

DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHAT GOES ON AT YOUR COTTAGE WHEN YOU ARE NOT THERE?

During the past year, many property owners have had to deal with a range of noise and disturbance issues often when their neighbours were not present.

Some cottage owners have no idea what transpires while they are gone and that their neighbours are placed in the very awkward position of having to deal with disturbances and having to decide whether to call the police. Good neighbours don't want to have to do that to their neighbours, but on the other hand, good neighbours don't lend their cottages to those who would abuse the privilege by causing a disturbance to all surrounding properties.

PSLL recommends that cottage owners take more care for the actions and behaviours of their guests. When you loan or rent your cottage, PSLL recommends that you set firm ground rules for what's acceptable and not. Why allow your guests to bother the neighbour that you have a good relationship with? Why force a good neighbour to call the police and then have that neighbour receive threats or fear reprisal from your guest/renter? **YES** – this has happened in our Domain! We all like to enjoy ourselves and unwind but there needs to be appropriate limits.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour (and we have **ALL** seen these) are: fires set on islands and trees chopped to fuel the fire, reckless use of fireworks, dangerous operation of watercraft, ATV road races, unattended bonfires, loud drinking parties with swearing and music. Remember, noise really carries across the water. If it's loud for you, then it's loud for everyone who is not at the party!

Some owners expect their PSLL Lake Reps to get involved and solve the disturbance. This is not a PSLL responsibility. We are volunteers and not your watchdog nor the police. When you witness or experience disturbances such as above, PSLL recommends the following course of action: First, if you know the property owner, give them a quick telephone call to their residence to advise them of the situation and try to solve this amicably. If this is not possible then calling the police may be the only recourse available.

Constable Danny Laberge of the MRC des Collines advises that reporting disturbances is still the best recourse to prevent reoccurrences, and, that you provide the name and home telephone number of the cottage owner to the police when you call in your complaint. When the police arrive at the property, and if the property owner is not present, the police will call the owner to advise them of the disturbance. The police number for emergencies is 9-1-1 and for all non-urgent calls it is 1-888-459-9911.

Constable Laberge also advises that you can report a disturbance *anonymously* on one occasion. If repeated complaints are required the police will need your name and address as a point of record. **BUT** if you fear any reprisals from the property occupants or owner let the police know this when you call and they will ensure that your name is not disclosed.

Also, the MRC des Collines have a new "Operational Support Unit" (OSU) in place to catch offenders who misuse ATV's, watercraft or snowmobiles. They are willing to set up on-site "sting" operations at any time to catch repeat offenders.

As a property owner in our Domain, please act responsibly when you lend or rent your cottage. We suggest that you provide guests/renters with a fact sheet containing standard Police, Fire and Emergency telephone numbers, including your own contact number. We also suggest that you ensure that all visitors to your lake property understand the following – ***clip this out and attach it to your “checklist”***:

- ❑ Please be respectful of all neighbours and their property.
- ❑ Do not cut trees down for firewood without the expressed permission of the property owner.
- ❑ Absolutely no overnight camping or fires are permitted on the islands at any time.
- ❑ Bonfires are technically only allowed by special permit from the Municipality. All bonfires must be attended at all times and kept to a reasonable size, accounting for wind direction and force. They also must be extinguished once no longer necessary.
- ❑ Please exercise safe and responsible use of all watercraft. This includes life jackets being made available to occupants, drivers being respectful of a boat's speed and the size of wake it may cause, while exercising respect and caution for other watercraft and/or swimmers on the lake. Boating after dark – only when necessary and ***always*** with a light present.
- ❑ Noise levels **MUST** be reduced after 11:00 pm (this includes loud music, voices, etc.) by Municipal By-Law.
- ❑ Municipal By-Laws strictly prohibit the riding of ATVs and unlicensed motorcycles and snowmobiles on all of our roads. There are several approved trails for this purpose.
- ❑ The local Police Dept has an Operational Support Unit (USO), which has been specifically established to deter ATV, motorcycle, watercraft and snowmobile misuse. They have their fleet of machines to catch offenders and will be called if necessary.

Cottage owners have been advised to report all disturbances to the POLICE, which they will do, so please act responsibly.

These recommendations are presented so that all property owners and their visitors have a safe, happy and enjoyable year at the lake.