

## May 11, 2019: Beach Reps Meet for First Presidents' Roundtable

by MATT DUCHARME, THUNDER BEACH

What happens when 21 beach representatives from 17 beaches get together on a Saturday morning in May?

In the first of what is hoped will be an ongoing series of meetings, beach representatives introduced themselves and spoke about their beach association/community. Our long-term goal is to identify common issues and solutions, share best practices, and create a support network.

We each shared information on our association regarding the number of members/non-members, membership fees, and one challenge the association is facing. Common challenges were poor internet access, high water, erosion, parking, and dealing with invasive species, especially Phragmites. We heard success stories on combatting Phragmites... an example of one beach community helping another.

We were made aware of some issues that should concern all of us and our associations: environmental damage to Pennorth and beaches farther south from the Tiny Island Causeway, expansion of the Teedon gravel pit and its potential impact on water quality, and the possibility of a province-led amalgamation of communities in Simcoe County. We all learned and were able to take these issues back to our members.\*

Thank you to FoTTSA for organizing and chairing the meeting. We ran out of time and did not get to other top-

ics, including volunteers, beach access points and short-term rentals. It was decided that we will all meet again very soon.

### Who Attended the First Presidents Roundtable

Participating beaches include the following:

- Addison\*\*
- Ardmore
- Bluewater Dunes
- Bluewater Georgina Wendake
- Carusoe Bay
- Cawaja
- Deanlea
- Edmor Georgian Heights
- Farlain Lake
- Georgian Highlands
- Kingswood Acres\*\*
- Nottawaga
- Pennorth
- Rowntree\*\*
- Thunder
- Wahnekewening
- Woodland

\* Find out more about these issues at [www.tinycottager.org](http://www.tinycottager.org)

\*\* Participated by conference call



## Culture Knows No Borders

by CINDY HASTINGS

When Midland first began its journey to create a cultural plan in 2013, the municipality quickly learned two things: North Simcoe has a wealth of history and creative talent, and culture does not end at municipal borders. Fast forward to 2019 and the formation of the Cultural Alliance in the Heart of Georgian Bay.

This new alliance is a partnership among Beausoleil First Nation, the towns of Midland and Penetanguishene and townships of Tay and Tiny. It is an exciting and unique opportunity for us to work and learn together to advance culture in our area. We are not aware of another undertaking of its kind.

As a group we will focus on supporting the creative talent in our area and enhancing the quality of cultural experiences for our residents. We also recognize that culture can be an economic driver for North Simcoe that is compatible with the rural nature of our communities.

Each municipality has committed \$10,000 towards this initiative on a one-year trial basis. There is either a council or staff representative from each community on the committee. The remaining six positions will be citizens at large. We are also fortunate to have Karen Mealing, Midland's cultural development coordinator, as a staff resource and ex-officio member. Karen is a visual artist, former Director of Quest Art, and a passionate advocate for artists.

Even when we were still working on the committee composition, we felt it was important to hit the ground running this fall with a few great initiatives. This summer, the Ontario Musicians Co-operative Inc.'s emerging artists program provided young musicians in Simcoe County with regular music industry training and skill development, and performance and artist development opportunities. They performed in community festivals and events. One of our young Tiny residents, Jackson Beer, was chosen to participate in this year's program. We look forward to seeing more of our young artists involved and performing at our local events next summer.

Artrepreneur is another program that helps creative people develop the business skills they need to turn their passion into a business. This multi-week program is supported in partnership with the County of Simcoe, York Region Arts Council and North Simcoe Community Futures Development Corporation.

#30DaysofCulture encourages residents of the five communities to participate in a cultural activity each day and to share on social media to win prizes. Our goal is to have residents realize that by taking a walk on a trail, woodworking, taking photos or listening to live music, they are experiencing culture.

We're just getting started! Check out our website for future activities initiated by our committee, and for the many other cultural pursuits available in our area: [www.culturealliance.ca](http://www.culturealliance.ca). Also, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @CultureGBay.

Cindy Hastings is a member of the Township of Tiny Council and the Culture Alliance Committee.

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