It’s been a very soggy spring in the French River and Lake Nipissing area. As you probably know, water levels are high but have been held below flood level. If you’re on the water at this time of year, keep alert for hazards like rocks that are normally quite visible but may be submerged, and floating debris. Some cottagers with lower docks have placed water-filled barrels on the dock to hold the planking down, and the ones I saw personally on May 16 seemed to be working, although it was strange to see blue barrels seemingly floating on the water with no dock visible!

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Sunday August 6 at Solid Comfort. We will try to limit the business end of the meeting to allow a longer social time - and that means more time to enjoy the treats prepared by the Solid Comfort chef. UFRCA members have been very cooperative the past couple of years in limiting the number of boats arriving at the Solid Comfort dock. Keep on boat pooling and making arrangements to get ferried to the meeting.

I would like to thank the current Board of Directors for their work and efforts over the past season. Sam, Peter, Holly, Liz and Liz, Jeff, and rookie Kathy have all been pitching in with many positive results. Additionally, thanks to Wendy Kennedy Sadler who, while not on the Board, has moved the first responders’ map closer to completion.

We have been operating with eight Board members this past season, and our By-laws call for nine, so one vacancy continues. In addition, two Board members are stepping down. Liz Gallagher will be leaving the Board and her post as Newsletter chair, and I will be stepping down as well. All the other Board members are remaining so there are a total of three openings on the Board, and we hope to fill these at the AGM. Thus, nominations are now open.

If you wish to nominate another UFRCA member, or volunteer yourself, please contact any Board member or a member of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee includes Dave Minden (minden.dave-andjane@gmail.com 705-495-9908) and John McFadgen (musky444@gmail.com 1-705-763-2020 or 1-905-634-2020).

Over the last few months, there has been an adjustment of committee responsibilities as I have handed off a few of these to others. In addition to financial responsibilities, Peter Rooney has taken over the Park and MNR Liaison role. A “Membership Team” consisting of Peter, Liz Gribbon, and Kathy LaBranche are handling the membership responsibilities during this present membership renewal period. And recently, we created a new committee called Publicity and Promotions, chaired by Kathy LaBranche. You will be noticing the results of those changes.

I wish you all a wonderful summer season (when it gets here), and I hope to see you either at the AGM or cruising on the river. It’s been a blast! It’s been fun! And it’s been a pleasure working with past and present Board members, and the entire membership, to further the aims and goals of the association.

Dave
Burning Brush Rules

We get a few calls each year from members asking about open brush burning – for example, limbs or trees that have come down in a storm or been removed for safety reasons. The following information is from West Nipissing Fire Service and applies within the boundaries of Municipality of West Nipissing.

* Burning brush in the open at any time of year requires a Burn Permit from West Nipissing Fire Service (contact 705-753-1171 for information about obtaining a permit).

* No burning of any kind – even with a permit – is allowed during a fire ban.

* Permits are $10 and the duration of a permit can be several weeks if that is what is required.

* Obtaining a permit gives the Fire Service notice that open burning is occurring and helps to avoid false alarms. While permitted open burning is taking place, the Fire Service will not dispatch a unit to that address because someone saw smoke. They will only respond if the permit holder calls.

* There are limits on open burning that make it very difficult to get a permit in cottage situations on the Upper French River – at least 50 feet from combustible materials, and 300 feet from buildings.

* In these cottage situations, the preferred alternative is to burn materials in a bottom ventilated steel drum with a spark screen – feeding the material in to fit with the capacity of the drum. No permit is required for this type of burning.

* It is very important to burn only dry materials to minimize the amount of smoke. Damp materials increase the amount of smoke and also the likelihood that a neighbour or passer-by might call 9-1-1.

* Whenever you are an open burn permit holder and are ready to begin burning, you are required to call West Nipissing Fire Services, who will ask for the permit number and will let them know if conditions are appropriate.

* Don’t burn on very windy days but also don’t burn when there is rain, fog or some other weather condition that prevents the smoke from being readily dispersed.

* To avoid complaints, let your neighbours know you are burning.

* You must have on hand the means to extinguish the fire (at least three pails of water, a charged garden hose, a shovel).

For more information, contact the West Nipissing Fire Service at 705-753-1171.

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- Available to non-residents of Ontario
- Discount for members of a cottage association
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YOUR HOMETOWN BROKERS FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS
Memories of the old Chief

by Louise (Crowe) Fry

Following WWII, Ontario’s Near North became a popular travel destination, so in 1946 the Northern Ontario Boat Lines company was established and launched the cruise ship “Chief Commanda”. The boat was named in memory of Chief Raymond Commanda who drowned on the French River two years prior. This 200 passenger double decked, steel boat was prefabricated in Trenton Ontario and shipped in pieces by rail to Callender Bay, where it was assembled, launched and put into service touring the reaches of Lake Nipissing.

The “Chief” as it was affectionately known, berthed at the North Bay city dock where she took aboard tourists from May to September everyday but Tuesday, from 10 am to 5 pm, on a 90 mile round trip cruises across the lake, down the Upper French River as far as the Dokis Village. There were also two very popular “moonlight” cruises, Tuesday and Friday evenings, leaving at 7:30 and crossing the lake to Keystone Lodge, and returning by 11:00. Young people especially enjoyed the live band on the upper deck. Many times I was asked to go on a date there and I would reply “If you don’t mind if I work in the commissary for an hour or so – you could be my guest”.

Some of the original crew included: Captain Bill Rowe, Engineer George Jenkins, Purser Lawrence Dokis and we three gals, Chris Wilcox, Marie Rivet and myself, Louise Fry (Crowe) who ran the restaurant. We made and served sandwiches, coffee and tea and the local North Bay Beaties’ Bakery supplied fresh pastries including the very popular lemon meringue pie. I was never sure who made the pickled eggs which sat in a large jar on the counter – a crew favorite. Not only did we feed passengers and crew who seemed to eat all day, but many of the cottagers took advantage of our menu at stops along the way including, Keystone Lodge, Solid Comfort, Lunge Lodge, Chaudiere Lodge, Casa Blanca and the Dokis Village.

The “Chief” was a life line and a welcome visitor to the seasonal inhabitants of the river, as we delivered not only paying guests but freight as well. “Chief’s in” noted by a loud blast from her horn at Keystone, was an especially popular meeting place for
young and old. Dozens of boats, nose to dock, unloaded cottagers to pick up their grocery orders, mail, newspapers, and ice cream! It also provided an opportunity to exchange gossip, plan activities, find out where the fish were biting and where the best blueberries were ripe for picking.

I worked the first two summers the Chief ran and especially loved it when the lake got rough. We would have to close the restaurant because the dishing were flying off the shelves. On one memorable occasion we delivered a baby grand piano to the Heinzmann cottage near Lunge Lodge - I could just imagine what wonderful parties they must have had. I also remember when the Chief docked at our cottage just behind Keystone. My father, Dr Loren Crowe brought the nuns and nursing staff from Saint Josephs Hospital to the cottage for the day. They were picked up on the Chief’s return trip from Dokis.

I remember another very foggy Sunday morning when Captain Rowe was continually sounding the fog horn to warn other vessels and listening for echo’s off the rocks. Finally he shut down the engines and as the Chief drifted slowly to a stop, out of the fog just a few feet off the bow, loomed from the vertical cliffs at Campbell’s Bay!

The Chief was decommissioned in 1974 and took up residence at the Dokis Village. Years later she was towed back to North Bay and now operates as a popular restaurant at the foot of the government dock, the same place where for 28 years she’d cast off her lines and made magic memories for thousands of lucky people.
Dokis First Nation Museum
Location: 956 Main Street, 705-763-2252
Please check summer hours as they are not yet posted.
Entry fee is cash only. Adults age 19+ are $5.00, Seniors and Teens (12-18 years) are $4.00, and children under 12 are free. Be sure to visit the French River room.
In honour of Canada 150, the UFRCA has chosen to share a collection of stories and poetry about life on the French River, written by former cottager Sid Sumner from his cottage in Satchel’s Bay back in the 1930s. The poetry and stories were originally written by hand and then later in 1935, transposed into a booklet. The stories entertained many in the family and circle of friends of Syd Sumner. In 1973, C. Carlton Hartley used the technology of the day and copied the collection of stories by typewriter and then reproduced them by photocopy machine into a 5 by 8 inch booklet. This booklet was distributed to many French River families in order to keep these wonderful stories alive.

Fast forward to 2017, the booklet was scanned onto a computer and reformatted to fit on 8 1/2 by 11 inch standard paper. The font was increased to 12pt Calibri and stored in a printable PDF file which is posted (here) on the UFRCA website, to be read, copied, printed and shared. We are attempting to preserve this collection of original stories and share them with all of the UFRCA families.

This book is presented in its original form with spelling mistakes, punctuation and grammatical errors. It is written in the language of the day, which may seem offensive to some groups, but remains as a snapshot of that time. These are not the views of the UFRCA and we apologize to anyone who might be offended. Please enjoy these memories and entertaining episodes from a bygone era, set in the land that we cherish so much.

by Holly Waters
Website Upgrade
This past spring, the website was upgraded to a more recent version, and it has presented a few background administrative changes and new systems that needed to be mastered. Casual users will not see much change. If you use your personal profile page, there is a slightly different look, but the general processes are the same. On website pages, when attachments are posted, the text is now underlined, indicating there is an active linkage.

Contact Sheet
One page that has been recently updated is the Contacts and Directory page in the Members Menu section. The first item on this page is the “Printable Contact Sheet”. It provides contact information for all Board members and a variety of emergency and other contacts. It is recommended that you print and post a current copy at the cottage. Knowing your GPS coordinates will assist someone reaching you in an emergency. As cell phone reception improves and usage spreads, remember that if you call 911 on your cell phone, those at the receiving end do not know your location. Only land-line phones in Bertram Township (West Nipissing Municipality) are linked to your cottage address number and GPS coordinates. Those on the river’s south side must also know their GPS coordinates if calling 911 from a land-line phone. The second item lower down on the Contacts and Directory page is the Members Directory. It includes the cottage phone number and e-mail address of all members who have given permission for their name to be listed here. Find Contacts and Directory here.

Membership Renewal
On May 1, all members received the membership renewal information and we thank all who have renewed their membership to date. Membership information and forms for the 2017-18 season are on the website. Those who enjoy fishing will note the recent postings on the website Home page regarding the walleye fishery and the recently released study Achieving a Sustainable Lake Nipissing Walleye Fishery. See something of interest for the website? Let us know.
Spring is Here!
I recently drove into Dokis Marina to drop my daughter and a friend off for summer employment at Chaudiere Lodge. Along the way, I pointed out fiddleheads as I saw them, which reminded me of this recent Cottage Life article on choosing which fiddleheads to pick and how to cook them. Delicious! Enjoy!

Fisheries Updates
Lake Nipissing's walleye population is said to be increasing due to restocking efforts and changes by Chief McLeod to local fishing practices. Stocking and Gill netting links

Ticks – How to Prevent them, Remove them and Signs of Lyme Disease
Warmer climates are causing ticks to spread further north, causing an increase in Lyme Disease and the Powassan Virus. As always, know strategies to prevent ticks and be aware of how to remove them. Peppermint Oil is said to effectively remove ticks!

Lake Nipissing and French River Recorded Water Level Forecast
The following is the water level forecast for Lake Nipissing and the French River as of Monday May 15th, 2017, as provided by Public Works and Government Services Canada. The precipitation at the French River Dams station for the month of May is currently at 89% of the total monthly historical average.

Lake Nipissing CAUTION: HIGH LAKE LEVELS
As of May 15th, 2017, the water level of Lake Nipissing was 196.11 metres. The lake level is currently above the long term average. The lake level should be relatively stable this week. Further change in the lake level is dependent on the amount of inflows and precipitation.

French River CAUTION: HIGH RIVER LEVELS
At Dry Pine Bay, the river level on May 15th, 2017 was 182.38 metres, which corresponds to a flow of 425 cubic metres per second. The river flow is expected to remain stable this week. Further change in the river levels will be dependent on the amount of inflows and precipitation.

Contribute to the scientific understanding of Canada's Environment
The Spring Peepers' night songs have been singing their spring chorus. If you are someone interested in monitoring the health of our ecosystems, you may want to sign up for www.naturewatch.ca to record frogs, worms, ice, and plants. You can also view other people's observations by zooming in on your area of interest.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE
UPPER FRENCH RIVER
COTTAGERS ASSOCIATION
SUNDAY AUGUST 6, 2017 10:00 A.M.
SOLID COMFORT FISHING CAMP
ON THE UPPER FRENCH
(COORDINATES: N 46.160202 W 79.980413)
PHOTO CONTEST AWARDS
UFRCA T-SHIRTS FOR SALE
REFRESHMENTS
& MORE
9:30 A.M. REGISTRATION OPENS
NEW MEMBERS ALWAYS WELCOME
10 A.M. TO 11:45 A.M. - BUSINESS MEETING
AND SOCIAL
COMPLIMENTARY REFRESHMENTS FROM THE
SOLID COMFORT CHEF
NOTE: REMEMBER THAT DOCK SPACE IS LIMITED.
PLEASE ARRANGE TO “BOAT-POOL” WITH OTHER
COTTAGERS OR ARRANGE A DROP-OFF.
CONTACT SOLID COMFORT 705-763-2182 IN
ADVANCE FOR BOAT PICK-UP IF REQUIRED.
THE DOKIS BARGE CAN TAKE A FEW FROM
RIVERVIEW TO SOLID COMFORT.

At the April 3, 2017 Board of Directors meeting, there was a small shifting of committee responsibilities and the creation of a new committee: Publicity and Promotions. The changes are reflected in the current listing.

Dave Minden
President
Communications

Sam Goodwin
Secretary
Vice President
Municipal Liaison and Security

Holly Waters
Dokis Liaison

Kathy LaBranche
Publicity and Promotions
Membership Team

Jeff Hamilton
Social and Events

Liz Gallagher
Newsletter

Liz Gribbon
Environment
Membership Team

Peter Rooney
Treasurer
Membership Team
MNR and Park Liaison

MNR and Park Liaison

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2017 Fish Fry and Social
Chaudière Lodge
Sunday August 6th, 2017
4:30 - 7:30 pm
$25/person
$12.50 children 12 & under

Live Music Sponsored by UFRCA
This event takes place on the same day as the UFRCA AGM

Menu
Fish
Baked beans
French fries
Pasta salad
Potato salad
Home made cookies

Change those Smoke Alarm Batteries!

A public service announcement from West Nipissing Fire and Emergency Services

May is when most Ontarians open their cottages and other seasonal homes. The West Nipissing Fire & Emergency service is urging cottagers to add Fire Safety and Prevention to their plans.

Cottages and other seasonal homes are vulnerable to unsafe conditions that can arise over the winter such as smoke and carbon monoxide alarms that no longer work, and chimneys that have become blocked or combustible accumulated near the cottage. Supervise campfires at all times, be Fire Smart.

For more information please contact the West Nipissing Fire and Emergency Service. [www.wnfs.ca](http://www.wnfs.ca) (705) 753-1171

RSVP by July 28th to Chaudière Lodge 705 768 2220
Cash, cheques and credit cards accepted
Please bring a lawn chair or blanket for this festive outdoors event!
The picture last month was taken from the suspension bridge at the French River provincial Park Visitors Center. The persons to correctly guess this were Melinda Pierce, Dave Minden, Jeff Hamilton and Susie Ray.

When you call for help, Riverview always responds. It's one of the many contributions that Valarie Viau and her team make to community life on the Upper French River. And it's part of what makes cottaging in our locale so unique – our reliance on volunteers and neighbours in time of need.

With that in mind, the UFRCA continues to look for ways to strengthen the capacity of volunteers to respond and this year, we're donating $800 to Riverview to provide for safety equipment upgrades and enhanced staff training. On behalf of UFRCA members, we wish to express our continuing gratitude to everyone at Riverview for all of their efforts on our behalf.