

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Dear South Channelers:

As I write this for our winter 'On The Waterfront', we are in a tiny hamlet on Lake Erie called Port Rowan. It is still a fishing centre and, like Parry Sound, explodes each summer in tourists and cottagers. It feels rather strange in that I have no historic or family link with Lake Erie. However, my wife, Liane does have in that she spent part of her girlhood summers immersed in relatives at Port Dover, a handful of miles east. So, she feels more residential than I do in a home we bought for our most distant years.

As for my Great Lakes pedigree, I was born in Sarnia on the St. Clair River, the vital join-up of Lake Huron and Lake St. Clair. My grandfather was born in Brockville on the St. Lawrence, my mother in Prescott, also on the same river. My parents met in Ogdensburg, and their first home was in Massena, N.Y. -- all on the St. Lawrence. One summer, Liane and son, Cuyler, starred in a theatrical performance at Upper Canada Village, depicting the flooding of several communities to create the St. Lawrence Seaway. And for a number of years, I was at Queen's where Lake Ontario flows into the St. Lawrence, where the legendary lovely islands begin known as The Thousand Islands. As a growing boy, our family rented a cottage just on the edge of The Thousand Islands near Maitland, Ontario.

I guess it is no surprise then that one time in a venture into federal politics I ran in an election in the riding of Leeds which included such centres as Gananaque and Brockville along my beloved waterway, the St. Lawrence. And we lived in London for 6 years and often visited Londoners who vacationed along the shore at Grand Bend, Goderich and Kincardine on Lake Huron and Port Stanley on Erie. So you can see how our lives have been largely spent within the influence of some segment of these rightly called Great Lakes.

But what can I say about what has been called "The Sixth Great Lake" and my enthrallment with Georgian Bay? I bought a cottage site from the old Department of Lands and Forests in the 1950's while I was still at university. My affection has not dimmed from those far-off days, but only grown, if possible, since paying the enormous sum of 60 cents a foot back then. We never fail to feel the charm of Sans Souci, Wreck Island, the Umbrellas, Snug Harbour, Pointe au Baril, the Bustards...and all the delights in between. They seem connected to our DNA. The Thousand Islands seem paltry when stacked up against the Thirty Thousand Islands. Didn't the United Nations declare it a special place in the natural world?

I used to have a friend, and Anglican minister, by the folksy name of Rev. Billy Barnes. We were both living then in Smiths Falls, the heart of the Rideau Lakes. He was retired and spending his winters in Florida. Guess what he did down there! He lined up with a funeral home, and when Northerners, who loved Florida, died and requested their ashes be scattered over the Gulf of Mexico, Billy would go up with a pilot in a small aircraft, and at the proper moment would say a prayer, and then shake the container of ashes out the window. The family would be notified and doubtless invoiced by that funeral home. Billy won't be around to do that for me...flying high over Georgian Bay...but it does strike me as a good way to gather up all my memories of this unforgettable part of God's world when the time comes. Any of you feel the same way? It could mean business for Georgian Bay Airways. But let's hope and believe that is a long way down the pipe,

Liane and I heartily wish every one of you a happy 2012, both at your home and cottage.

Gervis

lianemb22@hotmail.com

YOUR EXECUTIVE ALWAYS WORKING FOR YOU:

Gervis Black- President - lianemb22@hotmail.com

Liane Black –Treasurer - lianemb22@hotmail.com

John McAllistar – Membership - john.mcallister@rogers.com

Claudette Chabot - ClaudetteChabot@gmail.com

Eliana Wheeler –Secretary - bewheel@gmail.com

Grace Kopec - gbkopec@rogers.com

Pat Blundy - patblundy@hotmail.com

Paul Morgan – GBA Rep - phmorgan@sympatico.ca

SCA WEB SITE: <http://web2.uwindsor.ca/courses/hk/hermiston/sca/tryme.html>

GBA WEBSITE: www.georgianbay.ca

