

AYLEN LAKE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



JUNE 2006

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars.
- Walt Whitman

Spring has finally arrived as evidenced by the haunting call of the loons and the irritating buzz of mosquitoes. Many cottagers have already made the inaugural trip to the lake for 2006 and others will soon arrive to check for any lasting effects of winter and wildlife. Whatever the findings, all are looking forward to hot summer days lazing by the dock, fishing for the elusive big one and enjoying the company of family and friends. The ALCA Executive wishes you all a wonderful summer filled with your favourite things and enhanced by the backdrop of Aylen Lake.

Since the January Newsletter your Executive have continued to be very busy following up on various action items. I will take this opportunity to bring you up to date:

- Insurance – This item has proved to be very time-consuming, but we have finally been able to secure both liability and errors & omissions insurance. Following some preliminary investigations, the Executive determined that LMS PROLINK Ltd. offered the required coverage at a competitive price. LMS PROLINK Ltd. is the insurance company recommended by FOCA (Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association). The package includes coverage for the regatta as well as errors and omissions for the ALCA Executive. The chapel is included at no additional cost. Fire fighting is excluded which is not atypical for situations similar to ours. Signs will be posted in each fire pump box and at the landing bunker indicating exclusion of liability with use of the pumps. An additional 'exclusion of liability' sign will be posted at the landing pertaining to the shoal markers. All of these 'exclusion of liability' signs represent due diligence on the part of the ALCA. It should be noted that we did initially pursue the option of inclusion under insurance held by the Township of South Algonquin, but this was not realized. The cost for the first full year of coverage with LMS PROLINK Ltd. is \$2079.00.
- Education Taxes – At a May 2006 South Algonquin Township budget meeting it was mentioned (as an aside) that Dickens Ward has now been assigned to a Board of Education. The understanding from this development is that all future education taxes collected will be dedicated to that Board. This does not, however, address the issue of those funds that have been collected prior to the Board designation. At this writing,

the ALCA had approached eight separate law firms to ascertain their interest in pursuing this issue from a legal perspective with universally negative responses. Councillor Belisle has been asked to follow up on a legal contact of his knowledge that may have some interest in our case.

- Garbage Pickup Schedule – A request was put forward to the Township of South Algonquin for changes to the current garbage pick up schedule. Specifically, a request was made to change the pick up time to late afternoon hours to accommodate cottagers leaving for home. Initially, the Township provided a positive response, but later rescinded that, as the compactor truck is required at a landfill site during afternoon hours on every Wednesday. An agreement by the Township to later pick up hours on Sunday is currently being confirmed.
- South Algonquin Township Website – A letter was forwarded to the Township asking that their website be upgraded to include such items of public interest as Council minutes and agendas as well as the dates of budget and other Council meetings. A letter in response indicated their desire to enhance the current website, but at the same time the lack of human resources to dedicate to the task. There have, however, been some improvements made.
- Email Membership List – A notice was placed in the January Newsletter asking members to indicate their interest in being placed on an email list for the ALCA. Those on the list would receive electronic copies of the newsletters, as well as mail-outs of time-sensitive information. To date, there are approximately 30 members on the list.
- Aylen Lake Fire Map – Bill Lowthian has been working on an updated version of the colourized Aylen Lake Fire Map (including current contacts for volunteer firefighters). It is anticipated that this map will be available free of cost to ALCA members (one per membership) and on a cost recovery basis to non-members. Maps will be distributed at the annual AGM in August. Our thanks to Bill for taking on this task and donating his time and talents to the ALCA membership.
- Fire Hazard Sign – This has proved to be quite problematic. The Township has declined to assume any responsibility for maintaining the sign (i.e. condition of the sign itself and ensuring that the fire hazard level is current and accurate). The ALCA has investigated other options, but there are questions of liability for anyone assuming responsibility for maintaining the current fire hazard level. As a result, the Executive has decided to pursue an alternate approach. A sign will be erected by the public dock area advising all individuals of their responsibility to be aware of safe burning practices including current fire hazard levels and will also include the MNR number to call should they have any questions.

- WRAFT – As mentioned in the January Newsletter, the ALCA is now a member of WRAFT (Waterfront Ratepayers After Fair Taxation). This organization appears to be the most significant player for waterfront property owners in the current market value assessment discussions. You are encouraged to visit the WRAFT website at www.wraft.com. to keep informed of the current status of various actions including a broadened coalition of organizations, a private member's bill and the Ombudsman's report on MPAC. This site also provides you with information on how you, as an individual, can take action.
- Community Path – Included in its entirety in this Newsletter is a letter forwarded to the ALCA from the Peaire family concerning the barriers to and/or redirection of the footpath along the shores of Aylen Lake. The ALCA Executive fully supports the spirit of this letter.
- Regatta – At this writing, there has yet to be anyone come forward as a volunteer coordinator for this year's regatta. Bruce and Connie Dick are unable to take on this task for this summer due to other commitments. They will re-assume this role for the summer of 2007 and have also volunteered to hold this year's planning meeting at their cottage on July 8th. Again, I urge you to consider an offer to coordinate this year's event. Bruce and Connie will provide you with all the information you need to make this year's regatta another successful event.
- Newsletter – A reminder that this newsletter will be the final one for Janice Marks and that the ALCA is looking for a volunteer to take on this role. The Executive would like to take this opportunity to thank Janice on behalf of the membership for the many excellent Newsletter editions she has produced.
- Membership Dues – The insurance premiums are a relatively significant cost for our current revenues and will be an ongoing cost for the ALCA. Primary revenue sources for the ALCA are membership fees and the regatta. The regatta profits are not stable from year-to-year and are highly dependent on attendance. Membership dues have remained stable for many years and while our current bank balance is more than sufficient for a non-profit corporation, rising expenses may necessitate an increase in dues in the future. A full historical financial report will be presented at the AGM, and we are open to discussion of an increase in membership dues.
- Council of South Algonquin Cottagers' Associations – This informal Council continues via a group email. It is essentially an information sharing relationship and there has been no interest from the members in enlarging either the scope or the mandate of this group.
- Aylen Lake Website – David Ryan has constructed an Aylen Lake website and has offered the use of this website as a vehicle for the ALCA

to disseminate information including future and past editions of the Newsletter. The website also offers discussion forums for Aylen Lake cottagers and visitors. You are encouraged to visit the website at www.aylenlake.ca. Thanks to David for making this offer.

- South Algonquin Budget – All members of the ALCA Executive have attended at least two of the South Algonquin budget meetings this spring. Bottom line is that the budget will increase. Some of this increase (approximately \$170,000) is attributed to uncontrollable items such as DSSAB, Casselholme and policing. Additionally, there is a carry over deficit of \$48,000 from last year. The mill rate has risen slightly and assessments have significantly increased (averaging about 25% for the Township, and 56% for Dickens Ward), with the ultimate result of increased taxes. Waterfront property owners will bear a significant proportion of this increase, as they are the ones who have also borne the most significant assessment increases.

Finally, this President's message will also advise you that this will complete my final term as a member of the Executive of ALCA. As I step down, I encourage all of you to consider stepping forward at the August AGM to volunteer your time and efforts as a member of the ALCA Executive. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the other Executive both past and present for their dedication to our Aylen Lake community.

We do not see nature with our eyes, but with our understandings and our hearts. - William Hazlitt

Gwen Brown, President

COUNCILLOR'S MESSAGE

As you know, my term of office as Councillor for Dickens Ward will be ending in November 2006. Having served as President of the Aylen Lake Community Association for 7 years and an additional 8 years as Councillor, I am looking forward to retirement from public office. These past 15 years have been quite challenging and demanding. As South Algonquin's representative on the Nipissing District Social Services Administration Board and this year as Chair, I have had to attend meetings in North Bay every two weeks.

The most vexatious issue we have faced, in my estimation, is the frustration and hardship witnessed primarily by owners of islands and road access

properties who have seen dramatic spikes in their assessment for the 2006 taxation year, many in excess of 50% and the highest being 200%. The root cause of these unfair assessment increases is the Province of Ontario's Current Value Assessment system which relies on the most volatile, unpredictable and frivolous criteria one could possibly adopt to establish the amount of your municipal taxes – realty sales! Due to inflationary prices being paid for waterfront properties everywhere in Ontario as a result of a very strong demand for such properties, Aylen Lake has not been spared from increased selling prices. The average assessment increase in South Algonquin for the 2006 tax year is 24.6%. The following are the average increases by ward: Dickens 56%; Airy 14%; Murchison 14%; Lyell 16% and Sabine 28%.

In the case of Dickens Ward, MPAC used realty sales well beyond the Valuation Day of January 1, 2005 to establish some of their assessment values for the 2006 taxation year. MPAC's brochures all state, "Your 2005 Property Assessment Notice shows the assessed value of your property as of January 1, 2005." There is nothing in written communication from MPAC to property owners that explains that they have the flexibility of entertaining even one sale beyond that date. In our own case the only comparable sales that were used to arrive at our 85% increase were sales from May 2005 until October 2005, well beyond January 1, 2005. The same holds true for many other property owners. This is a very bold, if not illegal approach for MPAC to have relied upon realty sales well beyond Valuation Day to justify their dramatic increases in assessment for the 2006 taxation year. In Dickens Ward the increases in assessment range from 1% to over 200%. From a real estate standpoint and consequently assessment value, these disparities between assessment increases are ludicrous because Aylen Lake is one homogeneous real estate market area. This is unfair between neighbours on Aylen Lake. No property owners on other lakes in South Algonquin Township have been victimized by the same unfair increases.

Premier Dalton McGuinty says that municipalities have all the tools they need to mitigate some of these increases such as phasing-in dramatic increases in taxes over a maximum of an 8-year period. I introduced a motion at Council last month requesting a phase-in for anyone facing a 15% or greater tax increase. Not one other Councillor voted in support of my motion. The tool called phase-in by the Premier is not an entitlement or right as he would lead us to believe. Phase-ins can only be introduced if a municipal council is so inclined to allow it to happen. The likelihood of a Councillor supporting a phase-in is very remote as he/she would be agreeing to an increase in municipal taxes for some property owners that would have

to make up the shortfall in revenue from the phased-in (reduced) assessments to which they would not have been otherwise subjected. How likely is that?

This year's Tax Rate is only a fraction of 1% higher than last year's Tax Rate which, when multiplied by your assessment establishes the amount of your municipal tax bill. This year, the township faced a \$170,000.00 increase in levies over which we have no control whatsoever. The so-called windfall from revenues derived from increased assessments totals approximately \$230,000.00. The difference of \$60,000.00 between these two amounts rapidly decreases when you factor in normal inflationary costs to such items as wages, gasoline, hydro, etc. The proposed 2006 Tax Rate of 0.00746466 plus the province's Education levy of 0.00264000 equals 0.01010466. Multiply your assessment by 0.01010466 and that will determine your tax bill for 2006. For example, a \$100,000.00 property assessment will establish \$1,010.46 in taxes for 2006. The interim tax bill you paid recently is only one half of last year's tax bill. The next tax bill you will receive in July will be the difference between the interim amount paid and the balance of the total amount owed for 2006 based on your new assessment.

Thank you for your support through the years. I am honoured to have had the opportunity to serve as your representative.

Thank you,
Gerry Belisle

NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED!!

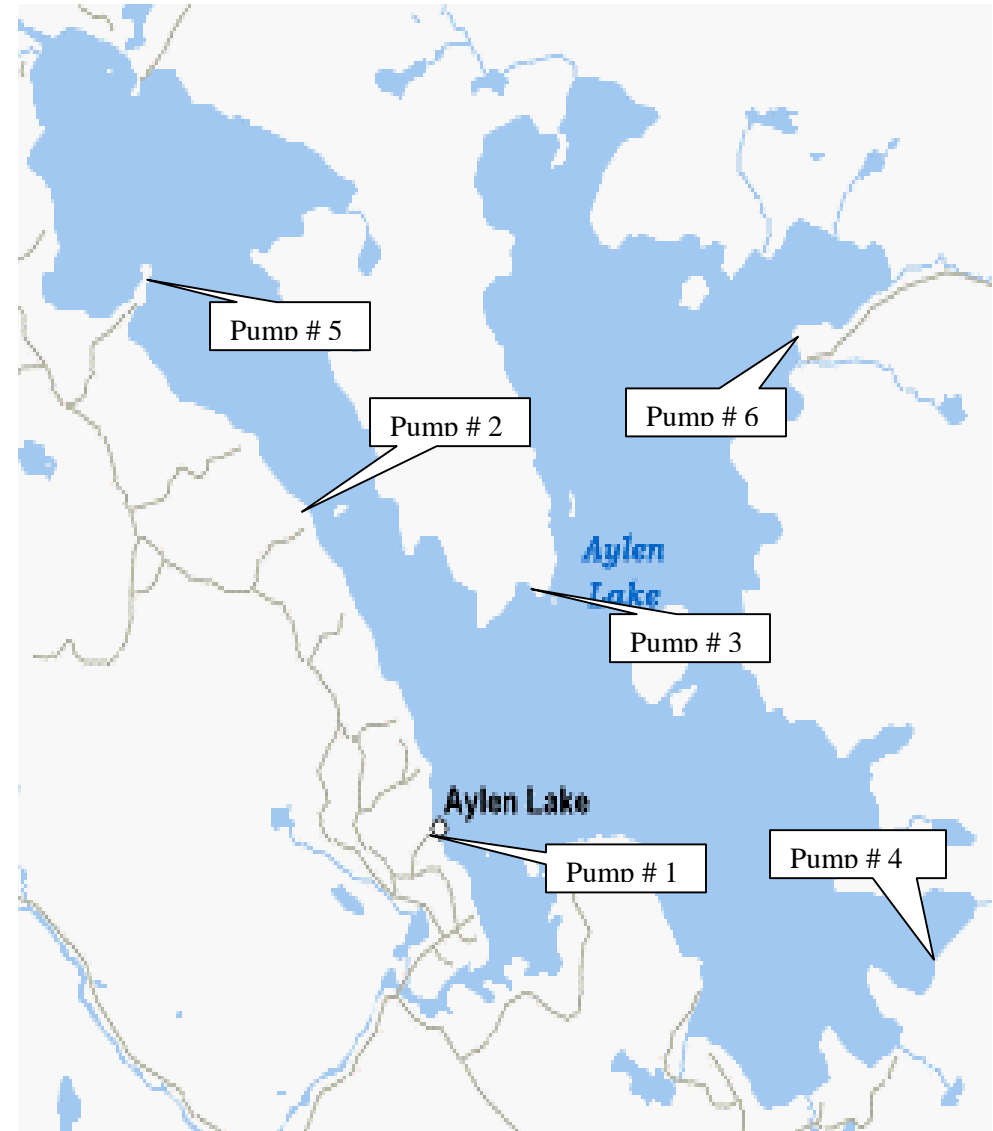
I am stepping down as Editor and a volunteer is needed to take on the task for the January, 2007 edition and beyond.

I have thoroughly enjoyed producing the newsletter for the past number of years, but its time for fresh eyes and a springier keyboard. Anyone interested is invited to contact a member of the Executive. I'll be available to provide any training or orientation.

Thanks to the members of the Executive and to all of you who have contributed to the Newsletter over the years. See you at the lake!

Janice Marks

Fire Pump Locations:



The Township of South Algonquin fire telephone number is
(613) 637-5556.

AYLEN LAKE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Zone # 1

Public Dock-Fire Road # 1

David Thornton 756-9052
Gerry Belisle 756-5256
Mark Gunner 756-1061
Bill White 756-5699
Dave McDougall 756-2957
Len Westwell 756-0019
Mitch Marks 756-1047
Peter Kenwood 756-0013
Pierre Villeneuve 756-0013
Geoff Barnes 756-7161
Chuck Roper 756-6933

Zone # 3

East Arm-No Road Access

Fred Kuehn 756-0689
Tim Hoekstra 756-7146
Brent & Kathy Starr 756-0313
Gerry Mahoney 295-3391.
Don MacKenzie 756-0313
Katie King 756-7146

Zone #5

Dennison Bay-Fire Road # 12

Mike McCormack 756-0373
Don Henry 756-0370
Mike Henry 756-3056
Steve Philip 756-1178
Gord McMeekin 756-0386
Geoffrey Iles 756-9044
Bruce Dick 756-9329
John Hynds 756-1227
Marc DeGrosbois 756-2216

Zone # 2

Turkey Island-Fire Road # 10

Ken Harrison 756-5021
Andy Sylvain 756-1235
Art VanWinckle 756-0020
Mike Radonicich 756-3478
Winston Rogers 756-0412
Murray Stone 756-0064
Gwen Brown 756-0086
Tim Pennal 756-5996

Zone # 4

Burnt Depot Bay-Fire Road #4

Jack Connors 756-3470
Cam Hubbs 756-1951
John Moore 756-3477
Jim Wellman 756-1787
Andrew McPhee n.avail.
Robert Ogilvie 756-3476
Bob Harrison 756-9607

Zone # 6

Bonnechere Bay-No Road Acc.

Ted Blaker n.avail
Art Fort 936-6117
Rick Fawcett 334-9292
David Kitchen 334-9292

FIRE INFORMATION

The Township of South Algonquin fire telephone number is **637-5556**.

Know your fire road access number and be prepared to give this number when calling for help.

If you wish to be added to the list of volunteer firefighters (as listed above), please contact Bruce Dick at 756-9329.

<u>Honda Pump (4 cylcle-straight gas)</u>	<u>Wajax Pump (2-cycle-gas/oil mix)</u>
START: Install suction line, fill with water Fuel lever ON and choke closed Throttle 1/3 away from slow Ignition ON then pull starter cord	START: Fill suction line with water Connect fuel line then close choke Push in overspeed switch Set throttle to start; do not run without water in pump body Pull starter cord and open choke
STOP: Set throttle to slow Ignition OFF	STOP: Set throttle to slow to cool Ignition OFF

FIRE PUMP AND SHOAL MARKER DISCLAIMER NOTIFICATIONS

Fire fighting and shoal markers are not covered by our Association liability insurance policy. Confronted by similar circumstances, other Associations have gone to the extent of selling off their fire pumps due to liability concerns.

In recognition of the proven value of having fire pumps on the lake we did not seriously consider the option of dispensing with the pumps. However, we did need to respond to potential liability issues through a demonstration of due diligence. Therefore, your ALCA Executive has chosen to retain our pumps and produce disclaimer statements covering their use. For similar reasons, a disclaimer addressing shoal marker liability has also been drafted.

At the suggestion of persons in the legal community, these disclaimers will be prominently displayed as well as published at least once a year in our newsletter. A copy of the fire pump disclaimer will be posted inside all fire pump boxes so all pump users understand that the Aylen Lake Community

Association accepts no responsibility for the use of the pumps. The Shoal Marker Disclaimer will be posted on the bulletin board at the Landing.

The disclaimer statements read as follows:

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

AS A CONDITION OF THE USE OF THESE FIRE PUMPS AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT, THE USER(S) ASSUMES ALL RISK OF PERSONAL INJURY, DEATH, OR PROPERTY LOSS RESULTING FROM ANY CAUSE WHATSOEVER INVOLVING THESE PUMPS.

THE USER(S) AGREES THAT THE AYLEN LAKE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION SHALL NOT BE LIABLE FOR ANY SUCH PERSONAL INJURY, DEATH OR PROPERTY LOSS AND WAIVES ALL CLAIMS WITH RESPECT THERETO.

THE AYLEN LAKE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION'S LIABILITY IS EXCLUDED BY THESE CONDITIONS.

SHOAL MARKERS ON AYLEN LAKE

Shoal markers on Aylen Lake are placed by volunteers at known shoal locations. Due to weather conditions and other factors markers may move or disappear completely.

The Aylen Lake Community Association shall not be liable for ANY personal injury, death, property damage or loss resulting from any causes whatsoever involving the shoal markers.

THE AYLEN LAKE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION'S LIABILITY IS EXCLUDED BY THESE CONDITIONS.

LETTER FROM JAMES AND WANDA PEAIRE

Note: The Executive received the following item too late for inclusion in the January newsletter. It was suggested to us by a number of people, that the following letter, presented to the annual meeting in August 2005, be submitted for publication in the January 2006 newsletter.

The Executive, Aylen Lake Community Association

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The motion proposed in the letter was defeated at the August 2005 meeting, however, before a vote was tabled, our daughter also suggested another approach, one of voluntary cooperation and common responsible use of a strictly walking trail. Our family strongly feels that this matter should be brought to everyone's attention, particularly at a time when properties are being sold and purchased by new people. Hopefully, in the spirit of community, as outlined in the Aylen Lake mission statement, a way can be found to rejoin the path so that it could be enjoyed for many generations to come.

Dear Members;

We received and read with great interest the January 2005 Newsletter, particularly regarding the status of the community path. We would appreciate your reading this letter at the next annual meeting.

Thirty years ago when we purchased property on Aylen Lake, we were informed that a well-established trail existed on the western shore of the lake from the landing north to Turkey Island and almost to McCormick's point, and possibly beyond. Cottagers who have been here for longer than ourselves have told us that loggers and the earliest cottagers used this "road" as an access from the old railroad before the present road from Highway 60 was built. We soon realized that this asset was quite unique to Aylen Lake and were proud to be part of this special feature.

Over the years we, our children and our neighbours have enjoyed the use of our trail for exercise, enjoyment of the environment, access to the Sunday chapel and the yearly renewal of friends and acquaintances. It was particularly important for our children who found it a safe and friendly environment - a wonderful part of their "cottage experience". We were hoping that our granddaughter would be able to share this tradition.

Closing this trail would run counter to Aylen Lake's stated mission statement

- (a) developing and fostering community spirit in the said area;
- (b) promoting the health, pleasure and security of persons living temporarily or permanently in the said area.

Becoming acquainted with our neighbours via the reasonable use of the foot path could be a great advantage. This can be a rather isolated area and we all depend on one another in emergencies.

As no one of our acquaintances was asked by the Crown regarding "any significant public use of the shoreline trail", we propose a motion that the association seek an unbiased legal opinion regarding the public use of the traditional public shoreline trail.

Thank you,
James and Wanda Peaire

YEAR-ROUND AYLEN RESIDENTS AND WINTER COTTAGERS

Those needing snow removal from cottage roads on either a regular or occasional basis may contact Cheryl Reimer at madawaskavalley@sympatico.ca or telephone (613) 756-9072. Cheryl has volunteered to locate someone for clearing roads and negotiate cost once services are determined. At present this service is difficult to secure, but with specific number of cottagers and distances known, it should be possible to contract for snow removal at reasonable expense.

GARBAGE PICK-UP SCHEDULE

We have asked the Township to confirm pick-up times at Aylen Lake for this summer, but unfortunately the schedule for the township will not be set until the committee meets on June 19. Printed schedules should be available at the Landing, and posted on the Bulletin board when they are ready. We have also asked the Township again to provide for late PM pick-up on Sundays (or holiday Mondays) to accommodate persons leaving the lake.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS' EMAIL LIST

If you wish to be included in the Aylen Lake Association email list, please send a short email to fred.kuehn@rogers.com and include the desired address in the body of the email. This will allow you to receive important notices and electronic copies of the bi-annual newsletter.

2006 DATES TO REMEMBER

- Saturday, July 8** Regatta planning meeting
10:00 a.m.
Bruce & Connie Dick's cottage
Fire Road 13-A-3
- Wednesday, August 2** Regatta beach clean-up
10:00 a.m. at Ranger's Point Beach

- Saturday, August 5** Annual Aylen Lake Regatta
1:00 p.m.- Ranger's Point Beach
Rain Date: Sunday, August 6

Please NO
PETS

- Saturday, August 12** Aylen Lake Community Association Annual Meeting – Parking Lot Upper Level
9:00 a.m. – Registration
9:30 a.m. – Meeting
- Rain Date: Sunday, August 13
1:00 p.m.- Registration
1:30 p.m. – Meeting

2006 ASSOCIATION DUES

2006 membership dues of \$20.00 are now due. Please make cheques payable to Aylen Lake Community Association and mail to ALCA c/o Fred Kuehn, 20 Lismer Crescent, Kanata, ON K2K 1A2.

AYLEN LAKE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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UUCONTEST WINNERS

Amanda Morin, age 6, drew the artwork for the cover of this issue and placed second in our "Design the Cover" contest. Honourable Mention went to John Morin Dodsworth, age 8, who drew the artwork appearing above.