



THE KEY EXCHANGE



From the President



Summer has arrived, I think? Well certainly the black flies have made it to The North. Recently paddling down the Pickerel River in a canoe, we were swarmed by hatching Black Flies. I have never been

through one of these before and the only reason we did not panic.... was they were not biting, just buzzing...zzzzzzzz! My canoe partner swallowed a mouthful, and I'm sure we scared every bit of wildlife out of the area with his coughing. I now understand how the little guys can drive the Moose out of the forest in spring. Near the end of the day, we were forced to deal with a severe wind and I just want to saythat wind is a subject we all will want to discuss in the following months and years. Not only did it stop our May 24th meeting, as several of us could not get out of our docks, but Wind Power is coming to the Bay!

On a conference call recently we were informed about plans to harness the wind in our backyard, Henley Inlet. The proposal has been made and with the new laws that the Ontario government has brought in recently we are limited in what we can do about this issue. so we want a chance for you to hear about this at our AGM August 1st weekend. There will be a special guest speaker Jeremy Gowen on the issue of Wind Farm and I would suggest that the fishing pole stays at camp that day and come out to hear about changes that will take place in our corner of the Bay. The KRAA is your voice in this matter and we want you to be up to speed. Let's work together to get the word out to your neighbour about this annual meeting. I ask that you not assume people know about our annual meeting, as there are many new faces in the Key these days. We want everyone to have a chance to meet and greet their new neighbours. I hope to see and meet you all.

The weekend will be full of activities this year. so come on out to share in the fun. Fish Derby. Picnic. AGM. and on the Saturday we also have a guest. Mary Muter

coming for Environment Day on the Bay. All in all a very busy weekend and if anyone can step up to help with any of these social activities that would be great! The summer promises to be a little different this year as we watch out from our cottage shoreline. Edwin going by in his Tug and runabout will be missed, as well as all those that have left us this year, for whatever the reason, we enjoyed sharing life at The Key with them and wish them all the best. Those that are new to the area, please come out and let us hear your voices, thoughts and concerns. We need this from all of you.

Lastly, thank you to all who put their time and effort into keeping the KRAA a strong voice on the Bay. Summer is here so let's get out and enjoy the rock. Make sure to breath in that great air, enjoy the sunsets, swim the waters, and most of all enjoy your family and friends at The Key!

See you all in The Great White North, watch out for those rocks. Have a great summer.

Key River Area Association Fishing Derby

Key Harbour Lodge

10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Saturday

August 1, 2009

Prizes for

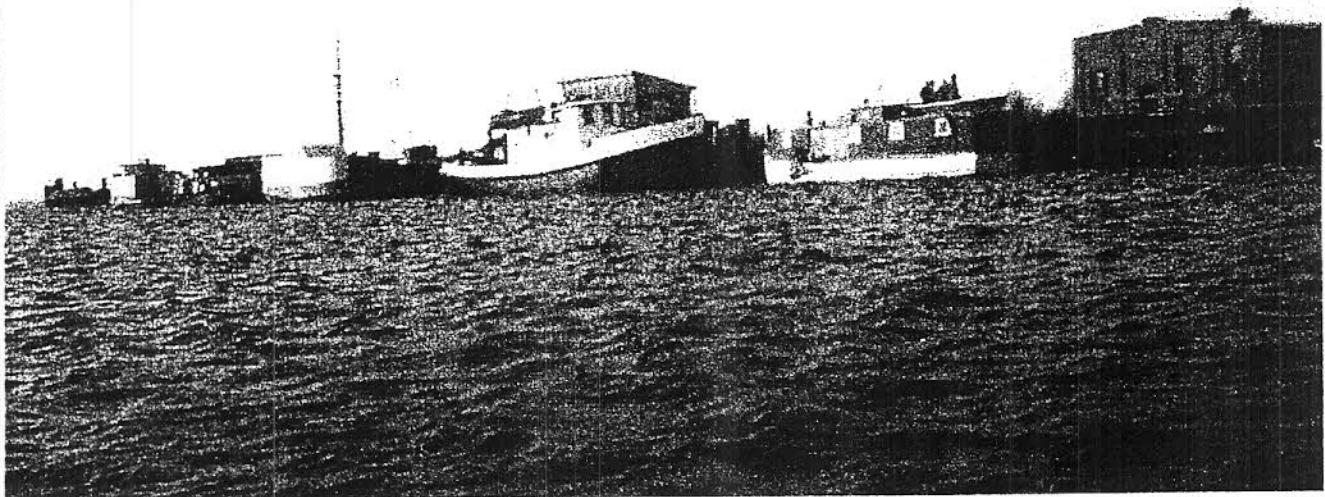
1st, 2nd, 3rd
and all participants

Participants must be
16 years of age and under



COMMERCIAL FISHING, KEY HARBOUR AREA

By Susan McKay



The photo, which is above, was given to me by Emily Murray Pillgrem, a true pioneer of the Key. Her father arrived here in 1921 after serving four years and having been gassed in the later part of "The Great War". His Doctor told him that he needed a dry, cold climate for his health. Emily grew up in Key Harbour, helping her Mom and Dad run the store and post office. I will relate some background on commercial fishing before I tell you about the photo.

With the coming of the railroad to the south end of Georgian Bay in the 1860's, a route to market was opened up. Rather than having to salt the season's catch, the commercial fishermen out of Collingwood, Meaford, Owen Sound and area, could move to various fishing grounds further afield and work the waters away from home, still having their fish sent to market in a timely fashion. Those who did, often built fishing stations on the fringe areas of the 30,000 islands.

In our area the largest of these may have been at the Bustard Islands. There were others at the Minks, The Snakes and Champlain Island. The fisherman would move their families to these summer colonies and I can remember my grandmother, Marion Hazzard McKay-telling me stories of sailing from Southampton with her father in his two-masted schooner, in the spring, and spending the summer on Green Island in the Bustards where her father fished, and later transported lumber to various ports on Georgian Bay.

Another well known family at the Bustards in the late 1800's was the Pillgrem family, located first on Meaford Island and later on Highlander Island. The Dominion Fish Company was also situated in the Bustards. They had a base on Rideout Island.

Supplies for the fishermen and families came on regularly scheduled runs by the steamers "Manitou" and "Caribou", owned and operated by the Dominion Fish Company which was a Canadian subsidiary of the Booth Fisheries Corporation of Chicago. The main function of it's vessels was to carry supplies to the many small fishing villages on the Bay and Lake Superior, and to carry their fish to the nearest rail lines for quick transport to United States markets. Of course, the steamers would carry what ever else came their way. A by-product of the fishing industry was fish oil. The fish entrails were boiled down in huge vats to render the oil. The oil was sold in Toronto for \$10.00 to \$12.00 a barrel. Much of the fish, on the other hand, was sold to agents of American companies.

As the boats came in from fishing grounds, they were loaded and the fish dressed and packed in ice in wheeled boxes, each of which contained 1200 pounds. These were put on the steam tugs which carried them away. Trout and whitefish were the usual varieties caught, but the fall pickerel were worth more per pound than any other fish because they could be shipped without first being dressed.

Fish began to be shipped out of Key Harbour by rail in the early 20's using the "Jitney".

We are not sure when the above photograph was taken but you can see by the number of tugs at the dock that the commercial fishing was in full swing. The picture was taken in the 50's.

The commercial fisherman during that time frame were the Aaltos and Lahtis, located at Key Harbour and in the Finn's Channel. Ellicot and Light, then Light and Moody on Champlain Island, Pillgrem Bros., Wilfred Lowe, Clem Lougheed from the Bustards, and C.H. Gauthier Fisheries out of the Bad River.

I think the most easterly or right had boat tied to the coal dock is the "Ruth M" belonging to Pat McIntosh. She was a wooden boat with a white hull and green cabin. He used her for delivering gas and propane to the various camps in our area. He had used her for fishing in earlier times. The next in line could be the "Edith G", Gauthier's new fish tug. Bill Belanger, General Foreman, had given my Mom and Dad and I a tour of the steel tug and she had all the latest equipment. Mr. Belanger was very proud of her. The other boats must belong to the fishermen in our area during that time.

You can see how far the coal dock extends out into the Bay and the boom which was used to lift the fishing boxes out of the boat and onto the flat cars and were then pulled to Key Junction by the "Jitney" to be loaded into CN refrigerator cars.

