

The Lac Sir John Newsletter

Summer 2015

From the Editor:

Another summer at the lake is drawing to a close. Perhaps not always the best of weather, but still it is always special to be at the lake and so close to nature.

This newsletter is intended to keep you informed about social activities and general information of interest to Lac Sir John residents.

Messages from the president of SIJOLM, Merv Trineer, related to the SIJOLM corporation, will be sent to you separately. The annual AGM of the SIJOLM corporation is presently scheduled for late morning on Saturday, Oct. 3. Be sure to attend.

If you have news related to lake social activities and general information, or something historical to share about the lake community, please send it by via email (in either French or English) preferably in MS Word to the editor, sanastass@gmail.com

Susan Anastasopoulos (editor and English version)

Louise Chambers (translator: French version)

Mariam Bowen (mailings for the newsletter)

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Recent Social Activities at the Lake

The **August Corn Boil** at took place at Boathouse Beach as usual on Aug. 15. Many lake residents attended with their family and guests. If you missed it, be sure to plan to join with us next August for this wonderful chance to meet and mingle with our neighbours. Thanks to the many lake neighbours involved in organizing this event.

This year the Corn Boil was prepared by most of the usual faithful group: Henri Andres mowed the grass at Boathouse Beach and brought down the tables which are stored in Barratt's basement; Derek Nicholson provided access to the power supply and the drinking water; Mervin Trineer organised the placement of the portable toilet. Chris Robitaille, Gillian Barlow's son-in-law, organised the electric wiring and built a new stand for one of the BBQs, somehow the old one had been destroyed by somebody using it as a saw-horse! Gillian's son, Nic Barlow, and Gillian erected the shelters for the food tables and her granddaughter, Victoria, chalked the "Horserace" course on the grass. Gillian provided table supplies from her camping supplies. The raffle tables were stocked by people donating as they arrived; maybe, more toys would have been appreciated by the young ones. Gillian's son-in-law, Chris, presented a fabulous, beautiful firework display to round off the evening.

Help is always needed for this event, so would be welcomed if offered; please call Gillian Barlow, [450 562 9613](tel:4505629613) if you are willing to participate in any way.
Cheers, Gill

The Sailing Club Lac Sir John Sailing Club

As we come to the end of our 2015 sailing season we look forward to new sailors joining us next year for our 49th Annual Racing Program. This year we have been fortunate to have 3 guests participating with us plus 2 others expressing the desire to join us next

year. While we have enjoyed as many as 6 racers this season we would welcome anyone interested in sailing to join us to make it more exciting for all – racers and We have managed to secure extra boats as needed to allow newcomers the opportunity to join in the fun. We are also in a position to offer coaching in how to sail/race a Races take place every Sunday afternoon, weather permitting, between 2 – 4 PM beginning the first Sunday in July until the Sunday of Labour Day when we have our wrap-up celebratory party. All residents of Lac Sir John are welcome to participate.

For more information please contact Christopher Vroom at (450) 562-6556.
chvroom@gmail.com

The Lac Sir John Symposia. This discussion group meets during the summer months at various members' houses. Our symposia themes cover a wide range of interesting topics. A few readings and discussion focus questions are sent in advance. Then the discussion commences at Happy Hour, accompanied by wine, ouzo, etc. and nibbles. Traditionally, it has been followed by a pot luck dinner where the main theme plus other topics are discussed. Symposia topics this summer include "CAPITALISM AND INCOME INEQUALITY", "ALTRUISM" and "MIGRATION". All are welcome! If you would like to participate in 2016, please contact Susan Anastasopoulos at sanastass@gmail.com.

Upcoming Social Activities at the Lake

The Lac Sir John Dinner Club is inviting new members to try out this activity. The dinner club is also open to all and a great opportunity to get to know more of your neighbours, as well as dine fantastically. It meets on the last Saturday night of the month (September, October, November, January, March and May). Diners are assigned at random to various houses and a different theme of international cuisine is chosen for each dinner. The host house prepares the main course and coffee. Others bring either the hors d'oeuvres or the salad or the dessert, as well as a bottle of wine.

If you would like to try out the dinner club, please contact Susan Anastasopoulos.
sanastass@gmail.com or Gillian Barlow gilbar61@gmail.com by mid-September.

Restaurant outings: This year the Dinner Club organizers will also attempt to organize several restaurant dinners for all members of the Lake Sir John community: The December Christmas Dinner, a dinner in February and in April. We need volunteers to take responsibility for each of these restaurant outings: picking the restaurant and making arrangements and reservations with them; also, writing the announcement for lake residents and receiving their reservation requests by email. Please contact Susan Anastasopoulos if you would be willing to arrange for one of the restaurant dinners.

The annual Lake Sir John Christmas Dinner

Everyone in the lake community is invited to join together in our winter celebration – our annual Christmas dinner party to be held in December. Family members and guests welcome. Watch for the announcement of the place and time, which have not yet been determined.

The Dec. 2014 **Lac Sir John Christmas Dinner** was held at the new restaurant at Gore (which has since closed). Participants enjoyed lots of holiday cheer and great food.

The **Entrances' Gardening Group.** Now that the landscaping of the three entrances has been completed, many thanks to Helene Parenteau and Joanne Michel who have volunteered to maintain the beauty of Entrance One. We welcome other volunteers to participate in a gardening group that will attempt to maintain the beauty of the other entrances to Lac Sir John. If you would be willing to volunteer, please contact Susan Anastasopoulos at sanastass@gmail.com. She will then put you in contact with each other.

News about residents

Our long time lake resident and nonagenarian, Sean Grennan, who suffered a serious fall last autumn, is recovering and thriving at La Residence in Lachute and always welcomes visitors. Our warm wishes to Patti and Michael Fraser who are also living at La Residence.

Several of our long time residents are now living in Lachute's seniors residence, Le Medallion Dor, but still spend time at their Lac Sir John houses: Ross and Lorraine Preville and Shirley Dempster.

Six or seven of us Lac Sir John gardeners are now members of the Lachute Garden Club, which meets on Wednesdays, once a month. We maintain the flower garden at La Residence, have luncheons, outing, guest speakers, etc. This August, the garden club toured five Lac Sir John

gardens and finished the afternoon with a tea. Would you be interested in this activity?
Contact the editor and she will put you in contact with the organizer.

New Faces at the Lake

We wish to welcome our new neighbors

We hope that our recently new residents will soon be joining into a number of the lake community activities.

Monique Filion has left the lake this August to live in a condominium in Lachute. Her daughter, Agnes, and her two adolescents now occupy the house. We wish all of you a warm welcome!

We may have missed mentioning some recently new residents. If you are new at the lake in the last two or three years, please send us a brief introductory note about yourselves to the editor for the next newsletter.

If you would like to participate in a small informal welcoming committee for new residents, please contact sanastass@gmail.com

In Memoriam

Laura Boutin has informed us that Irene Reed, dear friend of the late Stephen Harries, has passed away in Asheboro, North Carolina. Friends around the lake will remember Irene's beautiful needlepoint.

(If we have accidentally omitted anyone, please let us know so we can mention them in the next newsletter.)

Past Memorabilia: Photos , Stories and Miscellaneous Documents from Our Lake Community

As an addition to the newsletter, residents are invited to share memorabilia from our lake community's history. If you have an interesting old document, or photo, etc. please send it to the editor by email (sanastass@gmail.com) to be included as an attachment to the next newsletter. Or perhaps you would like to send a very short story account of a lake memory or a lake legend (in French or English).

Miscellaneous notices, announcements, and information

[1] By now, you have probably noticed the attractive new landscaping at all three entrances. As for the concrete barriers along the causeway, they serve to provide security. Does anyone have an idea of how to beautify them, especially the view of them from the lake? Perhaps hanging flower baskets on the side facing the lake?

[2] Mariam Bowen informs us that there is a new trend at the lake of people detaching the end of their docks and using them as boats with electric outboard motors to cruise the lake. Others sometimes anchor parts of their dock further out to use as rafts for swimmers and to enjoy the sun.

[3] The mayor of Gore, Scott Pearce, has invited all lake residents, whether they live in Gore or Lachute, to participate in the activities held at the Trinity Community Center at 2 Cambria Road, Gore. These include exercise classes for seniors on Mondays and Thursdays 11:00-12:00 (During the summer, the exercise classes are held in Wentworth at 10:00.) (\$2.00 suggested donation), a free luncheon by the Gore Seniors Network – “Meet and Greet” on the last Monday of each month at 12:30 (\$5.00 suggested donation), classes in dance, Tai Chi, Yoga, Qi Gong, art courses, etc. You can learn about all the Gore activities in their community newspaper, *The Gore Express* published monthly on the Gore municipal website www.cantondegore.qc.ca.

The Gore Express is also an excellent source to learn about environmental issues concerning the Laurentian lakes.

Autumn gardening tips (A feature column from our gardening enthusiast, **Janet Donald**.)

Janet suggests the following tips, selected from the periodical *Canadian Gardening*, which are appropriate for our lake environment:

8 more gardening tips for preparing for winter

1. When available, pop Icicle pansies into spots where summer annuals have been cleared out. They will bloom until December, then lie down for the winter. Cover them with evergreen cuttings until earliest spring, when they'll be ready to sprout new flower buds
2. Throw seeds of hardy annuals where you want them to bloom next year. Larkspur, poppies, cleome and cosmos will frequently take root from seeds sown in autumn and conditioned under winter snow.
3. Plant Asiatic and Oriental lilies in late fall to ensure flower bud set. When planting is delayed until spring they may not get enough chilling and come up blind, with no flowers

4. Wait until the soil has frozen before mulching autumn-installed plants. After freeze-up, a thick mulch of leaves and evergreen cuttings will keep their root balls safe from the heaving action of frost.
5. Lift big clumps of summer phlox, hostas and Siberian irises and divide with a sharp spade or knife; tease apart fleshy roots of daylilies. Late-blooming perennials such as Michaelmas daisies and obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*), purchased in bloom, can go directly into garden beds.
6. Autumn is a good time for planting evergreen trees and shrubs. The evergreens' root systems pump water all winter, so be sure to water them well before the ground freezes.
7. Autumn is the only time to move clematis or honeysuckle vine to prevent shock to growth: both vines begin extending leaves and shoots while frost is still in the spring ground. If the vines are large, cut them back by half, and they'll leap forward next spring.
8. Root vegetables such as carrots and parsnips are sweeter after hard frost and, in warmer climates, can be harvested all winter. Remove top foliage from the plants and cover them with a 15-centimetre-thick mulch of leaves or straw (available from garden centres) spread to similar thickness. Throw an old piece of carpeting on top and let it snow. Lift the coverings to dig out veggies as needed.

Observed wildlife around the lake this summer

(A feature column from our environmental representative, **Doug Dempster.**)

Many lake residents appreciate our wildlife. It is a sign that our lake is healthy and calm.

The great blue heron is often seen on the shoreline or flying along the edge of the lake.

This year has once again seen the return of a pair of loons. Their haunting calls are often heard during the day, as evening falls or at night. Chris Vroom wonders if the changes to the lake level make nesting difficult, and is considering converting an old raft into a nesting platform. The good news is that Libby Barrett reports spotting a mother loon with four baby loons in the bay at Boathouse beach.

There has been a group of three Merganser ducks who made a raft in the bay home for a couple of weeks. Another Merganser mamma duck with four chicks following closely behind her cruised along the shoreline in July. Yet another mamma duck has seven chicks following.

A mink was sighted at the North end of the lake again this year by Janet Donald and Susan Anastasopoulos.

There is beaver activity in the culverts in the causeway, and for much of June and July one could often see a beaver heading north down the bay out to work around dusk.

A flock of grackles with their abrasive calls have taken up on the island.

Libby Barrett has seen Kingfisher bird for the first time this summer.

Kathy Cole reports that in late August a car hit a black bear on the 329 between entrance 3 and Gore. The car was damaged and the bear apparently killed.

One can hear the frogs on a quiet evening. It is also a good year for dragon and damsel flies. This year has seen some incredible swarming of water striders on the North end when the lake is mirror-calm.

And of course Chris' Sweeney's white duck, Allo, is back again this year, with a black-coloured duck friend who sticks close as they cruise the lake. They seem to like flat beaches, and have been observed sitting happily under deck chairs on a dock on the East side of the bay.

No doubt this is an incomplete report. Let us know of your wildlife sightings.

Douglas.dempster@hotmail.ca

How safe is our lake to swim?

(Another feature column from our environmental representative, **Doug Dempster.**)

For those who like to skip to the end of a mystery to find out "who did it", the answer is that the quality of our water for swimming at Sijolm beaches is better than the national standard by a wide margin.

Two years ago Sir John's Lake participated once again in the Quebec voluntary lake monitoring network (Réseau de Surveillance Voluntaire des Lacs, or RSVL)). This process requires a water sample once a month in June, July and August, taken in one location in the very centre of the lake. This traditional laboratory service requires the insulated transportation by courier of samples with freezer packs, which is administratively inconvenient. Laboratory tests are made on phosphorus, chlorophyll and clarity to produce a perspective on the environmental health of the lake.

Phosphorus and chlorophyll are indicators of fertilizer and agricultural run-off. With the reservoir above the Marchand dam as a pristine nature reserve, these measures are not of primary concern to our lake.

The problem with the RSVL process is that it does not tell us if it is safe to swim at our Sijolm beaches, all of which are at the edge of the lake. The RSVL process does not measure E.coli bacterial count, the standard metric for swimming water quality. Many residents are concerned with the correct functioning of septic fields, and their possible effect in local areas. While we want to know that lake water quality is generally excellent, we need to know that the places where we swim are safe. Sijolm is responsible for seven beaches around the lake that serve our residents.

The first question was "What is the accepted standard for swimming safety?" Health Canada, in its third edition of its Guidelines for Canadian Recreational Water Quality published in April 2012 at www.hc-sc.ca, identifies the standard as not more than 200 E.coli over five or more samples of 100 ml of water. Of note is that the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets a standard of 126 E.coli per 100 ml.

What is E.coli? These are fecal bacteria that are the best indicator of problems such as diarrhea, ear infections or stomach upset that may arise from polluted swimming water. E.coli is a member of the larger coliform bacteria family.

To be clear, swimming quality measures are different from drinking water measures. Drinking water tests require a zero E.coli count.

The second question was “Is there a simple, cost-effective and reliable test that we can do to test our swimming water quality?” We looked for a test kit, and came across the testing system provided by Bluewater Biosciences.

This modern system using sophisticated reagents is in use in Canada, the US and in 40 countries internationally. It is used by government, industries, municipalities, cottage associations and international aid organizations. It is simple to use and produces reliable results. Water samples are gathered, poured onto plastic honeycomb-like Coliplate testers and then incubated for 24 hours under controlled temperature conditions. Each disposable test plate costs about \$12, so testing is both affordable and convenient.

The Coliplate tester has about a hundred cells. After incubation, cells with coliform turn blue, and blue cells that fluoresce under ultraviolet light have E.coli. Peter Nicholson and I found the reading of the test plates after incubation to be obvious and unambiguous. For those who seek further information, go to www.bluewaterbiosciences.com.

Bluewater Biosciences sets its standard as less than 1000 coliform and less than 100 E.coli per 100 ml water sample. This is a more rigorous standard than that of either Health Canada or the US EPA.

A test system including incubator and ultraviolet light source was therefore acquired. Our first use was on the 2-3 August long weekend. On Sunday morning 2 August 2015 Peter Nicholson and I collected water samples at the seven Sijolm beaches and in front of the De Groot, Cole and Nicholson houses. The last three locations were added to get a more complete coverage of the lake. Samples were collected 30 metres off-shore and from 30 centimetres below the water surface. The samples were placed into the Coliplate testers and incubated for 24 hours. We read the results the very next day.

Residents will recall that the previous week had seen three extremely hot days of around 30 degrees Celsius, plus some rain that produced run-off. This test was therefore done in conditions favourable to bacterial growth.

So what was the result? All of our ten sample sites came in below the standard for both coliform and E.coli. The average observed results across the ten sites, as compared to the rigorous Bluewater Biosciences standard, are:

	Average Observed Results	Standard
Coliform bacteria count	25	1000

E.coli bacteria count

8

100

Our average results are therefore an order of magnitude less than the standard. We know from almost four decades of Vanier College water quality studies that Sir John's Lake has great water. We now have a tool that will allow us to quantify swimming safety quickly at reasonable cost and effort under our own control.

Please note this result is as of a single point in time and was conducted by community volunteers. It should not be used for any purposes other than resident information, and should not be used for any legal, representation or warranty purpose.

We cannot be complacent. As we move forward, we will need to reflect on where and when we test, how we potentially deal with a high site count or adverse trends, how we use the information and how we collaborate with other cottage associations. More detailed information will be provided at the Annual General Meeting on 3 October. Please share your perspective or feedback with myself or Peter Nicholson so we can improve our approach in the future.

Douglas.dempster@hotmail.ca

If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter in the future, please notify the editor at sanastass@gmail.com .