

# GIMLI, MANITOBA: THE CHICAGO OF LAKE WINNIPEG

The CPR arrived in Gimli, Manitoba, in 1905 and the fishing industry in this town on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg never looked back.

"The daily commerce of the early village became better served with year-round, dependable transportation," says David Olson, president of the Gimli Harbour Authority. The Lake Winnipeg fishery was emerging in those days and was served by the main wooden pier in Gimli, which was built in 1900.

"MANY OF THE FISHERS ARE FOURTH GENERATION AND THEIR ICELANDIC NAMES ARE JUST AS COMMON TODAY AS THEY WERE 130 YEARS AGO."

Settled by Icelanders in the latter half of the 19th century, Gimli (which is the name of the home of the Norse gods) is now home to 2,500 people, with another 3,000 in the immediate rural vicinity. "Many of the fishers are fourth generation and their Icelandic names are just as common today as they were 130 years ago," says Olson. Interestingly, Olson's family was called Gottskalksson when the first members arrived in Gimli in 1876. The name was changed to Olson sometime after the turn of the 20th century.



An aerial view of Gimli, Manitoba, its harbour and the surrounding courtryside.

The Gimli harbour features a museum that is housed in a building that was used until the late 1960s by the local fish processing plant. In 1968, the federal government created the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and relocated the fish processing function to Winnipeg.

Gimli is in Area 2 of the Lake Winnipeg fishery, which also includes Winnipeg Beach and Arnes. With nearly 100 fishers picking up their mail at the Gimli post office, as Olson puts it, Area 2 has an overall aggregate quota of approximately one million kilograms of mostly pickerel with some whitefish.

The whitefish is harvested in the north end of Lake Winnipeg, says Olson. "There are five of us left that still spring fish at George Island; we have well over 100 years attending that end of the lake." The real value in the fishery, though, is in the pickerel in the south, he says, which is why Gimli thrives by comparison to other community fisheries in western Canada.

The Gimli Harbour Authority was set up in December 2004, after the town had run the harbour for several years. Four fishers, a Gimli Yacht Club representative and two municipal councillors comprise the board.

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# SMOOTH WATERS AT RIVIÈRE-AU-RENARD

Things are much calmer in Rivière-au-Renard these days. "Even during the fall storms, the water inside the harbour is calm," says Gaston Cloutier of the Rivièreau-Renard Harbour Authority.

The reason for the smooth water is a rebuilt main wharf. The north section was rebuilt with steel sheetpile and extended 75 metres. A concrete parapet was added to the exterior side to reduce the chance of the wharf being swept by waves during severe storms, and a new deck with a

concrete section was added along the berthing face. An asphalt section behind the concrete is expected to be finished this summer.

"The \$4.6 million investment is part of the ongoing improvement plan for the harbour," explains Jean-Pierre Huet of the Small Craft Harbours program in the Lower St. Lawrence-Gaspé sector. "This is an important harbour with a revitalized fleet, and considerable investment has been made to support it."

Rivière-au-Renard is Quebec's largest fishing port in terms of landing volume. Located near the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula, the harbour is exposed to heavy seas. Two breakwaters were constructed in 1971, but high northeast winds were driving waves through the opening in the breakwaters and the turbulence was creating a difficult and potentially dangerous situation inside the harbour.

When it became obvious that the wharf needed rebuilding, the harbour authority notified the Small Craft Harbours officials and submitted a request for funding assistance to have the wharf extended to form a large "C" shape and act as a secondary barrier.

After a preliminary study, soundings were made and various proposals discussed before negotiations were undertaken. An agreement was finally reached and work began in 2003.

Looking back on the process that brought about these improvements, Cloutier remarks, "You know, things have improved. In the old days there was no consultation. You'd see a construction crew arrive and you'd ask yourself, 'I wonder what they're here to do.'"

#### **Gimli, Manitoba** (continued from page 1)

Last year was eventful in other regards, says Olson. In the spring of 2004, Small Craft Harbours announced an upgrade to the fishing-related facilities in Gimli. The wooden marginal wharf in Gimli that has served the fishing industry for a century is being replaced with a steel sheetpile cell. The 14 slips will double to 28, with the potential of going to 70 spots for the six-metre vessels commonly used in the pickerel fishery.

"There is a collective sigh of relief that this is finally happening," says Olson. "The inner or original harbour that I and others arrive at and depart from has some recreational pressure that has spilled over from the other two harbours. The expansion lets us breath easier and probably guarantees a berth in the future as Gimli slowly grows to become, as I call it, the Chicago of Lake Winnipeg."

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### FROM THE EDITOR

Harbour Authorities Forum is published twice a year by Small Craft Harbours as a communication tool to exchange information and ideas, share best practices, celebrate successes and keep harbour authorities up-to-date on how their colleagues are operating across the country.

For the newsletter to achieve its objective of being relevant to you, the volunteer network of harbour authorities, I encourage you to submit ideas or information that you would like to share with colleagues at other harbours and suggestions for topics of interest to cover in future issues.

As well, to ensure that the newsletter is fulfilling its goal, we would appreciate your feedback. If you have comments or suggestions, you can contact us by e-mail at <a href="mailto:schinfo@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">schinfo@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>, by phone at (613) 993-1516 or by fax at (613) 990-1866.

Danielle Balfour

# MARITIMES HARBOURS BEEFING UP COMMUNICATIONS

Harbour authorities in Maritimes and Gulf regions are receiving training and tools to help raise their profile in the communities, communicate better with one another and recruit more volunteers.

Small Craft Harbours in these regions launched this communications initiative last summer after receiving feedback from harbour authorities that the public often had little idea of what they did or of their value to the community.

"We realized that we need the people in the community to be more aware of the harbour authority, to know who the people are that are involved in it and what they do," says Frédéric Butruille, Corporate Communications Manager for Gulf Region.

MEMBERS OF THE HARBOUR
AUTHORITY ADVISORY
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ADVERTISE WHAT THEY DO.

"It became quickly apparent that many of these problems could be solved through better communication," Butruille adds. To that end, the regions set up a communications committee with membership consisting of fishers, Small Craft Harbours staff and members of the regional Harbour Authority Advisory Committee. The



committee is looking at ways of raising the profile of harbour authorities across the region and for harbour authorities to communicate better among one another.

Meanwhile, Small Craft Harbours distributed 220,000 brochures (see above) about harbours and harbour authorities to all 250 communities in Atlantic Canada that have a harbour authority. The brochure focuses on what harbour authorities bring to the community and how people can volunteer. Those interested can call a 1-800 number to find out how they can help.

A business card CD-ROM given to the members of the Harbour Authority Advisory Committee explains the harbour authority program. It includes pictures and information about the six distinct geographic areas in Maritimes and Gulf regions, good news stories, and lists of Internet links and contact people. Small Craft Harbours also has a kiosk that program staff can take to events around the regions.

Members of the Harbour Authority Advisory Committee are also training to become more media-savvy in order to help them advertise what they do, make contact and build relations with the media. "This is a long-term commitment," says Butruille, "so that harbour authorities will be more visible in their communities."

## FEE COLLECTION ADVICE AVAILABLE ONLINE

In response to requests from harbour authorities for advice and assistance with fee collection, Small Craft Harbours (SCH) has compiled "HA Fee Collection — Unofficial Tips" (available at www.dfompo.gc.ca/sch/ha-ap-fee-driot\_e.html).

This "work-in-progress" is intended to open a dialogue among stakeholders,

examine the challenges of fee collection and suggest ways to deal with this recurrent problem. The site is a co-operative effort of SCH staff in Ottawa and the regions, the harbour authority advisory committees across the country and individual harbour authorities.

At this early stage, the document summarizes how a sample of harbour authorities deal with issues related to fee collection. Since further discussion and evaluation of the ideas are required, the document should not be interpreted as official or unofficial direction or counsel by any government body.

#### HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS HELP BEAUTIFY WHOLE COMMUNITY

Improvements to facilities at Madeira Park in Pender Harbour, British Columbia. have kick-started the rest of the community, bringing recognition and film crews to this community on the Sunshine Coast and improving the overall financial viability of the harbour.

In 1998, the harbour authority obtained funding from various federal and provincial sources, including Small Craft Harbours, to revitalize the Madeira Park facility. "Since then, we have added a second service area with parking for harbour users. Indigenous plant species have been replanted in this area. The three wharves have been upgraded and float pilings installed at two facilities," says Dave Foss, who is treasurer of the harbour authority's board. The continued revitalization of a second wharf area is waiting for the lifting of a moratorium on all local foreshore activity.

An adjoining property was leased and fitted with a sewage bio-filter system to manage wastewater, saving the harbour authority the cost of hauling away the sewage.

As these improvements took place, the harbour authority was also looking for alternative sources of revenue. "We started to ask, who would want to come here when the fishing boats are out fishing," says Foss. And the answer was tourists, including recreational boaters. This led to installing more docks, building showers, upgrading power hook-ups and

> "ANY MONEY WE GET. WE POUR BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY."

adding a pump-out facility. "And once we started this, and got it rolling, the efforts around the community picked up." Now Pender Harbour regularly has sailing visitors from up and down the west coast of North America and beyond.

A side benefit of the improvements has been the opportunity to use local resources to do the work, which has helped the local

economy that has suffered from reductions in the forestry and fishing industries. "Any money we get," says Foss, "we pour back into the community."

The efforts have been worth it, and various volunteer groups within the community have completed or are in the process of completing projects. The national Communities in Bloom competition has recognized the community, and a local television station has done a film about the area. In addition, movie crews have been attracted to the area, including one for a film in which the harbour authority office stood in as a police station.

Small Craft Harbours joined the crowd of more than 2,000 people at Fundy Fishermen's Days in Dipper Harbour, New Brunswick, last August. Staff from the Maritimes Region attended the event. They brought information about the Small Craft Harbours program and talked to passersby about the importance of harbour authorities for



## MONTHS LATER, OIL SPILL TRAINING PAYS OFF

If you ever wonder whether the training you get at seminars will ever come in handy, here's a story that shows just how beneficial it is.

Al Matthews, President of the Wheatley Harbour Authority on Lake Erie, got a call one day last October about an oil spill in the inner basin of the harbour. Thanks to training he received at a Central and Arctic Region conference months before, Matthews had the know-how and equipment on hand to contain the spill quickly before any serious environmental damage was done.

"The spill kits were a godsend," says Matthews. "We used everything we had, but we were able to prevent the oil from moving out into the lake."

With the help of four commercial fishermen and an aluminium boat, Matthews was able to corral the spill in a little more than two hours. Given the size of the spill (it nearly filled the 85-m-long basin), the team had to get creative and supplement the 90-m main boom by tying together a bunch of 0.6-m bilge booms.

Central and Arctic Region had handed out spill kits to harbour authority volunteers at its annual conference in the fall of 2003, explaining the contents of the kit and how to use it.

"The video and demonstration we had at the conference were more than beneficial." says Matthews. "I hope we can have something like that maybe every three years."

#### OVERCOMING ISOLATION ON THE LOWER NORTH SHORE

With the help of computers, pagers, fax machines, printers and digital cameras, Norman Letemplier and Darlene Rowsell Roberts are helping to reduce the isolation of eight small Anglophone fishing communities on Quebec's Lower North Shore.

Letemplier and Rowsell Roberts are resource people serving the harbour authorities in the communities of Blanc Sablon, Bras D'or Bay, Middle Bay, Old Fort, Mutton Bay, Harrington Harbour, Chevery and Kegaska.

"The communities can only be reached by boat and plane, and are also isolated from each other," says Rowsell Roberts.

communities. Below, contestants try their best at shucking scallops. This year's celebration took place August 6. It again featured dinghy and lobster crate races, a scallop shucking contest, children's events and a visit from a Canadian Coast Guard vessel. For more information, go to www.fundyfishermensday.com.



"Many are not connected by road and it is only in the winter, when snowmobiles can travel between villages, that connections are easier."

Letemplier and Rowsell Roberts travel to each of the communities several times a year, keep the harbour authority records and accounting records. Moreover, they communicate with Fisheries and Oceans officials in Sept-Îles and Ottawa, as well as with other harbour authorities in Quebec.

The pair helps the communities politically. "There is only a limited amount of money available to Fisheries and Oceans," explains Rowsell Roberts. "We help the harbour authorities to make their case for the work that needs to get done."

The two also remind the harbour authorities of important deadlines. They issue quarterly reports and send annual reports to Revenue Canada. "It helps to be organized when you are dealing with the government. If you don't get things done on time, you run into problems," says Letemplier.

The funding for Letemplier and Rowsell Roberts's positions is provided jointly by Fisheries and Oceans and Heritage Canada through the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Languages Communities program. This initiative was specifically set up to help communities interact in both official languages with federal government institutions.

## "PULLING WITH THE SAME OAR"

Co-operation among a number of community organizations, including the Burnt Islands Economic Development Board, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Fishermen's Committee, Small Craft Harbours and the harbour authority, has brought infrastructure and other improvements to Burnt Islands, on the southwest coast of Newfoundland.

For Kevin Hardy, who is vice-chair of the harbour authority and the town's mayor, it has meant that they accomplished much more than they otherwise would have.

The town provided equipment and land to build a new boat launch. The Economic Development Board — the "action group," Hardy says — worked with various federal agencies and the harbour authority on a number of projects. There are five new floating docks, a newly restored wharf, a new marginal wharf that is helping protect fragile coastline, new buildings that house facilities for the fishers, and even a museum about the traditional fishery.

"We all have a common purpose and it has been a benefit to everyone now that these areas are cleaned up," says Hardy, referring to the various improvements made to Burnt Islands.

The upgrades even brought a visit from the head of the international environmental group the Sierra Club, who is a keen yachtsman. He and many other boaters are now able to dock in the harbour thanks to the fixed-up facilities, which is increasing tourism.

Obviously pleased at all the developments, Hardy credits the willingness of the various groups to get along. "It all comes together, with everyone pulling with the same oar."

Future plans include putting in a new boat slip and working with a fish processing company to improve local facilities. The town is also considering a larger wharf to accommodate ship traffic serving the offshore oil industry.

## MOVING FORWARD IN PARTNERSHIP



Left to right: Bruce Benson, Chair of National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee (NHAAC); Faith Scattolon, Associate Regional Director General, Maritimes Region; and the Honourable Geoff Regan, Minister, Fisheries and Oceans at the May 2005 NHAAC meeting.

Two National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee (NHAAC) meetings have been held since the last issue of Forum. The 10th NHAAC meeting took place from January 26 to 28, 2005, in Ottawa, and the 11th in Halifax from April 27 to 29.

The theme of both meetings, *Possible Future Direction – Moving Forward in Partnership*, reflected Fisheries and Oceans' commitment to include NHAAC members in the consultative process as the Small Craft Harbours (SCH) program looks for new ways of strengthening harbour authorities.

In Ottawa, Jim Jones, Fisheries and Oceans Regional Director General, Gulf Region, opened the January meeting with an update of the topics discussed during the vision presentation at the NHAAC meeting that was held in Gimli in May 2004. He emphasized that immediate focus should be placed on continuing efforts to complete earlier change initiatives, particularly ensuring there are viable harbour authorities for all core harbours, divestitures (including the possibility of additional funding) and improving program delivery. Feedback from NHAAC members indicated that they were encouraged by the transparency of the Department. Participants entered into a good dialogue and open discussions with a positive attitude.

A continuation of discussions focused on ways to strengthen harbour authority capacity and address harbour authority fatigue. Members collectively brainstormed and discussed issues and areas for improvement. Discussions centred on identifying key priorities for moving forward as partners in strengthening harbour authorities, such as building stronger relationships, harbour authority capacity and health, improving program delivery and involving harbour authorities in project management. NHAAC members were asked to consult, in advance of the next meeting, with their regional counterparts to identify and confirm their collective priorities with a view of reporting back during the April 2005 meeting.

George Da Pont, Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources and Corporate Service, who has responsibility for the Small Craft Harbours' program, participated at the closing of the meeting.

This NHAAC meeting was also an opportunity to discuss a few recurring, yet crucial, topics. These included an update on insurance, situational updates from NHAAC and SCH regions. As well, as required by the NHAAC mandate, members elected the executive, with all three sitting members being re-elected: Bruce Benson as Chairperson, Luc

Legresley as Vice-chairperson, and Jock Beck as Secretary.

At the NHAAC meeting hosted in Halifax, SCH provided a progress report on third-party liability insurance, bodily insurance and directors and officers insurance. SCH staff indicated that the guestionnaires harbour authorities submitted to update the Risk Assessment Profile were used to negotiate the 2005-2006 third-party liability insurance policy as well as to obtain cost estimates for the other two types of insurance. Nonetheless, there is still a great deal of work to be done in the next rounds of negotiations, and SCH encouraged the harbour authorities to submit their questionnaire as soon as possible in order to facilitate the ongoing procedures. SCH is also in the process of creating an insurance guide that would outline third-party coverage and answer harbour authorities' questions about insurance.

A highlight of this meeting was the presence of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Geoff Regan. This was the first time that a minister had attended a NHAAC meeting. Minister Regan opened the second day of the meeting by speaking to the NHAAC members. He acknowledged the effort and dedication of the volunteers. He also stated that the extent of their devotion to the harbour authority program warranted them a key role in setting SCH's priorities. The Minister acknowledged that one of our biggest issues is the need for more resources, and articulated his intent to seek much needed funding from Cabinet. Meanwhile, he asked harbour authorities to innovate and find new ways of countering fatigue. One option could be for harbour authoritiess to share resources.

In the context of an open discussion, George Da Pont encouraged harbour authorities to give SCH more detailed information about initiatives undertaken to strengthen their organizations, for example, pooling resources and generating revenue, and on the number of volunteers helping to deliver the program. This could possibly help SCH get central agency support for a funding request. This idea was later reinforced by Robert Bergeron, the Director General of SCH, who said that an increased knowledge of the harbour authorities and their volunteers could ultimately benefit them in building a business case for additional funding. In fact, the idea of including such information in the upcoming lease review will be examined by SCH.

As well during this meeting, representatives from each of the five regions were invited to summarize the different initiatives that had been undertaken to address harbour authority fatigue. They brought forth many interesting and innovative ideas. This was done to increase communication between NHAAC, SCH in Ottawa and the region's SCH, as well as to provide more ideas for future initiatives.

While the two NHAAC meetings were somewhat different in content, they both contributed to increasing the collaboration between the Department and NHAAC members. Many are confident that the success of the NHAAC meetings directly contributes to bettering the harbour authorities program. The next NHAAC meeting will be held in Ottawa in November 2005.

A copy of the Record of Discussion for the January 2005 meeting is available at www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sch/ha-ap-rod\_e.html. The April Record of Discussion will be made available once it has been approved by NHAAC members at the upcoming meeting.

# YEAR-END REPORTS KEEP EVERYONE INFORMED

This March, Newfoundland and Labrador harbour authorities submitted more than just year-end financial reports to their area Small Craft Harbours offices. They also completed and sent in safety inspection and environmental inspection reports.

"We requested all the reports at the same time to make it as convenient as possible for the harbours to gather and send in the information," explains Dan Blundon, Regional Small Craft Harbours Engineer, who coordinates the sending and collecting of safety inspection reports. The additional inspection reports were first requested on a trial basis in 2003 and sent out to all Newfoundland and Labrador Region's harbours in 2004.

The safety inspection reports collect detailed information about the buildings, electrical systems, mechanical and plumbing systems, fire emergency procedures and equipment, first aid kits, office areas, exits, wharves, docks and slipways at a harbour.

"By continuously reviewing the condition of facilities at the harbours, their safety equipment and procedures, we want to assure insurance companies that we're doing everything possible to improve safety and limit liability," says Mr. Blundon. "We hope that at the end of the day insurance costs will be reduced for harbours."

The annual environmental reports record the type and volume of solid and liquid wastes collected over the year, and details on how the facilities collect and store this waste before final disposal. The report also identifies the harbour's pollution protection procedures and pollution protection equipment (such as spill kits) on hand and provides an account of all spill releases that may have occurred during the previous year.

In addition to the environmental inspection reports, a vessel operations survey was distributed to each vessel owner or operator. This adds to the information gathered by identifying the types and amounts of liquid wastes (such as oil, gasoline and paint) and hazardous wastes (such as batteries or paint waste) being generated by a vessel. Vessel owners or operators also provide information on waste disposal procedures, inventory management of the wastes being generated and information related to protocols being used for the removal of waste from their vessel.

"The information in these reports, detailing the volumes and types of waste the harbour and vessels generate, helps the Department of Fisheries and Oceans design and implement appropriate and effective waste disposal systems for each harbour or for a group of harbours," explains Glenn Marshall, Regional Environmental Coordinator.

"This protects the environment and saves money through a proactive reduction of releases into the marine environment."

## MANAGE WASTE WATER TO KEEP HARBOURS CLEAN



The fourth of the Pacific
Region's environmental
management fact
sheets provides tips on
managing waste water
(see also the July 2002

issue of *Harbour Authorities Forum*).

Rain falling on roads and service areas can carry pollutants into the marine environment. Long-term accumulations of this non-point source pollution can be detrimental to the water and sediment quality of the harbour and near shore areas.

Harbour authorities and Small Craft Harbours in Pacific Region are integrating cost-effective, low-maintenance methods to manage storm water and non-point source pollution.

#### **Porous pavement**

Asphalt with large pores allows infiltration of storm water and trapping of pollutants for oxidation and bio breakdown.

#### **Biofilter**

A type of vegetated channel (swale) with dense vegetation controls the overflow of storm water while intercepting and enhancing the breakdown of particulate and adsorbed oil pollutants.

#### Vegetative filter strip

A vegetative buffer along the water's edge filters storm water runoff and

removes contaminants and soil particles before they reach surface waters.

#### **Oil/sediment interceptors**

Tanks or specialized catch basins separate and detain oil and sediments from storm water runoff.

The set of four complete fact sheets is available online for harbour authorities to use (www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sch/clean\_harb\_init/main\_e.html). The others are about environmental management plans, harbour washrooms and vessel pumpout facilities.



# DEAR HARBY

Many of the members of our board of directors have never been part of such a body before. Do you have any tips on how we can make our meetings more effective?

Believe it or not, there is value in going to meetings! You can get useful work done when meetings are well organized and run.

Geri Nickerson, Harbour Supervisor for the Harbour Authority of Woods Harbour in Nova Scotia, has been working with her board colleagues on ways to make their meetings more effective. Here are a few suggestions.

Choose the right setting for the meeting. "Choose a central location in the community that is comfortable, familiar and safe," says Nickerson, but not someone's house. Have a proper table to sit around and decent chairs. Set an agenda and other documents at each place, along

with a pad, a pen and a glass of water. Serve refreshments during a break.

Have a good agenda. A well thoughtout agenda brings structure and professionalism to the meeting. More importantly, says Nickerson, "it is the vehicle to allow everyone to contribute to the meeting and it gives them ownership of what's going to happen." An agenda does not have to be elaborate to be effective. It should just set out clearly what will be done and in what order.

**Keep good minutes.** The agenda and the minutes are a matched set. The agenda sets out what you are going to do; the minutes record what you did. They are invaluable reference documents for the board each month. The minutes should be distributed to the board within a few days of each meeting.

**Keep a firm hand on the wheel.** The role the chair plays is essential to effective

meetings. The chair steers the meeting, keeping things in order according to the agenda. A good chair ensures that everyone gets a chance to speak and keeps the tone of the meeting respectful, polite and professional. Most importantly, the chair keeps the meeting moving, working to ensure it is finished on time (1.5 to 2 hours), so everyone can go home.

A number of people have asked recently for an article in Harbour Authorities *Forum* on the importance of harbour authorities filing their annual renewal of their federal incorporation. We will re-visit this in an upcoming issue, but for now please see the Dear Harby column in the October 2003 issue of *Forum*, which is available on the SCH website (www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sch/forum/foru92\_e.html).