



BIG BALD LAKE
COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

Big Bald Lake Cottagers' Association

FOCA Presentation

November 12, 2016

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NANCY:

We're the Big Bald Lake Cottagers' Association and our membership numbers have been increasing.



NANCY:

How can you increase your membership?

- You need a Kim. Our president, Kim Letto, is a local real estate agent. She has her finger on the pulse of the lake. She knows what's going on, she meets lots of people, promotes our association and can answer questions on a variety of topics. When Kim sells properties on our lake, she buys memberships for new residents.
- You need a Sue. Sue Flanagan, a weekend warrior, is our social director. She grew up on a resort and she's very good at planning events. Also, she's creative and crafty and is always planning things for kids all of ages.
- You need a Nancy. I'm Nancy Boyce. I'm retired and live on the lake full time. I look after coordinating membership and volunteers. Kim says I'm like a dog with a bone, which is an asset when it comes to collecting membership fees.
- And then, of course, there's our voluntold husbands.

Together, we make a great team, but we're not a conventional board. We rarely meet as a group, instead we exchange ideas and vote by email. We move fast and we get things done. When the three of us joined forces a couple of years ago, we increased our membership by 40%.



NANCY:

But it takes a lot of people to have a vibrant association.

One thing you need is volunteers, lots and lots of them. It's important to match the right person to the right job and to follow up with people when they volunteer.

Anyone can make a contribution regardless of how much time they have. All of us are involved in other volunteer activities as well.

You can make use of high school students to help them get their volunteer hours. We're really big on getting kids involved.

We include everyone on the lake in our events, not just paid members.

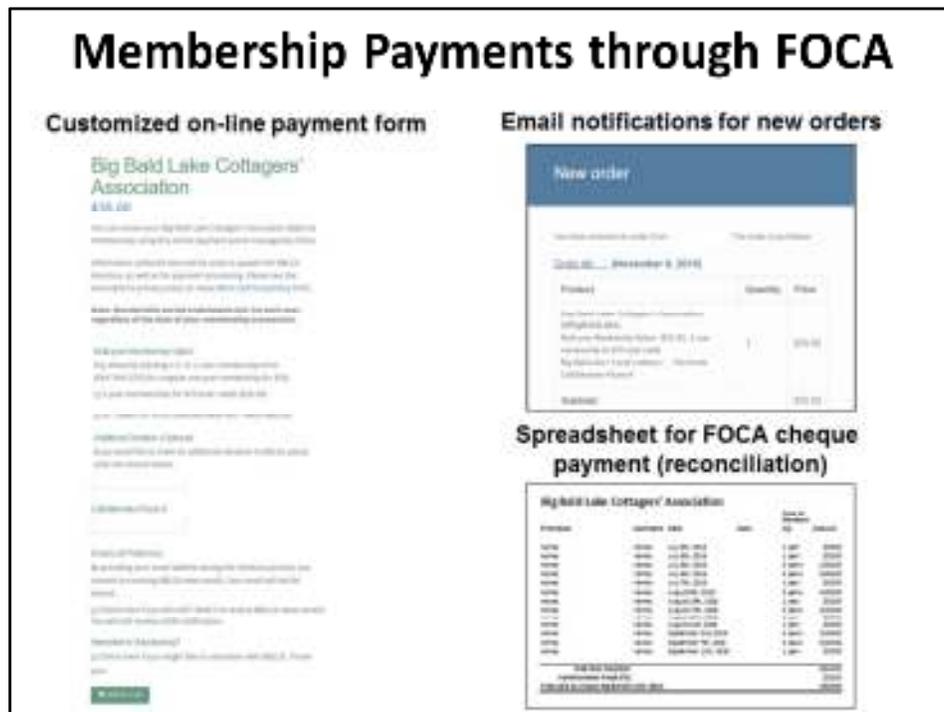
Membership



NANCY:

Here's a few ways that we're boosting membership.

- We print a directory of everyone on the lake and offer a password protected on-line copy as well. We sell advertising in the directory and our website to help cover costs.
- We printed kids being kids signs and they're available to everyone on the lake.
- Kim not only pays membership fees for places that she sells, but she's challenged other agents to do the same.
- We offer on-line payment through the FOCA payment portal and the link appears on all our main web pages and in our emails.
- Our 3 year membership discount has been popular and means a lot less administration.
- We use MailChimp to send out renewal notices and have volunteers that collect door-to-door.



NANCY:

Since offering on-line membership payments through the FOCA payment portal last year, we've had 76 on-line payments.

We looked at using PayPal and email transfer, both of which would have cost our members. We decided to absorb the cost and go with FOCA, because we felt they offered the most organized way to collect fees.

These are modified examples, but they show the type of service you get from FOCA that you won't get with other on-line payment options:

- The online payment form was customized for us,
- When members pay, I receive email notifications with all the information I need to update my database and thank members immediately,
- We've opted for twice yearly payments from FOCA, but quarterly is normal.
- We receive a spreadsheet when we get our payment which helps with reconciliation.



NANCY:

When we hear about new people on the lake, we drop off a package, which includes

- a directory,
- an information page, and
- a membership form.

We're planning to give welcome baskets to new residents filled with products from local businesses.

We just started publishing a list of new residents to our website to encourage other neighbours to say hello.



NANCY:

I'm the webmaster for our association

- Our site is always kept current, and
- it's a portal to everything you need for our association including events and presentations such as this one.

Kim, Sue and I administer our Facebook page. Facebook is a fast and easy way to share important articles. We used Facebook for on-line display and voting for our photo contest. We recommend that you have an administrator for your FB page so that content you don't get inappropriate content.

MailChimp has been a great tool for mass emails. We include links to our:

- Website,
- Facebook page, and
- our payment portal

on every email. Our MailChimp announcements are automatically posted to our Facebook page.

We have lots of non-members on our distribution list, but we're all about promoting a sense of community and we can only do that by including everyone.

Water Testing Reports

email...website...Facebook

Water Testing Report

Tips on Protecting our Lake and Yourself

- Don't feed geese and other waterfowl.
- Naturalize stream banks.
- Don't shower after a heavy rain.
- Clean up and properly dispose of any animal waste from geese and dogs.
- Don't overload your septic - spread out your laundry loads.
- Have your septic tank pumped out every three years.

BBLCA, keeping you safe...

2016 Testing Sites

2016 E.coli, Phosphorus and Secchi Depth Testing Schedule

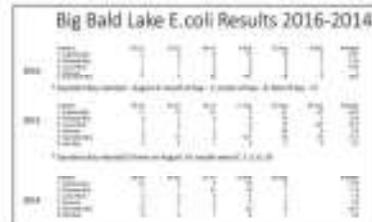
2015 (and earlier) Results



Water Testing Schedule

DATE	PHOSPHORUS	E.COLI	SECCHI DEPTH
16 May 16	0.05	100	1.5
16 Jun 16	0.05	100	1.5
16 July 16	0.05	100	1.5
16 Aug 16	0.05	100	1.5
16 Sep 16	0.05	100	1.5
16 Oct 16	0.05	100	1.5

E. Coli Test Results



NANCY:

Our residents have really appreciated our improved communications this year:

- We emailed a water testing report in the spring.
- We're posting E.coli test results to our website and Facebook within days of testing.
- If we get a high E.coli reading, we email affected residents.
- We include detailed water quality information on our Environment page.

Partnerships



NANCY:

We work closely with our municipality and other local organizations.

We're currently working with a number of these organizations on our spring Shoreline Gardens Workshop.



NANCY:

Contests are a great way to give back to members and generate excitement all year round.

When people enter a contest, I get to remind them about their membership payment.

We opened up our photo contest to everyone on the lake and had 50 submissions. It was a great way of promoting our Facebook page because that's where initial voting took place.

Our Big Bald Lake Beaver Contest is a very popular contest. Kim's husband puts the beaver out on the ice and we guess when he's going to fall through.

- We just launched our Find the Beaver contest yesterday. He's hiding on the pages of our website so that he doesn't have to go out on the ice.

Building a Community



- Commit to your community
- Not all ideas work – don't take it personally
- Engage everyone – not just members
- Start small – know your demographics
- Free events with donation box or collect for a cause

SUE: I have the hard job; I get to explain how to have fun at the cottage! I made the conscious decision to build my new community by joining the board as their social director.

At this time of my life, I have the time to plan events that I feel would be enjoyed by kids of all ages. To be successful I have found that you have to have a philosophy of being fluid. Your well thought out plans won't always work in the moment and you have to be okay to adapt them. You will never make everyone happy; there will always be someone who will complain about something no matter how spectacular your event is, you just can't take it personally.

Our goal is to build relationships; we try to engage everyone in the surrounding area, and not just on our lake, with the hope to create lasting childhood friendships and memories. We also hope that the young people participating now will one day take over from us.

Our events are free to everyone, so no one has to miss out, but by request we have started to put out a Donation Box. We include everyone, if they paid their dues or not. This helps them see the benefits of membership, what they get for their money and hopefully future paid dues.

Social Event Ideas

- Fishing Derby
 - Golf Tournament
 - Corn or Watermelon Eating Contest
 - Game Tournaments: Horseshoes, Croquet, Bocce Ball, Volleyball, Badminton, Frisbee
 - How to Events
 - Road Clean Up
 - Outdoor Movie Night
 - Regatta Poker Run
 - Book Clubs
 - Card Clubs
 - Games Nights
 - Potluck Gatherings
 - Carnival Contests
 - Ice Melting Contests
 - Photo Contest
 - Cooking Contests: Chilli, Butter tarts, Brownies
 - Themed Events: Firsts, Hippy, Red Necks, Kafe (Tastefully Hip)
- Pinterest is your friend, great ideas for every event you can find with a simple search.
- End events at a central location for beverages & snacks to continue the bonding process.
- PRIZES: Bragging rights work, dipping into the budget funds or soliciting items from local businesses.

SUE:

A large event can be intimidating so first start by doing something small. Listen to what people are interested in and know your demographics, your target market. I have listed a few ideas for events and we have done...

read this slide & elaborate on what we have done....



SUE: We're an all year round organization. My very first event I hosted was our red-neck Boxing Day Santa Claus Parade that we threw together with a few emails the week before and in the end, seven vehicles participated with many on foot. The parade was actually my husband's idea & I wasn't a huge fan, and I found out later neither was Nancy's husband.

But we both had our minds changed as it was so much fun! John came home and said to Nancy, "I'm going to buy a float for next year!" And he did!

Last year we had our mayor participate too.

We hold The Winter Carnival on the Family Day weekend, we feel this gives cottagers an opportunity to check on their places and have a place to catch up with the neighbours and keep warm. The weather has not been our friend as it seems to be always on the coldest day of the year, so there is more drinking hot chocolate around the fire than participating in the games. We do however provide Bowling, curling with frozen hams and hens, and a skating rink and then inside to get warm for chili contest and prizes.

Kim's husband clears the skating rink for everyone to use all winter; and my husband has won the chili contest every year much to Kim and Nancy's chagrin.



SUE:

- Our first regatta in 2015 was nerve-racking for me, by the end of June we only had a handful of kids registered and I was discouraged and thinking about scrapping the entire idea. That's when you need a Nancy. She started networking every parent & grandparent on the lake and we had a full turn out.
- Our regatta success is based solely on our volunteers. We had 100 participants and over 30 volunteers this summer. We use volunteers the day of and leading up to the event, including the kids on the lake. The kids made these bandanas, stamped the bags, and created signs for the event; a resident sewed all the loot bags together & made the gingerbread cookie medals in our colour theme.
- Safety is Key BUT life happens so we created a Waiver Form so we wouldn't get sued & we also took out extra insurance for the day as well. I start off by telling the parents they are responsible for deciding what their child can do at their age and modify the activity accordingly.
- Because it is a water event we hand out whistles & teach water safety. I give the kids one chance only to blow the whistles together as loud as they can and then immediately they are told what the rules are: lose 50 points if you blow your whistle, gain 50 points if you help someone in trouble. We only allow Non-motorized boats and have walking options.

- We start with a donut eating contest, kids take their age in steps back and then I blow my whistle & the games begin, then they boat or walk to the next location and partake in different obstacle courses and scavenger hunt events along their journey. Collecting rocks that have been spray painted gold & silver. Getting “coins” as rewards for accomplishing challenges. We end with the bucket challenge where they work as a group to move the water from one pail to the next, and then everyone gets a cookie medal. In the end we raise the flag of the winning team and take a group picture by the photo booth that we use for a Thank You card for our sponsors.



SUE: In 2015 our costs for this initial event were over \$2000.00.

For 2016 I wanted to reduce this number to half so we decided to sell 10 Regatta Sponsorships who would get their names on the back of the t-shirts. We gratefully sold all 10, and 4 of those sponsors came and participated in the event with their families.

Our T-shirt design is fun and we will keep the front design going forward year after year to save costs.

In 2016 the colours were green & purple; with volunteers wearing red.

In 2017 they will be two different colour combinations with just the sponsorship artwork needing to be changed.

We also did other fundraising events, we had a silent auction & 50-50 draws and many of our members and attendees donated money and materials so I am happy to announce that there was zero cost to our association in 2016. We actually had a \$50.00 surplus.

Every year we just add a couple more challenges while keeping the old ones or repurposing where possible to save costs.



SUE:

At Our Educational Meeting For the last two years I have done a craft to keep kids engaged while parents look at exhibits and listen to speakers. In 2015 the kids made friendship bracelets and this year they made felt owls. I'm planning on bat houses for 2017.

Another spur of the moment idea was our Outdoor Movie Night, we were lucky on how easily this came together as one of our full time residents had the projector & popcorn maker. We used a 12x16 foot canvas drop clothe for the screen.

We start with a pre-movie talent show put on by the kids themselves before it gets dark; then an early movie for the younger kids; followed by a classic movie for kids of all ages. We provided the popcorn & we have had ice cream bars donated yearly.

Lake Residents can walk, drive or boat in for the movie.

As you can see we watched ET this year.



SUE:

I often ask: “Who has more fun, the volunteers or the kids”

I was the first one to walk this plank; you know I had to test it out to make sure it was safe for the kids! We have a great time as group planning, creating & testing out challenges.

And that’s the reason why we are successful, because we concentrate on having a good time!

We do get requests, BUT we do not try to police our members. We will direct them to the proper channels only.

Previously we had lost members over controversial issues, but those members have come back because of the events we have been hosting. They see we’re a new organization with fresh ideas.

We’d encourage you to follow us on Facebook to see the great ideas we come up with and if you want help on any event idea I would be more than happy to have a dialogue with you. Thank you!