must also plan well ahead, and must try to match the individuals to the offices being undertaken. Thus, the Committee is not so much faced with replacing one officer who has resigned, but in re-establishing a team to provide sound leadership in the future. Accordingly, the Nominating Committee Chairperson, Doug Banks, should be advised of the names and qualities of those who could and would undertake tasks and provide leadership. You, yourself, might be interested in serving in a position, or you may know of someone who has proven to you that he/she has the requisite qualities. You may even have someone in mind who may fill a particular office better than other offices. Don't let the list of qualities being sought intimidate your thinking, as the reality is that very few of us have all of the qualities we would like to have in ourselves. Please take the initiative and contact Doug Banks at (519) 471-4378 (home), (519) 565-2560 (lake), or (519) 434-5081 (office). You may also e-mail him at scotrite@pppoe.ca, or send snail mail to BSRA's address as shown above.

On the Environmental Front

BSRA's concerns about environmental quality, and about water quality in particular, have led to the research reported last year, and to research undertaken last Summer in co-operation with Bluewater, which funded it. The results of this research were reported early this Spring, and have been posted on BSRA's Website bsra.ca. The research was two-fold: **a study of pollution of beaches and ravines** along the Bluewater shore, and **a DNA fingerprinting analysis of E. coli to investigate potential fecal pollution sources** impacting St. Joseph Beach water.

The data for the first study were summarized in the October Newsletter, but the actual Report provides some analyses which, without going into the detail of the Report, indicate that on June 24, July 14 and July 28 during the study that the statistical risk of gastrointestinal illness of some sort for those "swimming", (defined as complete immersion and "significant exposure of the upper body orifices to the water"), could at times exceed the rate of 7 persons per thousand "swimming" in the lake. The study recommends that "Swimming in an agricultural drain, [ravine], is not recommended, as levels of fecal pollution and potential pathogens may be sufficient to cause gastrointestinal illness", and "it is suggested that a warning against swimming [in a ravine] be provided." BSRA established a program of making warning signs, (as shown on the right), available, and you may contact Paul Mennill for further information at 238-1240. (He also has information about name signs for use on the "911 posts")

The Report on the fingerprinting analysis, based on the St. Joseph's ravine, provides detailed scientific information about membrane filtration, gel electrophoresis, dendograms, quality controls and other techniques which indicate thoroughness and care in the study. Significantly, the study concluded that the "Results show that strains [of *E. coli*] isolated from the water samples collected at St. Joseph's beach matched with strains [collected from] sites along the St. Joseph's drain", "Data support the argument that the drainage impacts the water quality at the beach", "The data confirm multiple sources of *E. coli* such as agricultural activities, residential [e.g., septic systems and sewage lagoons] and wildlife *sources* impact water quality at St. Joseph's exist", and "Results indicate that multiple fecal sources of pollution located along St. Joseph's ravine contribute to the occurrence of fecal pollution at St. Joseph's Beach". Thus, this thoroughly scientific study of one area confirms the general concern about Lake Huron pollution and its sources. For more information, contact Bob Slow,

Chairman of the Environment Committee at 236-4650.

Looking into the remediation of the problem of polluted water, the studies' authors also provided an information session on a relatively new reverse osmosis technology for separating out pure water from liquid mixtures such as liquid manure, septage, (septic tank pump-out), etc. It was even claimed that the resulting water was drinkable without further processing. While this shows great promise for specific applications, capital- and operating-cost analyses are still needed, as well as a willingness to protect the environment and improve water quality. As well as this technology, Huron County is said to be looking into the possibility of building two septage treatment locations to be prepared for the day that the Province implements its declared policy of disallowing the spreading of septage on fields. However, a problem will remain if the facilities to be built only provide primary treatment in a lagoon, which is only the first stage of proper sewage treatment.

Strategic Plan for Bluewater

One of the items on the Council's agenda over the winter was the development of a Strategic Plan. A consultant was hired who met with focus groups and elicited responses to assist in the development of a plan. At a subsequent public meeting where the draft plan was presented, BSRA provided the principal response, especially urging that the quality of the environment be considered important in the Strategic Plan. The plan includes a Vision for Bluewater, that of "Valuing our unique quality of life, recognizing our diversity, respecting our traditions." The Plan includes these areas of effort:

1. To develop a multi-dimensional economic development strategy for Bluewater that works in co-operation with the County and other partners, and which drives compatibility with the quality of life values of the community ...
2. Prepare a ten-year infrastructure development strategy for water, sewer and roads ...
3. Undertake a comprehensive operational review of the Municipality of Bluewater ...
4. Develop a communications strategy as a basis for an annual communication plan ...
5. Undertake a development strategy to enhance the teamwork and leadership capacity of the organization ...

You will note that these are all shortened from the original, which includes more specific implementation details. Nonetheless, this is somewhat of a "sleeper" document which could and should form the basis for future directions for the municipality, and, of course, what our tax dollars may be used for.

Taxes, Taxes, Taxes

In Hay West and Stanley West Wards, tax concerns are heightened by the sharply increasing assessments on which the taxes are based. The BSRA Executive Committee has been making efforts on a number of fronts to deal with this issue. When appropriate, the disproportionate tax load on shoreline properties is highlighted, the municipal expenditures are monitored, the budget is scrutinized, the County demands are monitored, the provision of services for the taxes paid is recommended, the opportunities for area rating are studied, etc., and there have been some successes. Nonetheless, the core of the problem is at the Provincial level, and the Executive Committee believes that the efforts of the Waterfront Ratepayers After Fair Taxation (WRAFT) group provides the best hope for action at the Provincial level. Recently WRAFT has encouraged BSRA, (and other organizations), to seek funding from within. Thus, if a Member association within BSRA feels that this is a sufficiently important issue to provide financial support, then contact can be made with WRAFT through www.wraft.com or by e-mail at wraft@sympatico.ca.

The New Official Plan

The development of a new Official Plan every few years provides a focus on the future and an organized plan to follow especially if they get the plan right to begin with, and follow its provisions with some diligence. This process for the latest Plan is nearing completion, but there may still be some glitches. You'll be hearing more details later.

Associate Memberships

Remember, any resident of Hay West or Stanley West Wards whose property is not within a subdivision that is a BSRA member association is welcome and encouraged to become an Associate Member of BSRA. The annual fee is only \$5.

John Gillespie, President

Compiled by Doug Banks, Newsletter Editor