

Hi everyone. I apologize for not being there today and want everyone to know that I am available for questions or comments at any time via email at katsdeas@gmail.com

I am covering four topics today: social media, clothing, fireworks and the regatta.

Firstly, for social media, let's start with the numbers:

We have 557 page likes on our Facebook. Considering the size of our lake and membership, I consider this to be a strong representative sample of our group so that even if someone is not following us online, chances are their neighbour is, so, we have a pretty good reach.

Every time we post something, we reach an average of 250 – 350 people. Our most engaging posts are usually regarding community events. People like to know what is going on in the community outside of the BLCA, so we have become a good source of information for local events.

Our analytics reveal that we are improving in every aspect of our Facebook page, such as: post engagement, page views and responsiveness.

Our site is used for a variety of purposes, including: sharing BLCA and other events, political and cottage-related updates (such as from FOCA and local conservation authorities), acting as a lost and found resource – we have reunited many docks and floating objects with their owners – and a place to post pictures and videos and share memories.

Last summer, wake boats and boat racing were hot topics around the lake. This translated into the social media universe. Unfortunately, the banter wasn't always friendly. In fact, opposing viewpoints were expressed by some in a manner that became quite rude and hostile. We posted objective information from Transport Canada about speed limits and wake restrictions and stated our stance was simply to stand behind current laws but, some users took their comments too far. So, instead of blocking people, we disabled all comments. When we finally decided to re-enable commenting, we provided a disclaimer warning users that only friendly, non-derogatory discussion would be permitted. We also stated that any future negativity could result in individual users being temporarily or permanently blocked from the site. So far, we have had no further issues. There is an upside to the negativity we witnessed last summer and that is that not only are people passionate about lake issues and willing to share their opinions but, our Facebook page has become a forum in which we are able to debate. This gives board members a great opportunity to gain insight into what people think about hot button issues.

Moving on to Instagram, we have noticed an increase in people following our account. As users know, this site is for pictures only. We have been able to make good use of our Instagram account in two important ways: firstly, we always have an abundance of pictures sent to us for the calendar. So, I decided to collect some of the pictures that didn't make it to the calendar and use them to post online, while giving credit to the person who submitted it. Secondly, in an effort to increase youth engagement, I put out a call on Facebook for a student to help manage

the Instagram account. One young lady volunteered and she has been doing a great job posting the pictures from our archive, adding a brief description, hashtags and even linking to the account of the person who submitted the photo. She will be received OSSD hours for her work.

All in all, social media has improved significantly over the past few years, with people becoming more engaged, submitting more information more often and using the site in more ways than ever before. So, we look forward to another exciting year.

Some people asked about creating a “social media corner” on our website so I will ask Greg Alexander to speak to that if anyone has any questions.

Next – clothing for the BLCA was a bit of a hit and miss. We distributed shirts to the road reps last year and will, at some point, create a new, error-free version to pass along again. Last summer, I designed two shirts for sale to the public. We offered two separate designs in four colours. We offered the shirts for sale at the regatta and other events. Sales did quite well and we received very positive feedback. We still have some stock leftover from last year. Instead of ordering more just yet, we heard that a family was designing their own shirts, and we have seen others around the lake wearing them and, you can buy Belmont Lake shirts at Sam’s Place so, we decided to see what demand is like this summer for our current inventory and how well sales do with the clothing being offered by various places around the lake before placing a new order for our own styles. So, expect sometime in 2020 to have more shirts available directly from the BLCA.

If anyone is interested in purchasing a BLCA shirt, please see Brian Deas or contact Katherine at katsdeas@gmail.com

On to fireworks now. As you may know, in addition to the BLCA, there are quite a few displays offered around the lake. BLCA puts on a show every year on the lake with the help of private donors and organizers. Cordova Mines has an annual display and so does Havelock. They all take place on the Canada Day weekend. We try to coordinate so that they are all held on different nights but sometimes there is a bit of overlap. The lake display is really special because people attend in boats and, for those who live near the south end, also watch from shore. Cordova Mines is a long-standing tradition because just before the show begins, everyone sings O’Canada and there is more opportunity to socialize because everyone is gathered together in one place. The next time that the first of July falls on the long weekend, we will be eligible for funding from the Government of Canada through the Celebrate Canada program, which we have received in recent years. And, as usual, we ask that people refrain from putting on their own personal displays as the loud noises scare pets so we really encourage folks to come out to one of the many local fireworks events held around the lake.

Lastly, I will briefly talk about the regatta. Greg Alexander usually manages the activities but as he was away last summer, I volunteered to take his place. So, firstly, I want to thank everyone

that helped and volunteered because it is really a big team effort and I think the day was a great success.

Last year, we had more student volunteers than ever before!! We offer OSSD hours towards it and word has really spread about the need for people to help so that many youth volunteers contacted me before the big day to offer assistance. Everyone, youth and adults, was really flexible about helping with whatever was needed so we are heading in a positive direction in terms of becoming more inclusive for people of all ages.

Last year, we were fortunate for Mary Ellen Myers volunteering to take pictures of the day with a real camera so of you can visit our Facebook page and find a huge selection of professional quality pictures capturing the entire day.

The trivia contest was also a great success. We had a 2018 winner and a 2019 winner, pictures posted on our Facebook. The trivia is local knowledge and a great way to provide entertainment for those folks attending the regatta but not inclined to participate in other events. We are still looking for people to takeover some of the BBQ duties at the regatta, everything other than the actual cooking, if interested or know someone who might be, please contact any board member.

Looking forward to another great year and thanks again to everyone for their participation.